

Local municipalities take part in Day of Action on Litter



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

According to a posting on the South Algonquin Township Facebook page and on the township website, they are participating in the Day of Action on Litter on May 10. In addition, the Town of Bancroft and several other surrounding townships also took part in this important provincial initiative to reduce litter in our communities that has been in place for the past two years.

The first Day of Action on Litter was back in May, 2020, and is celebrated on the second Tuesday of May every year. The Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Jeff Yurek and parliamentary assistant to the minister Andrea Khanjin, said at the time that although the province and the world were currently grappling with COVID-19 that nobody should lose sight of protecting the environment by ensuring that we do not litter, choose products with as little packaging that will need to be discarded as possible and that we clean up refuse whenever possible.

“When the time is right, our government will work with communities and our partners to organize litter clean up days across the province. We know that Ontarians are eager to return outdoors and this will be a great opportunity to reconnect with nature. The provincial Day of Action on Litter is a reminder of the importance of our greenspaces and the role we all play in maintaining a cleaner, healthier Ontario for our communities and loved ones, now and for future generations,” they said in their 2020 statement.

Andra Kauffelt, the general manager with the Town of Bancroft, told The Bancroft Times on May 5 that staff and members of council will be actively participating in the Day of Action on Litter on May 10.

?We will be working our way through the downtown core, parks and side streets with rakes, brooms, bags and gloves picking up litter, on the morning of May 10, to do our part to keep our town and our little piece of this world beautiful. We encourage every visitor, resident, and business to get involved and do what they can to protect our environment and our future, one decision and action at a time,? she says.

Nancy Carrol, Tudor and Cashel's clerk and treasurer, said that as of May 5 they had nothing planned for the municipality for May 10.

?I imagine we will do a push on our Facebook page to encourage the community to pick up litter along their road frontage, or while they are walking to take a bag for collection,? she says.

Victoria Tisdale, Limerick's clerk and treasurer, said on May 5 that they are under major renovations at their municipal office and just trying to get by over the past few weeks, so don't have much planned for May 10.

?However, I would be very happy to put a notice on the Facebook page and hopefully get some community involvement with tidying up our roads. There are a few residents in the community that actively walk and clean up roadside litter all throughout the summer months,? she says.

Hastings Highlands had their annual Earth Day trash clean up on April 24, but they are also doing a Roadside cleanup from May 2 to May 13. On a May 4 posting on their Facebook page, they have it advertised with instructions on how residents can fully participate. Clerk Suzanne Huschilt says that they resolved to do this initiative at their Feb. 16 waste management committee meeting, to recognize the province's Day of Action on Litter Day May 10. Mayor Tracy Hagar also confirmed this two-week initiative.

?We are encouraging folks all over the municipality to do outdoor clean-ups, take pictures and share on our page for Hastings Highlands.?

Bonny McCleery Scanlan, the environmental coordinator with the Lake St. Peter Property Owners' Association, cleaned up garbage along Hwy 127 with her husband Tom and several other members of the LSPPOA as part of their garbage cleanup efforts, and says that it continues to be very disappointing that they are still having to do it every year.

?Why do people think it's okay to throw their garbage out the window?? she says.

McCleery Scanlan notes that most of the refuse they've picked up include Tim Horton's coffee cups, plastic water bottles and other plastic bottles with other beverages, beer cans, and cigarette butts.

?It's the cigarette butts that I find the most concerning. I'm quite sure these are hot embers when flicked out the window and it doesn't take much to start a fire and have it get out of control. By the way, it is seniors that are climbing up and down the ditches,? she says. ?It took about two and a half hours for our one-kilometre section on both sides of the road. Stop littering!?