

Resource Management course at NHHS steps up to the challenge



By Chris Drost

North Hastings High School teacher Kelly Waterbury, is determined to make a success of the Resource Management Course this quadmester, even though field trips have not yet been sanctioned by the school board because of COVID-19. Waterbury has taken over the teaching of this course from Collen Drew-Baehre, long-time educator at the school, who retired last year.

The Resource Management Course is offered to grade 9 students. According to Waterbury, "it is a good fit with the school population and it leads into the Northern Outdoor Studies and Northern Environmental Research and Development Studies courses in later years."

Since field trips are not possible this year, Waterbury has reached outside the school to find interesting speakers who can either come to the classroom to share their knowledge and enthusiasm, or provide it virtually. She is very excited about the number of guest speakers who have already been lined up for this fall, and the diversity of them.

Locally, directors of the Bancroft Area Stewardship Council have already stepped up. Chair, Ian Hendry will share information on the work that BASC does in the community, some of the past efforts of the BASC youth council and information about the North Hastings Community Fish Hatchery. A video is being shot to give students an opportunity to visit the site virtually.

New director, Sheila Currie will share her knowledge on butterflies and pollinators and Virginia deCarle and Colleen Drew-Baehre are excited to share their expertise as well.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is also stepping up to do a virtual presentation on invasive species. David Legros, Algonquin Park chief naturalist, is planning a virtual presentation on Algonquin wolves and the research carried out in the park.

Anne McCarthy, transfer specialist Wildlife Research and Monitoring Section with the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, will present on the wildlife and aquatic research at Trent University.

Douglas Tozer, director Waterbirds and Wetlands Birds Canada, will speak with the class via Zoom about his upbringing in Dwight (on the west side of Algonquin Park), his career path, his work with sap suckers and his current projects. Waterbury will use this opportunity to give her students some information in advance about possible careers in resource management and ecology.

Kevin Vance, president of the North Hastings Community Fish Hatchery, a well-known local outdoorsman and supporter of environmental initiatives, will offer his expertise to the students.

Waterbury has also reached out to The Alpine Club of Canada and they are interested in helping out how they can. Soper Creek Wildlife also plans to do a virtual presentation with graduates from Fish and Wildlife.

Waterbury is very excited that Kevin Callan, camping expert and author of 15 books, including, *The Happy Camper: An Essential Guide to Life Outdoors*, has agreed to present to her students. Callan is well-known as a canoe enthusiast, and author of a series of paddling guides, not to mention, a media personality.

While still waiting to hear back from a few other potential guests, Waterbury is feeling very pleased with the response so far. With such an exciting list of guest speakers, Waterbury hopes she can bring life to the course, even without the field trips this year. "It is important to give this introduction to our grade 9 students," she says. If she carries it off, and students are engaged, she hopes the course will continue well into the future.