

New Bancroft scout program seeking leaders

By Sarah Sobanski

A new scouts program is coming to North Hastings.

Some of Bancroft's Scouts Canada scout leaders have decided to split from the brand to get back to a more traditional and cost-effective, volunteer-governed, scouting program for youth, said former leader and biologist for Bancroft's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry Graham Cameron. The new group will be for boys and girls ages 11 to 15 under the umbrella of the Baden-Powell Service Association.

"[The association] is part of a world scouting movement," said Cameron. "We just found that [our previous organization] didn't really fit our needs. We still want to have a scouting program for our youth, we just want to make sure that it suits our landscape and our demographic."

According to its website, BPSA Ontario is associated with other BPSA groups across the country, including in B.C. where it started in 1997, and the world. It's also affiliated with the World Federation of Independent Scouts.

It was "established to promote the principles, methods and practices of scouting as originally laid down by Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of scouting." It states it upholds Baden-Powell's "original ideas in [its] programs and methods as much as possible, while progressing with the times and keeping up to date with the very latest technology, child protection, legislation, first aid standards, and safety in outdoor education."

"The traditional scouting is the one that's very outdoors focused. Basically, we'll have some objectives " we want to complement the education of our youth " we want to develop character, we want to develop physical fitness and health, we want to make sure they're competent at handicrafts " so carpentry, things like that," said Cameron.

Before getting the youth back to the great outdoors however, Cameron needs parents and interested parties to sign up with the new scouting group.

"We have a meeting coming up [this month] to get kind of a steering committee developed and from there begin to work on the logistics," he said. "Our hope that is if we set up a solid foundation and a base as a group of community members and parents that this thing will have a longevity to it so it can continue even after the youth that will be in it" once they're graduated and gone off that there will still be leaders around delivering the program."

Cameron was planning to have the meeting on Nov. 22. He asked parents call him for a time and location at 613-332-8788.

"Any variety of skills is fine," he explained he wants to chat with community members to discuss for administrative roles, activities co-ordination, leaders and more.

He added, "We're hoping to have a program that builds things, that takes kids outside and we go camping, we hike, we learn about nature, we learn about trapping, hunting fishing, all that stuff. We also want community members to be involved."

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