



Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha

children's water festival

2017 Final Report

Prepared by Irene Heaven

Many thanks to ...



RBC
Blue Water
Project™



Friends of **E**cological and
Environmental **L**earning
"Living, Learning, Growing"



ONTARIOPOWER
GENERATION



**School of Environmental &
Natural Resource Sciences**
Frost Campus | Fleming College



2017 Supporters

Together we are making a splash!

Ocean

Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning
(FEEL)
RBC Blue Water Project (Supporter)
Trillium Lakelands District School Board

Lake

Kawartha Credit Union
Ontario Power Generation
Ontario Wildlife Foundation

River

Orillia Power Distribution Corporation

Stream

Haliburton & District Lions Club Inc.
Heather Ross
Minden Kinsmen Club
Royal Canadian Legion, Sir Sam Hughes Branch 67
Trent University
Yours Outdoors

Sponsor an Activity Station

Bracebridge Generation Limited

Outside Presenters

Dorset Environmental Science Centre (MOECC)
Friends of the Osprey
Haliburton County Emergency Medical Services
Haliburton Fire Management Centre (OMNR)
Kawartha Conservation
Larry Dyke
Muskoka Watershed Council
Ontario Provincial Police
Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre
Township of Algonquin Highlands Fire Services
TRACKS Youth Program

In-Kind

Abbey Gardens
Baha'i of Haliburton and G. Wymen
Bancroft Stewardship Council
BarK Ecologic Gardens & Nursery
Fleming College (Lindsay)
Friends of Ecological & Environmental Learning
(FEEL)
Kinark Outdoor Centre
Minden Agriculture Society
Todd's Independent Grocer
Township of Algonquin Highlands
Township of Minden Hills
Trent University
Trillium Lakelands District School Board
U-Links Centre for Community Research
Water Depot

... Thank You



Table of Contents

Overview	4
Steering Committee	4
The 2017 Festival.....	5
Registration	5
Activity Centres	7
Volunteers	10
Budget & Supporters.....	10
Additional Highlights.....	11
Recommendations	12
Conclusion	14
 Appendix 2: 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival Media Listings	 18

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 free water education to our youth on an annual basis since 2005. 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.

At the HMK Children's Water Festival, hundreds of participating students, teachers and parent supervisors are challenged to consider the importance of water to human and environmental health as well as the role of water in economic development. The HMK Children's Water Festival brings together the expertise of educators, water quality and quantity specialists, community volunteers, Trent University students, Fleming College students, conservation groups, industry and government to provide elementary students the opportunity to discover the importance and diversity of water. Each day of the festival is filled with interactive, stimulating hands-on activities which relay messages on water conservation, technology, protection and science. Attending the HMK Children's Water Festival and learning in such an interactive way not only complements classroom lessons and helps teachers fulfill Ontario's school curriculum expectations but also excites and motivates students to share information that they acquire with others, causing a ripple effect. Through this experience, participating students come to 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.

Although the HMK Children's Water Festival is a two day event, activities and programs initiated at the festival are aimed at expanding the learning experience beyond that day. The HMK Children's Water Festival Teacher's Resource Guide was developed and made available to teachers in 2012. The Water Hero program continues to be popular on site and the 4th "Big Splash" contest will be running until December 1st, 2017. The intended outcome in both cases is to increase participation in water education and to promote sharing of this information back in the classroom, within the home and in the community.

The HMK Children's Water Festival is a project of the charitable organization, Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning (FEEL) and had its 12th successful annual festival on October 2nd and 3rd, 2017. The HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee would like to thank all our partners, financial supporters and volunteers that have been, and continue to be, vital in making this event the success that it is!

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

Tony Armstrong, tony.armstrong@tldsb.on.ca, (past trustee for Trillium Lakelands District School Board)

Ron Reid – re9id@interhop.net, Set up/Take down lead

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 2017 Festival

The 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival was held on Monday October 2nd and Tuesday October 3rd 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 to the HMK Children's Water Festival during the festival.

Registration

A digital invitation to register for the 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival was distributed to past participating teachers and all elementary schools within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board in late April/early May, 2017. 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.

Due to the festival's popularity and limited space, registration was closed mid-June and a waiting list for over 100 elementary students (5-6 classes) was established. The waiting list was utilized in September to optimize the overall festival attendance as registered classes confirmed numbers. The HMKCWF committee believe that the capacity of the festival is between 550 and 600 per day. More children each day would start to affect the positive learning experience individuals receive at this educational event and the number of busses that can be accommodated on site each day is also limited.

