



Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha

children's water festival

2015

Final Report

Prepared by Irene Heaven, Out to Learn

Many thanks to ...



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Environment
Foundation



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Trent University
Trillium Lakelands District School Board
U-Links Centre for Community Research
Up River Trading Company
Water Depot

Outside Presenters

Baha'i of Haliburton and G. Wymen
Barry Hayward
Dorset Environmental Science Centre (MOE)
Friends of the Osprey
Haliburton County Emergency Medical Services
Haliburton Dance Academy (HDA)
Haliburton Fire Centre (OMNR)
Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre
Let's Talk Science
Muskoka Watershed Council
Ontario Provincial Police
Township of Algonquin Highlands Fire Services
TRACKS Youth Program
Turtle Guardians/Land Between

... Thank You



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Overview

The Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival is a unique approach to inspire children to become wise stewards of water and related systems through educational, fun and hands-on activities.

Mission statement from HMK Children's Water Festival Strategic Plan 2011.

The Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival (HMK Children's Water Festival or HMKCWF) has been successfully delivering water education to our youth on an annual basis for the past ten years. The HMK Children's Water Festival is a fun filled educational event offered free-of-charge to students from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) area. The TLDSB covers a large geographic area, approximately 11,500 Km², encompassing Haliburton County, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the City of Kawartha Lakes. These Districts share watersheds and waterways impressing the need for water education to ensure healthy water and environments for the communities of these areas and beyond.

Hundreds of students, their teachers and parent supervisors attend the HMK Children's Water Festival and are challenged to consider the importance of water to human and environmental health as well as the role of water in economic development. Through stimulating hands-on activities children are provided the opportunity to discover the importance and diversity of water in a natural outdoor setting. Messages on water conservation, technology, protection and science, complement classroom lessons with the intention of helping teachers fulfill Ontario's school curriculum expectations. The active and hands-on format of the festival provides an experiential learning opportunity that excites and motivates students to share information that they acquire not only in the classroom but with others in the community, causing a ripple effect.

Since 2005, the HMK Children's Water Festival has been bringing together the expertise of educators, water quality and quantity specialists, community volunteers, Trent University students, conservation groups, industry and government to provide elementary students the opportunity to discover the importance and diversity of water. Attending the HMK Children's Water Festival and learning in such an interactive way helps students come to better understand that their attitude towards water does matter and that their actions do make a difference and that, ultimately, we are all responsible for maintaining healthy water systems for healthy living.

In the 11th year of the HMK Children's Water Festival, a work to rule directive prevented elementary teachers in providing field trips for their students, including those within school hours. Due to this situation, the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee was forced to defer the 2015 festival a week and a half prior to the scheduled date. This is the first time in the history of the Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival that this action had to be taken. The 2016 HMK Children's Water Festival will occur on September 26 & 27, 2016.

The HMK Children's Water Festival is a project of the charitable organization, Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning (FEEL). On behalf of the FEEL Board and the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee, thank-you to all our partners, financial supporters and volunteers for understanding these unfortunate circumstances. Your continued support is vital in making this event the success that it is. It is with this support that the HMK Children's Water Festival will continue to deliver water education to our youth in the future.

Steering Committee

The HMK Children’s Water Festival steering committee consists of representatives from supporting organizations and other interested individuals.

Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning (FEEL) –Rebecca Krawczyk,rebecca.feel@hotmail.ca

– Chair Person

Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning (FEEL) - Norm Thomas, thomas75@xittel.ca

Kinark Outdoor Centre – Ryan Mortell, Ryan.Mortell@kinark.on.ca

– Facilities Sub-committee lead

U-links Centre for Community Based Research – Sonja Marx, ulinks@on.aibn.com

– Volunteers Sub-committee lead

Township of Minden Hills - Elisha Weiss, eweiss@mindenhills.ca

Other interested individuals making up the HMKCWF Steering Committee are:

Rick Whitteker –richard.whitteker@flemingcollege.ca , Program Sub-committee lead

Jim Milne – milnes1094@sympatico.ca

Gina Stanely - crosshall@sympatico.ca

Tony Armstrong (past Trillium Lakelands District School Board trustee)

Ron Reid

Irene Heaven – iheaven@outtolearn.ca , HMK Children’s Water Festival coordinator.

FEEL is a registered charitable organization in Haliburton and is the parent organization for the Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children’s Water Festival.

