This page was exported from - Bancroft this Week
Export date: Thu Mar 28 17:35:15 2024 / +0000 GMT

Grand reopening ceremony held at Eagles Nest



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The intermittent chance of rain couldn't dampen the spirits of everyone who attended the grand reopening ceremony of 18 kilometres of non motorized trails at Eagles Nest on Sept 24 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Present at the ceremony were HDTI chair Dora Trimbee, HDTI board member Cathy Trimble, Hastings County Warden Rick Phillips, OTC CEO Patrick Connor, Hastings Prince Edward Public Health medical officer of health Dr. Piotr Oglaza, Limerick Township Mayor Carl Stefanski, Bancroft Councillor Wayne Wiggins, North Hastings Economic Development Designate Chair (and Mayor of Tudor and Cashel Township) Libby Clarke, Wollaston's Deputy Mayor Darlene Coulton, the chair of the North Hastings Fund Development Committee Kim Bishop and representatives from the Algonquins of Ontario Ada Tinney, Diane Martin and Dora Yateman. After a closing prayer by Tinney, there was a ribbon cutting ceremony and an invitation to explore the rehabilitated trails.

HDTI sent out a press release about this grand reopening of 18 kilometres of non-motorized trails throughout North Hastings on Sept. 7. The event celebrates the completion of a project made possible by a $145,800 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, so that residents and non-residents of all abilities can enjoy the outdoors via these trails.

Trimbee welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming out to the ceremony that day. She then introduced Trimble, a board member with HDTI and the past chair. Trimble thanked everyone for coming, saying that COVID-19 stopped them last year but it was great to be here now. She also expressed gratitude for all stakeholders who had made the reopening of the 18 kilometres of non-motorized trails a reality in the Town of Bancroft, Limerick Township and Wollaston Township. She also mentioned the concurrent children's program with the North Hastings Public Library running in Millenium Park. She also provided a land acknowledgment and thanked the contributions of the Algonquin nation in the whole process.

Next up, Tinney, Martin and Yateman had a smudging ceremony, which is a cleansing ceremony done daily to get rid of any negative energies. They also played a song about the eagle, since the ceremony was happening at Eagles Nest. They explained that they honour the eagle because it can take prayers and messages up to the Creator because it can fly the highest of all the birds and above the clouds.

Oglaza said that the HPEPH was proud to have been a partner in the development of these trails.

?The investment in these trails came at an optimal time. Over the past year and a half, we've been taught the lesson about the value

of outdoor spaces and the activities we can enjoy in them. These trails will contribute to the improved physical and mental health of our community now [continuing to deal with COVID-19] and well into the future,? he says.

Connor spoke next, and said that over the past two decades, the OTC has supported about $4.5 million of the Ontario Trillium Foundation funding grants and they've worked on a couple of infrastructure grants with Infrastructure Canada through the National Trails Coalition.

?At the bedrock of all this, we've worked hard to ensure that provincially and nationally, local groups like yours get the resources they need and it's our pleasure to have developed 51 of these committees to our 220 member organizations, including HDTI and Hastings County and we're grateful for your support,? he says.

Trimble spoke again, outlining each trail system and the upgrades they had received including; new kiosks, new stones and bedrock placement, new signage, wayfinding and directional arrows, bear bins, accessible washrooms and upgrades to the trails themselves to make them more maintenance free.

?Everything was upgraded with major improvements through the grant at this particular location. With the counters we'll be able to have some statistics and we can apply to other grants and funders because we'll have some actual statistics. So, these are some of the major improvements that were taking place at the different locations, so we hope you enjoy them,? she says.

Wiggins, who attended for Mayor Paul Jenkins, who was otherwise engaged, was up next. He mentioned the town's partnership with NHPL, who are going to be doing a backpack system for people to come and enjoy the trails and the nature around Bancroft.

?It's quite a little package put together. I know the backpack includes a lot of stuff like binoculars, etc,? he says.

Stefanski spoke next and said that McGeachie Conservation Area boasts a myriad of outdoors activities for people to do and a trail system second to none. He also highlighted the rescue team at their municipal office that could respond in short order should an incident occur on the trails.

?HDTI and Ontario Trillium Foundation have stepped up to make exercise on these trails viable and a truly outdoor experience for those who may not have another way to enjoy the outdoors and with that bring economic growth to North Hastings,? he says.

Next up was Wollaston's Deputy Mayor Darlene Colton, who remarked it had been quite a hike on the new trails.

?So, it's best to make sure you have a good pair of shoes/boots especially with all this rain the past week and don't forget a camera. Wollaston invites all visitors to visit The Gut and all destination trails that bring economic development to the area,? she says.

Clarke was next up and said that NHEDC was one of the first who thought of the idea of bringing non-motorized trails to fruition in the area.

?Cathy Trimble and other board members formed the original trails subcommittee who procured the Trillium grant. Eventually this subcommittee became known as Hastings Trails and received the $145,800 in grant money from the Trillium foundation to rehabilitate the trails with extra funds from Hastings County and Carlow Mayo. NHEDC is thrilled to have been part of making these non-motorized trails a reality,? she says.

MPP Daryl Kramp was unable to attend that day due to his recovery from an illness, according to Phillips, who wished him well and a speedy recovery.

Bishop spoke next and said that by creating, improving and planning the appropriate trails system, all involved had created a link to serve as a gateway to the area, which she called ?a beautiful part of Ontario.?

?This project is proof of what can happen with a common goal and tremendous collaboration. Together you have paid tribute and respect to the land and environment while creating a place for all people to enjoy,? she says.

At that point, Phillips invited Tinney up to the podium to say a closing prayer.

?Thank you everyone for attending our celebration today. We appreciate very much that we are part of it. The Algonquins of Ontario really appreciate that the trails are open and that the public will be able to take part and enjoy the beautiful land. Hopefully everyone will do their part to take care of it as we should as caretakers of the land. I just want to again say thanks to the Creator for this day and for having everyone here today,? she says. ?Meegwetch, Meegwetch!?