

Stewardship council inaugurates youth council



From left, members of the Bancroft Area Youth Stewardship Council Rachel Ladouceur, 16, Carling Pepin, 16, Kelsey Dillabough, 16, Taylor Grosklag, 23, Mckyla Woodcox, 16 and Rena Foster, 15, at North Hastings Children's Services March Break event March 16. The council helped attending children sort through what should and shouldn't be out in nature using box diagrams filled with animal figurines and materials such as crumbled aluminum foil representing garbage.

/ SARAH SOBANSKI Staff

By Sarah Sobanski

Some young North Hastings environmentalists are being sculpted into successful stewards with the support of pros at the Bancroft Area Stewardship Council.

It all started when BASC chair Ian Hendry spoke to fellow directors Kelsey Dillabough, 16, and Taylor Grosklag, 23, to gather ideas to encourage young stewards and to get youth involved in the community. That's when the pair teamed up to develop the Bancroft Area Youth Stewardship Council.

"The BAYSC is a group of students involved in community initiatives surrounding conservation and stewardship," said Grosklag. "The goal is to express concerns and inform the public of all ages of ways to further prevent issues and promote education in environmental skills and studies."

Having started in December 2017 with five members, including Grosklag and Dillabough, the council quickly grew to nine. It now includes North Hastings High School Grade 10 students Thomas Switzerland, Rachel Ladouceur, Mary Watt, Madison Peever, Mckyla Woodcox, Carling Pepin and Grade 9 student Rena Foster, as well as the two BASC directors.

"We are hoping this council brings youth the opportunity to explore stewardship and conservation, which may spark interest into careers. We think it's very important that young people become involved and aware of the environment. We are tomorrow's stewards," said Dillabough.

With that in mind, the council has wasted no time in strategizing their first youth inspired initiative.

On March 13, Dillabough made a delegation to Bancroft council asking if it would give BAYSC \$350 to rehabilitate a portion of the York River shoreline between Bridge and Station Street. Now approved by council, the money will go to planting trees and shrubs along that stretch to support biodiversity in both the province and town.

Of course, it also has an aesthetic appeal, according to the delegation report. The program provides trees and shrubs that have successfully naturalized shorelines in the Bancroft area including red oak, eastern red cedar, eastern red pine, white spruce, red pine, shoreline shrub bundles and highbush cranberry shrubs.

Kelsey was the one who came up with that idea, BASC chair Ian Hendry told the paper when asked to discuss the area youth council. She works at Stedman's. She said she was just looking out the back window one day and it just looked drab and dreary to her. She just thought she could make it look better.