The 2015 Festival

The 2015 HMK Children’s Water Festival was scheduled for Monday September 28th and Tuesday September 29th at the Kinark Outdoor Centre. Located just west of Carnarvon, the Kinark Outdoor Centre is an ideal location for this event as it is centrally located within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board, including Haliburton County, Muskoka District and the City of Kawartha Lakes. The facility is well equipped with indoor areas, a dining hall for volunteer meals, and a spacious natural area for outdoor activity stations. Kinark’s forested landscape allows access to a lake, wetlands and open areas thereby connecting the activity centres and their messages to the landscape and providing an overall enhanced experience for participants. The Kinark Outdoor Centre provides exclusive use of all its amenities by the HMK Children’s Water Festival during the festival.

Registration

A digital invitation to register for the 2015 HMK Children’s Water Festival was distributed to past participating teachers and all elementary schools within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board in April 2015. Support from the TLDSB communications department ensured that all elementary schools within the TLDSB were

delivered these invitations. The invitation was also uploaded to the TLDSB staff bulletin board. In addition, the invitation flyer was posted on the HMK Children's Water Festival website and facebook page.

In total, 1006 elementary students from grades 2-6 were registered to attend the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival by the first week of June. This included students from 11 different schools within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board and 17 children from the Haliburton Home School. Registration numbers were high and would most likely have exceeded the previous year if a work to rule directive was not put into place prohibiting elementary teachers in planning and participating in any fall field trips. As a result, registrations to the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival halted at this time.

The early and high registration indicates that the HMK Children's Water Festival is considered a meaningful and positive learning experience. Teachers value the active hands on learning environment of the festival and are able to make connections to their classroom teachings throughout the year, enriching the children's overall education.

While the HMK Children's Water Festival is physically located in Minden Hills, its messages typically reach out beyond these municipal boundaries, educating and impacting the whole of Trillium Lakelands District School Board area. This education outreach benefits Haliburton County, City of Kawartha Lakes, District of Muskoka and beyond.

	County of Haliburton		Muskoka District		City of Kawartha Lakes		Other (ie. Home School, Out of District, etc.)		Festival Total	Av./day
	Student #'s	%	Student #s	%	Student #'s	%	Student #'s	%		
2005 (3days)	309	27%	76	7%	772	66%			1157	386
2006 (3days)	322	23%	350	25%	747	52%			1419	473
2007 (3days)	407	46%	300	34%	146	20%			883	294
2008 (2days)	44	10%	86	20%	300	70%			430	215
2009 (2days)	152	21%	80	12%	481	67%			713	357
2010 (2 days)	130	16%	280	34%	316	38%	108	13%	834	417
2011 (2 days)	167	18%	427	46%	338	36%			932	466
2012 (2 days)	264	29%	370	41%	269	29%	10	1%	913	457
2013 (2 days)	300	26%	620	55%	207	18%	9	1%	1136	568
2014 (2 days)	374	30%	564	45%	293	24%	13	1%	1244	622

*2015 (2 days)	330	33%	285	28%	374	37%	17	2%	1006	503
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**Festival deferred to Sept. 26 & 27, 2016 due to work to rule actions by elementary school teachers. Represented here are registrations numbers prior to work to rule action in early June. Numbers are included here to indicate the interest of teachers to participate.*

Activity Centres

In 2015, the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee continued to diversify the scope of water related topics addressed by acquiring 3 new activity centres: An EnviroScape Waste Management (Landfill & Recycling) Model was purchased, Earth in the Balance was developed and another newly developed activity by the Children's Water Education Council, "GREAT Lakes!", was borrowed. The 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival was to offer 48 activity stations.

Activity stations and the messages relayed from them are relevant to the Ontario Curriculum. Through a Community Based Research Project facilitated by U-Links Centre for Community Based Research, a student from Trent University reviewed and updated curriculum connections for 50 activity centres featured at the 2014 HMK Children's Water Festival. These included both HMKCWF owned activities and those presented by Outside Presenters. In the past, curriculum linkages focused on the Science and Technology, and Social Studies subject areas. This updated version includes curriculum connections for grades 4 to 6 in these subject areas [Science and Technology (2007), Social Studies (2013)] but extends the linkages to include Health and Physical Education (2010). These updated connections are provided within a section of the HMK Children's Water Festival Teacher's Planning Guide and are listed with the associated activity centres on our new website, www.hmwaterfestival.ca.

