

Hastings Snowshoe Hustle cancelled due to weather



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With Mother Nature refusing to cooperate, the Hastings Snowshoe Hustle, scheduled for March 10 at Camp Cedar Ridge in McArthurs Mills in Carlow Mayo Township, has been cancelled due to lack of snow. While the first such race in Hastings County was a big success last year, and this year's event was a no-go due to weather, Carl Stefanski, chair of Hastings Destination Trails Inc. who helped organize the event, say that next year's Hastings Snowshoe Hustle will be bigger and better than ever. Grayson Burke, camp director at Camp Cedar Ridge, confirmed that the event had been cancelled due to lack of snow. "So strange not to have any snow in early March. We are looking to reschedule an event for the [North Hastings] Community Cupboard in the spring," he says. Last year, the first year such a snowshoe race was held in Hastings County, the event was a big success, with 67 people attending, and another 26 that would have attended but were deterred by a big snowstorm that made travel difficult. Burke told Bancroft This Week back in 2023 that their plan was to start an annual snowshoe race in Hastings County with two main goals; to attract tourism to showcase the incredible beauty of the region, and to provide an opportunity to local families to have fun and introduce them to the sport of snowshoe racing. He said the feedback to the 2023 race from participants was very positive. Stefanski, the chair of Hastings Destination Trails Inc., who helped organize the event, says it was a great disappointment to all concerned but they don't control Mother Nature. "If you recall, our inaugural launch of the event last year on March 4 was a huge success with 62 participants in attendance, despite experiencing a horrendous snowstorm. While I sit here responding to your request and watching the rain, I reflect on the kindness of those willing to volunteer and participate in our venture," he says. Stefanski says he wanted to thank the following individuals who stepped up; Foodland Bancroft, who supplied hot dogs, buns, condiments and hot chocolate, Trailhead Belleville, who supplied two \$25 gift cards for prizes, Carlow Mayo Public Library, who provided arts and crafts, Julie Edwards, providing health and safety, Carlow Mayo Township staff and Mayor Randy Wallace, who provided site preparation, and Cedar Ridge Camp for providing the venue, the board of HDTI for assisting in the logistics, Hasting County Economic Development, and the many other volunteers, too numerous to mention. Stefanski reveals that enquiries have been made as to what else HDTI is planning and the answer is "lots." In addition to their waterways committee continuing the water trails mapping beginning in May and to be done by the fall, they are also in talks with the Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquins to collaborate on projects that would complement HDTI with their knowledge and experience. "[We'll be] exploring the possibility of connecting McGeachie Conservation east and west trails together with reigniting interest in the Trail of Broken Hearts, we'll be doing educational events of environmental, geological and astronomical themes (similar to Dark Sky), and not to forget snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, hiking and biking. We'll also continue to participate in the Coe Hill and Madoc Fairs, and MACK (Marmora and Area Canoe and Kayak) Fest," he says. For more information, go to www.hastingstrails.ca. Stefanski tells Bancroft This Week that this year's event would have been quite a change from last year. "This year's estimated head count was close to 100 attendees and

rather than a snowshoe race, we decided on a family fun day involving casual racing, a bonfire, archery, tobogganing, skating and a rock-climbing wall. Admission was a donation of one non perishable food item for the North Hastings Community Cupboard,? he says. ?Based on the interest this year, preparations are being made for Hastings Snowshoe Hustle 2025.?