In total, 1088 elementary students from grades 2-6 attended the 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival along with teachers, educational assistants and parent supervisors. Sixteen elementary schools from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board and 14 children and 7 parents from the Haliburton Home School Group participated in this year's event. Over the past several years, annual daily attendance has ranged from 500-620 students per day. The continued high participation this year, 544 children/day, and the need to establish a wait list 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.

	County of Haliburton		Muskoka District		City of Kawartha Lakes		Other (ie. Home School, Out of District, etc.)			
	Student #s	%	Student #s	%	Student #s	%	Student #s	%	Festival Total	Av./day
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
2016 (2 days)	262	21%	476	39%	472	38%	24	2%	1234	617
2017 (2 days)	211	20%	494	45%	369	34%	14	1%	1088	544

****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.***

While the HMK Children's Water Festival is physically located in Minden Hills, its messages reach out beyond the 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.

Activity Centres

In 2017, the HMK Children's Water Festival was able to offer a total of 48 activity centres to participants. Thirty-six of these educational centres are owned and maintained by the HMK Children's Water Festival committee and 3 of these were newly developed for this year. Twelve activity centres were made possible by Outside Presenters. The number and diversification of activity stations as well as continuously upgrading activity centre content and delivery, maintains high quality learning experiences for all participants, including returning students and teachers from previous years. The larger number of activity centres also provides ample centres to better accommodate larger numbers of participants.

Activity stations and the messages relayed from them are relevant to learning expectations of the Ontario Curriculum. To assist teachers, the 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 available to the 2017 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)	29
	Amazing Aquifer	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	33
	Beaver Fever	WP	The Challenge Course/The Pines	39
NEW	Blooming Jeopardy	WP	The Pines	46
	Bugs in the Mud	WS	Waterfront	10
	Creeks and Critters	WP	Waterfront	12
	Discovering the Water Table	WS	Waterfront	14
	Earth in the Balance	WP	The Pines	45
NEW	Froggy ... You are Outta There!	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	28
	Gchi-Nbi: "Sacred Water"	WA	Waterfront	15
	Getting to Know the Osprey	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	25
	GREAT Lakes!	WS	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	35
	Haliburton Fire Crew	WC	Waterfront	8
	How Much Water Does It Take?	WT	Waterfront	3
	How Wet is Our Planet?	WS	Eagles Nest (Back Porch)	37
	It's a Trout's Life	WP	Waterfront	6
	Just Dam It!	WP	The Challenge Course/The Pines	40
	Lather Up!	WC	The Pines	44
	Lay My Egg!	WP	Waterfront	16
	Migration Headache	WP	The Pines	49
	Mother Nature's Respirator	WS	Waterfront	9
	No Water Off A Duck's Back	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Lower Level)	30
	Ontario Provincial Police Marine Unit	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	24

Osprey Survivor	WS	Dining Hall (Outside)	22
Panning for Gold	WA	Waterfront	13
Pioneer Water Race	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	23
Reign in Garbage! (EnviroScape® Model)	WP	Eagle's Nest (Front Porch)	38
Reservoir Rendezvous	WC	Dining Hall (Outside)	17
Riparian Repair	WP	Waterfront	1
Rolling Through the Shed	WP	Baseball Diamond (Hill Beside)	20
Round You Go, H ₂ O!	WS	Waterfront	2
Settle Down!	WP	The Waterfront	7
Shoreline Do's & Don'ts (a display)	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	34
Somethin's Fishy Going On	WS	Waterfront	11
Stream Savers	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Lower Level)	31
The Fish is Right	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	26
The Soap Box	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	21
Tread Lightly	WA	The Pines	41
Turtle Trauma	WP	The Pines	47
Unwelcomed Guests	WP	Waterfront	5
Up on the Watershed	WA	Baseball Diamond Field	27
Wash Out!	WA	The Pines	42
NEW Water Does Wonders	WP	Waterfront	4
Water Hero Scavenger Hunt	WA	Throughout Festival Grounds, Finish at "The Soap Box"	21
Water Runs Downhill	WS	Eagles Nest (Inside Upper Level)	32
Where Are all the Turtles? (Tuesday Only!)	WP	The Pines	48
Why So Porous?	WS	Eagles Nest (Back Porch)	36
Wonderful Wetlands	WP	The Pines	43

A total of 3 new activity stations were featured at the 2017 Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival. Funds provided by the Ontario Wildlife Foundation (OWF) in 2017 were used by the HMK Children's Water Festival committee to develop 3 new activity stations: "Blooming Jeopardy", "Froggy ... You are Outta There!" and "Water Does Wonders".