To also assist teachers in their planning, activity stations are grouped into themes: Water Conservation, Water Attitudes, Water Technology, Water Protection and Water Science. It is recognized that many of the activities could belong to more than one of the five themes listed. The activity centres that were to be available to the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival participants are listed below with new centres indicated:

WC: Water Conservation WA: Water Attitudes WT: Water Technology WP: Water Protection WS: Water Science

	Activity Centre	Theme	Location	Map #
	Algonquin Highlands Fire Service	WC	Eagles Nest (Outside)	27
	Amazing Aquifer	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	31
	Beaver Fever	WP	The Challenge Course/The Pines	37
	Bugs in the Mud	WS	Waterfront	10
	Creeks and Critters	WP	Waterfront	12
NEW	Earth in Balance	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	26
	Getting to Know the Osprey	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	24
	Gchi-Nbi - "Sacred Water"	WA	Waterfront	14
NEW	GREAT Lakes!	WS	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	33
	Grey is OK!	WC	Eagle's Nest (Inside Lower Level)	28
	Haliburton Fire Crew	WC	Waterfront	8
	How Clear is Your Lake?	WS	Waterfront	11
	How Much Water Does It Take?	WT	Dining Hall (Outside)	17
	How Wet is Our Planet?	WS	Eagles Nest (Back Porch)	35
	It's a Trout's Life	WP	Waterfront	6

NEW

Just Dam It!	WP	The Challenge Course/The Pines	38
Lather Up!	WC	The Pines	42
Lay My Egg!	WP	Waterfront	15
Migration Headache	WP	The Pines	47
Mother Nature's Respirator	WS	Waterfront	9
Municipal Wastewater Treatment	WT	The Pines	43
No Water Off A Duck's Back	WP	The Pines	40
Ontario Provincial Police Marine Unit	WA	Eagle's Nest (Outside)	23
Osprey Survivor	WS	Dining Hall (Outside)	21
Pioneer Water Race	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	22
Reign in Garbage! (EnviroScape® Model)	WP	Eagle's Nest (Front Porch)	36
Reservoir Rendezvous	WC	Dining Hall (Outside)	16
Riparian Repair	WP	Waterfront	1
Rolling Through the Shed	WP	Baseball Diamond (Hill Beside)	19
Round You Go, H ₂ O!	WS	Waterfront	2
Septic Sights/Rural Home Wastewater Treatment System	WT	The Pines	44
Settle Down!	WP	The Waterfront	7
Shoreline Do's & Don'ts (a display)	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	32
Somethin's Fishy Going On	WS	Waterfront	4
Stream Savers	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Lower Level)	29
The Fish is Right	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	25
The Soap Box	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	20
Three Times A Day	WC	Waterfront	3
Tread Lightly	WA	The Pines	39
Turtle Guardians	WA	The Pines	46
Turtle Trauma	WP	The Pines	45
Unwelcomed Guests	WP	Waterfront	5
Up on the Watershed	WA	Waterfront	13
Wash Out!	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	18
Water Hero Scavenger Hunt	WA	Throughout Festival Grounds, Finish at "The Soap Box"	20
Water Runs Downhill	WS	Eagles Nest (Inside Upper Level)	30
Where Are all the Turtles?	WP	The Pines	41
Why So Porous?	WS	Eagles Nest (Back Porch)	34

Funds provided by the Ontario Wildlife Foundation (OWF) were utilized by the HMK Children's Water Festival committee to purchase an interactive EnviroScape model and develop, "Earth in the Balance".

The purchased EnviroScape model was re-named "Reign in Garbage" and will replace the "retired" activity centre, "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle". The intention of the new "Reign in Garbage" activity will be to emphasize the same concept of waste reduction but to also increase the scope of messaging related to landfills and the potential effects that ill managed waste can have on our water, ecosystems, wildlife and human health. The model will educate youth on the formation of leachate from landfills and help make those linkages with the types of garbage they produce. Through the use of this interactive model, children will learn that their responsible decision when purchasing material and disposing of associated waste does have an effect on landfills and on the ecosystems nearby.

