

Wonders of Wetlands Day a huge success



By Chris Drost

Despite some inopportune downpours, the Bancroft Area Stewardship Council's Wonders of Wetlands Day at Joy Bible Camp on June 1 was a huge success, with approximately 300 grade 3 students from across the region taking part. Event organizer, BASC director, Colleen Drew-Baehre, said it was the largest group they had ever had. Students came from as far away as Apsley and Whitney. BASC's mandate is to provide educational opportunities for the public to learn about the environment. Wonders of Wetlands Day does just that. With approximately 20 different education stations, the students learned about everything from bugs in mud to how trees prevent run-off into lakes, and so much more. Volunteers were present at each of the stations to help the kids with activities that further explained the learning opportunity. Some were volunteers from BASC, or their family members, while the NERDS from the North Hastings High School and representatives from other organizations took part. Dan Rapson from the Bancroft Retriever Club was on-hand with two adult retrievers and a very small puppy named Winnie. While he demonstrated how to train a dog to retrieve, a large group of students watched with great enthusiasm. "The kids are really enjoying the day. The table with the bugs and the dogs seem to be the favourites," said parent volunteer from Apsley, Kathleen Walker. Her son Emmerson agreed. "My favourite is the puppies," he said. Some of the other activity stations included one where students learned that trees can help prevent unwanted run-off into a lake. By tossing balls into a diorama with trees, they could see first-hand how the trees prevented the balls from flowing into the lake. At the bugs in mud table, eager students looked through magnifying glasses to spot the tiny bugs in a dish full of muddy water. Ian Hendry, chair of BASC, used a display of turtles and snakes to share information about the longevity of turtles and the importance of protecting them. The students had lots of questions for Hendry while the kids shared stories of their encounters with injured turtles. Robert Craftchick, BASC director, and Algonquin Negotiation Representative for Whitney and area,

had students very interested in learning about the different species of animal pelts that were on display. The kids are enjoying the day. There are lots of activities and things for them to see and do," said Diana Sheridan, who was supply teaching for the day at Maynooth Public School. Wonders of Wetlands Day typically runs every other year. Because of COVID-19, it has been on hiatus since 2018 since it was cancelled in 2020. Drew-Baehre was very pleased that things aligned with the schools in allowing field trips once again and the event was able to proceed as planned. The day could not have happened without all the volunteers, Joy Bible Camp, the support of BASC, donations from the Town of Bancroft, Hastings Highlands, South Algonquin and the Baptiste Lake Association. Robert Craftchick and Doug Wellman stepped up to pay for the bussing from Whitney and Apsley respectively.