

Trails project transitions to new not-for-profit

On the evening of Jan. 9, the lower level of the Bancroft municipal office in the Railway Station was buzzing with enthusiasm as 24 individuals gathered to talk about the next steps for Eagles Nest Park now that the successful first stage, the Canada 150 'Eagles Nest' An Algonquin Story has been completed.

A new not-for-profit, Stewards of Bancroft Eagles Nest Park, is being formed to look after the maintenance of the interpretive trail already completed, and to focus on new phases of work all aimed at providing educational and recreational opportunities and programming for both the local community and visitors.

Dave Naulls, long-time non-motorized trail advocate in North Hastings said, 'After years of being stalled in getting an interest in non-motorized trails in the region, it is so encouraging to see new people coming forward to become part of the next steps for Eagles Nest.'

Co-chair of the Eagles Nest Project- An Algonquin Story, Steve Wilkins was excited that 'the variety of expertise in this room is more than enough to set this new not-for-profit organization off to a great start.'

After a presentation that included a slide presentation of accomplishments summarized nicely by Dora Yateman of the Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin Nation, Paul Jenkins spoke about the vision to ultimately extend the trail system as far as Clark Lake. Roger Kelly, spoke about the opportunities to create experience tourism, educational programs and ongoing revenue generation through memberships, donations and memorials.

Chris Drost announced that a Market Feasibility Study is already underway to assess the possibilities for revenue generation through experience tourism on Eagles Nest. This has been made possible through generous support received from Community Futures Development Corporation of North and Centre Hastings and South Algonquin.

By the end of the meeting at least six individuals had indicated an interest in joining the new Board of Directors and thirteen had signed up to be part of a trail team that would monitor the trail, carry out work bees, special events and other outstanding tasks.

Some of those individuals also volunteered to provide some unique interpretive programming for Eagles Nest.

Others interested in being part of the trail team can contact Chris Drost at 613-332-6246 or chrisdrost@xplornet.com.

Submitted