The model comes with 6 recycling activity boxes with a variety of recyclables which will be used to introduce children to the three R's: Reduce, Reuse & Recycle through a fun, hands-on game. This introduction will be followed with an interactive simulation of rain on an "active" landfill which provides a visual of how rain flows through solid waste (represented by sponges) within a landfill. "Leachate is formed" and is collected by the children using hand syringes. A discussion will follow which explores how leachate can be treated.

Additional funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation were used to develop a more engaging activity to replace "Prey I Don't Get Eaten". "Earth in the Balance" is a cooperative activity consisting of several ropes representing various species and elements within a food web. These ropes, species and elements, are attached to a central ring which holds the "Earth". Students become part of the web of life by holding the interconnecting ropes and are responsible for balancing the "Earth". As parts of the web are damaged or lost, the ropes are dropped and eventually the Earth is no longer supported and falls to the ground. This activity demonstrates the interconnectedness of ecosystems and the importance of maintaining overall health within those ecosystems.

The Water Hero Scavenger Hunt activity was developed in 2012 and helps disperse larger numbers of participating students at the festival by having students find hidden water facts throughout the festival grounds. This successful initiative creates excitement in students about being water stewards and encourages them to continue being good "water heroes" beyond the festival day. Funds provided by TD Friends of the Environment in 2015 allowed us to purchase new Water Hero Challenge sheets for this activity as well as Water Hero mementos: stickers, tattoos and rubber bracelets. These resources will be used for the 2016 HMK Children's Water Festival.

water hero challenge

Search the festival for the answers to the questions below. Work as a group to remember the answers (or you can use this handy cheat sheet)

1. Where does Canada rank in regards to water use per person world-wide?
2. What percentage of municipalities in Canada have experienced water shortages?
3. Where do one third of Canadians draw the water for use in their homes?
4. Water is unique as it is lighter as a solid than as a liquid. What is this form called?
5. This lake in the Northwest Territories is the deepest lake in Canada at 614 meters.
6. How much oil makes 95 litres of water unfit for drinking?
7. You can survive up to a month without food but how long can you last without water?
8. Most of Canadians just turn on a tap for water. On average how far do women have to walk in Africa and Asia to fetch water?
9. How many Canadians rely on the Great Lakes for their household water?
10. How many litres does it take to flush the average toilet?

If your group is ready for the "Water Hero Challenge", Come to "Hero Headquarters" and show us your smarts!

With thanks to: TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

Share your water heroics: waterheroes.ca | [/H2Ofestival](https://www.facebook.com/H2Ofestival)



Tattoo



Stickers

Presenting a Heroic Contest!
Your School can make a **Big Splash!**

Share your water conservation ideas!
The school with the most ideas will win the "Big Splash" award!

water you waiting for?

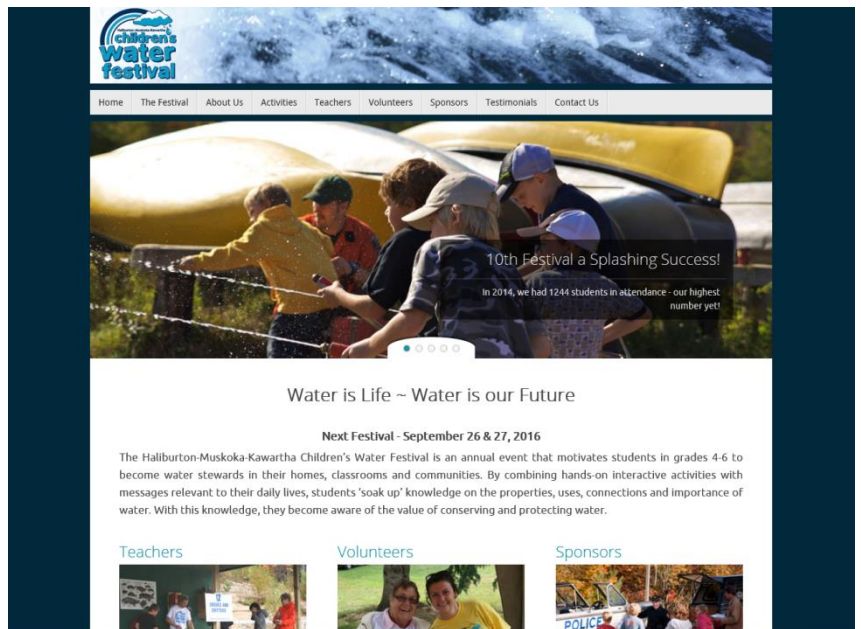
Post your ideas today at: waterheroes.ca or [/H2Ofestival](https://www.facebook.com/H2Ofestival)

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation Children's Water Festival

Since 2013, the Big Splash Award Contest has been promoted to schools at the festival. The purpose is to extend the Water Hero program beyond the festival and encourages students to enter water saving ideas through the Water Hero website (www.waterheroes.ca). Typically the contest runs until December and the school which enters the most water saving ideas are presented the Big Splash Award. This award is hosted at their school until the following HMK Children's Water Festival. At this time, the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee is in the process of assessing the feasibility of delivering this contest for 2015/2016 school year.



