

NERDs catch and stock fish



Brandon and Dakota show off before releasing this 22 pound, 36-inch lake trout from Cashel Lake. It was the only one caught in the SLIN project.

The past two weeks in NERDs have been very busy! First, we had to get everything prepared for the upcoming NERDs golf tournament. Then we started SLIN netting (Spring Littoral Index netting) for Lake Trout, on Cashel Lake near Gunter. We did this for five days. Each day a different group of NERDs put out six sets of nets in three mesh sizes: 1.5, 2.0, and 2.5 inches. Each 300 foot gang of nets would be set out twice for 90 minutes. We caught a lot of perch as well as a few other different species. On Thursday the group caught a huge 22 pound lake trout, the only lake trout we caught over the five days. That catch was better than all the perch other groups would catch. By the way, do perch ever make a mess of our nets!

On Thursday we went out to our local hatchery to help stock out 4,500 lake trout into Paudash Lake. We loaded the trout into big tanks on the trucks and took them to the lake. From there, two volunteers took us out on the pontoon boat to release the trout into deeper water. We had to move very quickly to get them from the hatchery to the lake because of the lack of oxygen in the holding tanks.

This was only round one of stocking for the NERDs class. The following Tuesday some NERDs went to Cross Lake and others went to Blair's Lake to stock brook trout. For Cross Lake, the trout were taken out in boats, but at Blair's Lake, we released them at the shore. We had to keep throwing them back into the water because they're confused at first and flip back up on shore. They're still trying to find the edge of their tank.

On Monday the last group went out netting again. The rest of us prepared slideshow presentation on biomes.

On Wednesday we spent the day with Graham Cameron, management biologist with the Ministry Of Natural Resources and Forestry, assessing wildlife values in a future cut block area. Graham spent a lot of time telling us about turtles as well as other endangered species. We went down Airport Road by Albion Lake, looking mostly for Blanding's turtles. Except for the painted turtle, all species are at risk in Ontario. This is because turtle eggs hardly ever have a chance to hatch. In addition, turtles get hit by cars when they cross a road. So when you're driving and see a turtle ahead, please stop and help it cross the road!

On Thursday we went into Egan Chutes, getting ready for the upcoming Forestry Day with the Grade 7/8s. We worked on

identifying trees, as well as different types of diseases and other problems the trees face. We also practiced using calipers and prisms to determine basal area.

As the school year comes to an end, the NERDs class is still hard at work. Don't forget about our golf tournament on May 28 ? hope to see you there!

Submitted by Samantha Bruce