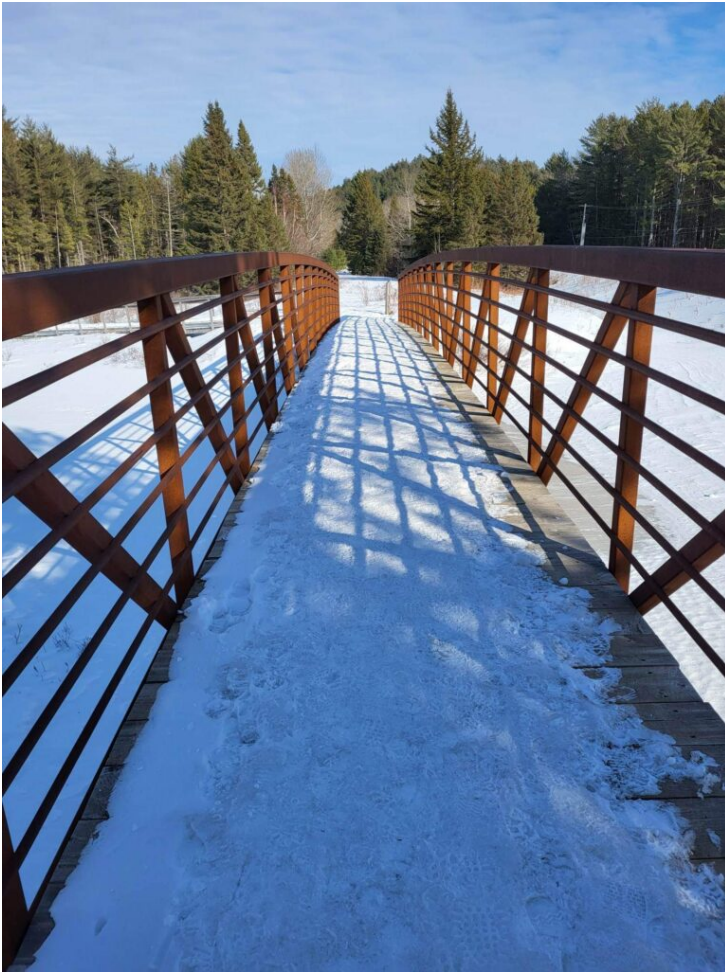


Local high schools to benefit from Environmental Summit]



By Chris Drost

The invitations have gone out to high schools in Haliburton, Bancroft, Barry's Bay and Peterborough for the first Environmental Summit at the Algonquin Visitor Centre on March 31. The event is being organized by the Bancroft Area Stewardship Council and Trent University's Careerspace and the Trent Community Research Centre, with much appreciated support from Algonquin Provincial Park.

BASC had initially planned the inaugural Environmental Summit for late April 2020. Just as things got into full swing, COVID-19 hit and the event had to be cancelled. Now, with the interest and organizational support from Trent University, things are shaping up for a successful and informative event that will target high school level students from across the region.

"We welcome the group with open arms. Algonquin Park is the birthplace of outdoor education," says chief park naturalist for the Discovery Program, Peter Simons. The Visitor Centre will be used exclusively for this event on March 31.

The theme for the Environmental Summit is "youth, careers and climate change." A full slate of speakers is being assembled who will share their knowledge and expertise with the young participants.

The keynote speaker will be Nick LaCombe, a young graduate of Trent/Fleming. He is expected to inspire with his address that will tie in climate change and careers in the environmental field. LaCombe is a senior technician with the Harkness Laboratory of Fisheries Research Ontario, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Students will be bussed from their respective high schools to the Algonquin Visitor Centre. ?We are excited to be able to cover the cost of bussing for the students but would greatly appreciate any other sponsorship donations,? says BASC director and member of the organizing team, Steve Wilkins.

After the keynote address, students will rotate through a selection of speakers of their choosing and will have an opportunity for a Visitor Centre tour led by one of the park naturalists.

Following the lunch period, there will be additional speakers before everyone heads outside for guided interactive tours near the Visitor Centre. Staff naturalists will lead tours on the Fire Tower Trail and along a trail through the woods where there will be plenty of opportunity to view wildlife, practice tracking and do some bird watching.

Organizations are also being invited to set up information booths for the students to visit throughout the day.

Following the outdoor session, a panel is planned that will focus on the paths to a career in the environmental sector.

For those with general questions about the Environmental Summit, contact Ryan Sisson, manager of community and workplace partnerships at Trent University, rsisson@trentu.ca

If you or your organization can provide a sponsorship donation to help offset the costs of this educational event, please contact Steve Wilkins at BASC, stevegwilkins@gmail.com