TD Friends of the Environment funding also provided the means for redevelopment and modernization of the main HMK Children's Water Festival website, www.hmwaterfestival.ca. The HMK Children's Water Festival website is an important resource for educators, volunteers and event supporters. The original website was developed over ten years ago and was outdated. The newly updated website is now optimized for all devices and can more effectively provide that information. The newly developed website also provides the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee and coordinator easier access to update information more efficiently and quickly.



In total, eleven organizations (Outside Presenters) were scheduled to donate time, resources and staff, to provide demonstrations for fourteen activity stations at the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival. Listed below are the Outside Presenters who were to be a part of the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival:

1. **"Wash Out!"** presented by Muskoka Watershed Council
2. **"Haliburton Fire Crew"** presented by Haliburton Fire Centre, Ministry of Natural Resources
3. **"Bugs in the Mud"** presented by the Dorset Environmental Science Centre, Ministry of Environment
4. **"How Clear Is Your Lake"** presented by Dorset Environmental Science Centre, Ministry of Environment
5. **"Septic Sights/Rural Home Waste Water Treatment"** presented by the Bahai of Haliburton
6. **"Municipal Waste Water Treatment"** presented by the Bahai of Haliburton
7. **"OPP Marine Unit"** presented by Ontario Provincial Police
8. **"Gchi-Nbi: Sacred Water"** presented by TRACKS Youth Program (Peterborough)
9. **"Getting to Know the Osprey"** presented by Friends of the Osprey (City of Kawartha Lakes)
10. **"Where are all the Turtles?"** presented by Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre (Peterborough)
11. **"Turtle Guardians"** presented by Turtle Guardians/The Land Between
12. **"Stanhope Fire Truck & Services"** presented by Township of Algonquin Highlands Fire Services
13. **"Creeks and Critters"** activity borrowed from Bancroft Stewardship Council
14. **"Shoreline Do's & Don'ts"** model borrowed from Bancroft Stewardship Council

The Haliburton County Emergency Medical Services has been a long time supporter of the HMK Children's Water Festival by providing on-site first aid for the two day event. The Haliburton County EMS continues to be a critical component in providing a safe experience for all participants and was scheduled to once again be an important partner in the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival.

Two special "drop in" sessions were scheduled for between 11:30am and 12:30pm on both days of the festival. Barry "Bazza" Hayward has been a valuable part of the HMK Children's Water Festival for many years and was once again going to provide an interactive drumming circle for participants over the lunch hour. The

Haliburton Dance Academy (HDA) was to participate in the 2015 festival and is becoming a lunch time tradition at the HMK Children's Water Festival where children can enjoy some fun and active dancing.

These activities were to be available to all participants at the 2015 the HMK Children's Water Festival and it is the steering committee's goal to provide this range of activities for the 2016 event scheduled on September 26th & 27th.

Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to the success of the HMK Children's Water Festival. In 2015, over its two day run, 215 volunteers lead activity centres, registered schools, parked busses and ensured that participants had an overall positive experience. Volunteers generally include steering committee members, Outside Presenters, Kinark staff, members from the community and Trent University students.

Through a partnership with Trent University and facilitation by U-Links for Community Based Research, students from the first year Environmental and Resource Studies Program can volunteer at the HMKCWF for part of their course. Participation has been increasing over past years; in 2014 a total of 128 students from this program took part in the delivery of the festival. This partnership is important on different levels as it provides essential volunteers to run activity centres and helps the festival to run smoothly but it also provides university students the opportunity to work alongside community members while getting experience in environmental education.

