

Doctor donates to build outdoor activity trails



By Tony Pearson

As a doctor, Greg Cooper encourages his patients to live a healthy lifestyle.

But he also sets an example.

This summer, he and his daughter Dana celebrated her graduation from Western by bicycling 5,500 kilometers in a little over a month.

Yes, that's five thousand five hundred kilometres.

They travelled through six provinces, averaging over 150 kilometres a day.

And now, Dr. Cooper has put money where his muscle is, by raising \$1,500 through his trek to donate to CESCO. CESCO is short for the cumbersome moniker ?Central East Sporting Organization of Ontario?, which has the goal of promoting physical fitness by developing and maintaining exercise trails through Hastings County.

Their trails can be used for walking, hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and horseback riding ? i.e., where the power comes from muscles and not motors.

In this area, CESCO along with the Bancroft Trails group works on the Vance Park and Eagle's Nest trails in Bancroft, as well as the Nelle Lunn trail in Coe Hill, and the McGeachie trail in Limerick.

The work is done by volunteers who believe that outdoor activity not only helps improve people's health, but builds support for environmental protection, and can help foster economic development, by attracting visitors to the area and adding yet another reason to re-settle here.

Dr. Cooper certainly agrees.

As he wrote at the outset of his ride this summer: ?As a local health-care provider in North Hastings there can be no better prescription for me to write than: ?Get outside and hike or bike a trail at least once a day ? and call me in the morning to invite me along.?"

So he was pleased to be able to direct funds to the trails group, especially since it's said that every kilometre of trail yields significant savings to the health-care system.