"Blooming Jeopardy" is a cooperative "game show" like activity that teaches students about Blue Green Algae (Cyanobacteria). Blue Green Algae is naturally occurring but occurrences of blooms seem to be on the rise. This fun activity helps students understand the ecology of this cyanobacteria and what they can do to help decrease blooms from happening. Volunteers facilitating this activity said that this activity was engaging and well received by students.



Photo Credit: Rebecca Krawczyk

"Froggy ... You are Outta There!" is an active baseball simulation game that introduces students to amphibians and the concept of limiting factors. Participants become "frogs" and attempt to make it around the life cycle "bases" (egg, tadpole, sub-adult and adult) without being caught by students representing limiting factors.

This is the first activity that the HMK Children's Water Festival has which focuses on amphibians and limiting factors. This activity broadens the overall range of topics covered at the festival and complements activities which have messages on reptiles and wetlands. Volunteers running this activity provided positive feedback with regards to the content and students were seen having fun and being active.

"Water Does Wonders" is an activity where students learn about the water that their bodies require to function, grow and stay healthy. Through the use of Janod Magnetic puzzles children work in teams to piece different body systems together. They then brainstorm on what those body systems require in terms of water and through the use of visual aids, come to understand how much water the body needs, the importance of water and daily hydration and where this water can be obtained from: drinking water as well as the food we eat. This was a popular station and seemed to be enjoyed by participants.

Funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation also enabled materials to be purchased that were necessary for general upkeep and maintenance of the 34 HMKCWF owned activity centres.

In total, eleven organizations and individuals (Outside Presenters) donated time, resources and 31 person days, to provide demonstrations for twelve activity stations at the 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival. Listed below are those Outside Presenters who were at the 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival and have been valuable partners in the past:

1. **"Bugs in the Mud"** activity borrowed from the Dorset Environmental Science Centre, Ministry of Environment
2. **"Creeks and Critters"** activity borrowed from Bancroft Stewardship Council
3. **"Discover the Water Table"**, presented by Larry Dyke
4. **"Getting to Know the Osprey"** presented by Friends of the Osprey (City of Kawartha Lakes)
5. **"Haliburton Fire Crew"** presented by Haliburton Fire Centre, Ministry of Natural Resources
6. **"OPP Marine Unit"** presented by Ontario Provincial Police
7. **"Panning for Gold"**, presented by Gillian Carswell
8. **"Shoreline Do's & Don'ts"** model borrowed from Bancroft Stewardship Council
9. **"Stanhope Fire Rescue"** presented by the Township of Algonquin Highlands Fire Service
10. **"Wash Out!"** presented by Muskoka Watershed Council
11. **"Where are all the Turtles?"** presented by Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre (Peterborough)
12. **"Wonderful Wetlands"**, presented by Kawartha Conservation

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.

Barry "Bazza" Hayward has been a valuable part of the HMK Children's Water Festival for many years and once again provided an interactive drumming circle for participants over the lunch hour, between 11:30am and 12:30pm. This activity has always been, and continues to be, very popular.

Members of the Bahai of Haliburton have been participating in the HMK Children's Water Festival as Outside Presenters for many years. They created and facilitated two models which taught students about waste water and its treatment: "Septic Sights" and "Municipal Waste Water Treatment". Due to health issues, members of the group were unable to participate in the 2017 festival. The Bahai of Haliburton donated the two activity

centres to the HMK Children's Water Festival and it is the intent of the committee to update these activities over the 2017/2018 year and offer them again in 2018.

The goal of the HMK Children's Water Festival committee is to maintain a range of topics and have a diverse repertoire of activity stations at the festivals. Through the participation of Outside Presenters, donations of activity centres and funds for activity development, this goal will continue to be met.

Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to the success of the HMK Children's Water Festival. Over its two day run, there were 145 volunteers leading activity centres, registering schools, parking busses and ensuring an overall positive experience for all participants of the festival. These enthusiastic volunteers included steering committee members, FEEL Board, Outside Presenters, Kinark staff, 13 members from the community (mainly from Haliburton Highlands), 63 Trent University students and 24 students from Fleming College, Lindsay.

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. This year we had a total of 63 students from this program. In a similar partnership with Fleming College initiated last year, 24 students from the Outdoor Instructional Skills Course volunteered at the HMK Children's Water Festival as part of their course.