As outlined in previous year's recommendations, a partnership such as this is valuable and other similar relationships with other post-secondary institutions would be beneficial. For 2015, the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee had established a new similar partnership with Fleming College, Lindsay. Twenty-four students from the Outdoor Instructional Skills course were to volunteer at the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival for an assignment that was worth 5% of their final grade. The HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee aims to maintain and foster this new partnership for the 2016 festival.

Budget & Supporters

The total operating budget for the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival was to total \$104,795.00 (See Appendix 1). Due to the re-scheduling of the HMK Children's Water Festival to September 2016, total expenses are divided into "Total Realized Expenses" which include those expenses spent in preparation for the delivery of the festival on the scheduled dates of September 27 & 28, 2015 and "Total Deferred Expenses" which include all those expenses that would have been incurred if the festival was delivered, but were not due to deferment. The total realized expenses amounted to \$40,453.00 and the total deferred expenses amounted to \$63,795.00.

For the overall 2015 budget, in-Kind support contributed approximately sixty-one percent of the operating budget, decreasing the actual monetary cost of the 2015 festival to \$40,568.00. Without In-Kind support, the overall costs of the HMK Children Water Festival would be significantly higher, emphasising the importance of volunteers and in-kind contributions towards delivering a successful, high quality educational event.

The 2015 operating budget included the development and/or purchase of two new activities, maintenance on existing HMK Children's Water Festival owned activity centres, purchasing of Water Hero materials,

completion of a review and upgrade of curriculum connections to water festival activity centres and the re-design and launching of the newly enhanced festival website, www.hmwaterfestival.ca .

Directed funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation made it possible for the HMK Children's Water Festival committee to acquire and develop new activity stations, prepare for the anticipated delivery of the Water Hero program and re-develop an up-to-date website for the HMKCWF. Non-directed funds from Ocean supporters such as the Trillium Lakelands District School Board as well as all level sponsorships provided necessary funds for event preparation and needs such as further program development and improvement, updating of festival documentation, updating and marketing teacher registration, consultation and updating of new website, and purchasing of volunteer identification shirts.

RBC Blue Water Project and Hydro One funds have been deferred to help cover delivery costs of the 2016 HMK Children's Water Festival.

Seventeen financial supporters contributed essential funds to the organization and upgrading of the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival. These funds augment the overall quality of the festival and its educational value. Although delivery of the actual festival was deferred, the funds required to get such an event to the point of delivery is crucial. The HMK Children's Water Festival has several traditional financial supporters who are extremely important in providing a good economic base to this event and it is the intention of the committee to maintain these relationships for future festivals. In 2015, the committee initiated a fundraiser with the Rhubarb Restaurant and will nurture this new relationship with the intention of developing sustainable revenue generation. In August of 2015, SUP North hosted its second annual Pirates and Mermaids Family day to provide community based funds for the HMK Children's Water Festival.

Although the 2015 budget was met through generous financial contributions from HMK Children's Water Festival supporters and some revenue has been retained to cover costs of delivery of the deferred festival on September 26 & 27, 2016, funds to cover general operational costs continues to be challenging for the steering committee. It is the goal of the committee to become financially sustainable by increasing the number of long term financial partners and overall contributions. The steering committee will continue to promote more involvement and increased financial support from organizations and businesses in areas that benefit from water education stemming from the festival but are outside of the Haliburton area, District Municipality of Muskoka and City of Kawartha Lakes. Promotion within Haliburton County will also continue to maintain interest in the event and to increase contributions. It is necessary for the HMK Children's Water Festival to maintain current fundraising and increase sustainable annual funds to ensure that the quality of this event does not waver and that it remains free to students. Establishing new funding partners while maintaining already existing financial supporters is essential in further developing a long-term sustainable funding strategy vital to the continued success of this important educational event.

Supporters of the HMK Children's Water Festival were acknowledged in many ways including thank you letters, posting of logos and/or names on the HMK Children's Water Festival website (www.hmwaterfestival.ca), logos and/or names listed on various manuals and publications, volunteer t-shirts as well as displayed on a festival on-site sponsor board.

Additional Highlights

A new relationship began in 2015 with the Coboconk Freshwater Summit located in the City of Kawartha Lakes. The HMK Children's Water Festival provided 5 activity centres and supplied committee members for this family oriented event which took place in June. The event not only provided an additional source of income but helped increase awareness about the HMK Children's Water Festival within the Coboconk community. The presence of the HMK Children's Water Festival committee members, activity centers and the HMK Children's Water Festival Water Hero at the Fresh Water Summit increased outreach of the HMK Children's Water Festival into a public event and into the City of Kawartha Lakes. It is the aim of the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee to work with the organizers of the Coboconk Freshwater Summit and continue to nurture this new relationship.

The 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival was covered in various media from Haliburton County, City of Kawartha Lakes and Muskoka. The various news articles and radio segments are listed in *Appendix 2: 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival Media Listings*. The RBC Blue Water Project Community Grant cheque presentation was scheduled to be photographed on site at the 2015 HMK Children's Water Festival. It was necessary to re-schedule this presentation and will occur before the end of 2015, but a date has not been confirmed at the time of writing this report.

Recommendations

Since 2005, the HMK Children's Water Festival has been successfully bringing water education to elementary students from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board area. During this time, there have been some consistent financial supporters, most of whom are from Haliburton County. It is the goal of the HMKCWF to maintain these supporters and to increase involvement and financial support from other Haliburton corporations and businesses.

There are organizations from outside of Haliburton's boundaries who have been valued supporters throughout the years and the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee is extremely grateful for this support and will strive to maintain these partnerships. A new and promising relationship with the Coboconk Freshwater Summit began this year and it is the intent of the HMKCWF steering committee to continue fostering this opportunity. New relationships with other businesses and corporations from the City of Kawartha Lakes and District of Muskoka areas are something that the HMKCWF steering committee and their charitable organization Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning will continue to strive for. It is hoped that the HMK Children's Water Festival and its role in water education within these areas will be recognized through continued communication and increased awareness and that this will eventually transform into increased support.

It is the goal of the HMK Children's Water Festival to take on a more aggressive outreach program which will enhance awareness and highlight the importance and significance of youth education to increase involvement and financial support from all upper tier municipalities within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board whose children participate in the HMK Children's Water Festival.

- **It is recommended to maintain existing financial partnerships and stress the need for their continued support;**

- **It is recommended to enhance awareness of the HMK Children’s Water Festival within Haliburton County and to increase financial support from corporations and businesses within the County;**
- **It is recommended to emphasis an aggressive campaign reaching out to the District of Muskoka and the City of Kawartha Lakes increasing awareness, involvement and financial support of the HMK Children’s Water Festival;**
- **It is recommended that a long term sustainable fund raising strategy is further developed and implemented using existing documentation as a guide. This should be accomplished in collaboration with the HMK Children’s Water Festival parent organization, Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning.**

The HMK Children’s Water Festival has successfully increased the number of activity stations with a broad range of topics. Developing new activity stations will enrich the festival experience and will provide a more diverse year-to-year repertoire of stations, sustaining a continued interest with returning students. This strategy will also give opportunity to temporarily "retire" select activity stations for detailed maintenance.

The Water Hero Program was developed to not only provide another on-site activity but to further promote water stewardship beyond the water festival, to act as a reminder of the important information learned at the water festival. It is important to continue to utilize the Water Hero mascot and program as an outreach tool on behalf of the HMK Children’s Water Festival and water education in general. It is also important to maintain and update the interactive Water Hero website on a regular basis to promote public engagement throughout the year and extend the HMK Children's Water Festival outreach.

The HMK Children's Water Festival has been successful in establishing and maintaining relationships with organizations that provide Outside Presenters. These partnerships strengthen the educational component of the festival by increasing the overall diversity of water related messages while accommodating larger numbers of participants. By establishing more partnerships outside of Haliburton County will increase awareness and involvement within other districts included within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board area.

- **It is recommended to continue acquiring new activity centres thereby increasing the variety of learning stations as well as increasing the number of overall stations;**
- **It is recommended that further partnerships with organizations are pursued for donations of new activity centres to the HMK Children’s Water Festival;**
- **It is recommended to develop a yearly rotation schedule for activity stations;**
- **It is recommended to prioritize existing activity stations to undergo detailed maintenance;**
- **It is recommended that further establishment of partnerships with organizations within the District of Muskoka and City of Kawartha Lakes areas to participate as Outside Presenters at the HMK Children’s Water Festival;**
- **It is recommended to engage the Water Hero mascot and program in more community events to enhance water education outreach and awareness of the HMKCWF;**
- **It is recommended that specific funds are sought and allocated for the upgrade of the Water Hero costume;**
- **It is recommended to actively maintain and regularly update the newly designed Water Hero website to promote continued engagement of teachers, students and parents;**

The HMK Children’s Water Festival has developed an important partnership with Trent University through U-Links for Community Based Research. This partnership not only provides essential volunteers to run activity centres and help the festival run smoothly, it also provides university students a chance to work with

community members and receive a hands-on opportunity in environmental education. A similar partnership with Fleming College (Lindsay) was to begin in 2015 with the participation of students from the Outdoor Instructional Skills course. These students were to volunteer at the HMK Children's Water Festival for an assignment that was worth 5% of their final grade. The Haliburton Community has much to offer in terms of volunteers and many community members participate, playing a vital role in water education. With community members and university students volunteering together, a mentoring relationship develops adding yet another level and benefit to the HMK Children's Water Festival.

- **It is recommended that this partnership with Trent University be continued;**
- **It is recommended that the new partnership with Fleming College in Lindsay be fostered and maintained;**
- **It is recommended that other such partnerships be explored with other educational institutions such as Georgian College and Nipissing University in Bracebridge;**
- **It is recommended to continue building a relationship with the Haliburton Community to maintain and increase volunteer support for future Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festivals;**
- **It is also recommended to continue reaching out to the Muskoka District and City of Kawartha Lakes in order to increase volunteer participation from these areas for future Haliburton-Muskoka Children's Water Festivals.**

Through the U-Links Centre for Community Based Research program, the HMK Children's Water Festival has had several projects completed by students from Trent University. In 2015, a Trent University student reviewed, analyzed and updated the grade 4 to 6 curriculum linkages for the HMK Children's Water Festival activity centres. The goal of this project was to provide teachers with an accurate reference in terms of the water messaging from the activity centres that is consistent with the current curriculum.

- **It is recommended that this partnership with U-Links Centre for Community Based Research and Trent University be continued and future projects completed, benefiting students of Trent University and the HMK Children's Water Festival as well as its participants.**

It is important for the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee to outline a more directive strategy to continue with the festival's success, remain viable and achieve sustainability. A strategic and funding plan has been drafted in which goals have been outlined. It is necessary for these to be reviewed and further developed to parallel the overall mandate of the HMK Children's Water Festival and their charitable organization, Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning.

- **It is recommended to review the goals and actions provided within the 2011 HMK Children's Water Festival strategic plan and the 2012 HMK Children's Water Festival funding strategy and formulate an immediate action plan for the 2015 festival;**
- **It is recommended to develop a long term action plan to ensure continued success and growth of the HMK Children's Water Festival and the water education it provides.**

Conclusion

The HMK Children's Water Festival has grown over the past 11 years and has become a valued and well attended water educational event throughout the Trillium Lakelands District School Board area. This festival delivers high quality water education annually to hundreds of elementary students in a natural outdoor setting

in a relatively short period of time, two days. It is important that the HMK Children's Water Festival continues its water education and strives to reach beyond the two day event and its participants. Communities need to be aware of the importance of water stewardship and the benefit in working alongside our youth in protecting this essential natural resource.

2015 was a challenge in that, for the first time over its eleven years of delivery, the HMK Children's Water Festival was negatively affected by work to rule directives set forth by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. Teachers were unable to attend with their classes. Nonetheless, the value of this educational event to teachers is evident in that prior to action, registration to attend was high. With this in mind, the HMK Children's Water Festival is confident that attendance to the 2016 festival on September 26th and 27th will be as high as in recent years.

Water education outreach for the HMK Children's Water Festival was initiated in 2011/2012 with the development, production and distribution of the Teacher's Resource Guide. The Water Hero program initiated in 2012 and further developed over past years expands the outreach capacity of the HMK Children's Water Festival water education experience. This year, the HMK Children's Water Festival participated in the Coboconk Freshwater Summit, a community event with a family focus. It is important to continue advancing this educational outreach while maintaining a successful children's water festival as a celebration of water and water education.

Efforts will continue to support program enrichment however the 2015/2016 year needs to focus on the challenges of raising funds, revitalizing committee members and securing overall sustainability. Developing and strengthening long term financial partnerships are necessary in ensuring that the HMK Children's Water Festival will continue to provide free, high quality water education to our children through fun and interactive learning experiences. In doing so, the festival will continue fostering awareness of the importance of water and healthy water systems and in the long run, will better our communities and help us live healthier lives.