Budget & Supporters

The total operating budget for the 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival is \$81,140.00 (See Appendix 1). The In-Kind support for the HMK Children's Water Festival contributes to approximately 61 percent of the operating budget, bringing the actual fiscal cost of the 2017 festival down to \$31,330.00. 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 this successful, high quality educational event.

The HMK Children's Water Festival involves a year of organization and therefore has required associated costs throughout the entire year. It is through the continued support from traditional supporters as well as the dedication of Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning and the HMK Children's Water Festival committee that this year's financial requirements were met. The outcome of this funding and dedication is the delivery of quality water education in an outdoor environment, free of charge to elementary students of the Trillium Lakelands District School Board. The 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival had a total of twelve financial supporters.

Directed funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation made it possible for the HMK Children's Water Festival committee to develop new activity stations and enhance many existing centres. Non-directed funds from financial supporters enabled the HMKCWF committee to purchase volunteer pinnies, provide volunteers with food and some transportation, and contributed to the overall successful organization and delivery of the 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival.

Although the 2017 budget was met through generous financial contributions from HMK Children's Water Festival supporters, fundraising for general operational and delivery costs continues to be challenging for the steering committee. The steering committee will continue to promote more involvement and increased

financial support from municipal governments and organizations in those 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 from businesses. 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 remains and continues to be 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 as well as displayed on a festival on-site sponsor board.

Additional Highlights

The HMK Children's Water Festival committee decided to purchase volunteer pinnies in 2017 instead of volunteer t-shirts. In the past, festival t-shirts were purchased annually and worn by all volunteers and supervisors. These garments provided students, teachers and parent supervisors a visual aid for the recognition of facilitators of activity stations and supervisors in case help was needed. The t-shirts were then given to the volunteers as a token of the committee's appreciation for their valuable contribution towards the delivery of the festival. The cost of approximately \$2,500.00 has been increasingly harder to meet on an annual basis and therefore the committee decided to allot \$1,400.00 of this year's budget to designing and purchasing Nylon Pinnies. These "one-size fits all" pinnies are made of a material which dries quickly and can go over any type of clothing (t-shirts to coats) making them very versatile. The pinnies are assigned to all volunteers and supervisors in the morning of each day of the festival and are then returned at the end of the day. Green pinnies indicate supervisors of the HMKCFW and blue pinnies indicate volunteers who are helping with the facilitation of activity centres, registration and parking. All pinnies have the HMK Children's Water Festival logo printed in white on the front and will be used for future festivals. This purchase removes the annual cost of t-shirts but allows us to continue to providing an important visual cue for participants during the festival.



The actual logo on the pinnies purchased has "Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival" printed

The 2017 Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival was covered in various media from Haliburton County, and is listed in *Appendix 2: 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival Media Listings*.

Recommendations

Since 2005, the HMK Children's Water Festival has been successfully bringing free water education to elementary students from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board area. During this time, there have been some consistent financial supporters but there is a need to expand this list of reliable financial supporters.

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 municipal governments 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 emphasise 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 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 developing and constructing 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 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 deliver activity centres and help the festival run smoothly but it also provides university students a chance to work with community members while receiving hands-on opportunities in environmental education. A similar partnership was initiated with Fleming College in 2016 which increased post-secondary student participation at the HMKCWF. Working with post-secondary institutions increases the overall value of the water festival by involving various levels of education in delivering important water stewardship messages. The Haliburton Community has much to offer in terms of volunteers but a "volunteer fatigue" has been experienced over the last few years for the water festival. It is the committee's hope that community member numbers will again increase in order to provide opportunity for post-secondary students to work alongside community members developing a mentoring relationship which adds yet another dimension and benefit to the HMK Children's Water Festival.

- **It is recommended that the partnership with Trent University be continued;**
- **It is recommended that the partnership with Fleming College be continued;**
- **It is recommended that other such partnerships be explored with other educational institutions such as Georgian College and Nippissing 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.

- **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 future festivals;**
- **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

Since its inception in 2005, the HMK Children's Water Festival has grown and is a valued and well attended water educational event, now accommodating 1100-1200 elementary children over its 2 day run. This festival delivers high quality water education annually to hundreds of elementary students from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board area. Children learn about water in a fun experiential way, in a natural outdoor setting within a relatively short period of time. 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.

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 since then, maintains and expands the outreach capacity of the HMK Children's Water Festival water education experience. 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.

Three new activity stations at the 2017 festival supported the committee's goal to provide participants with continual program enrichment. Efforts will continue, however the 2017/2018 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 continues 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.

Appendix 2: 2017 HMK Children's Water Festival Media Listings

RBC helps to fund water education

Minden Times (pg21), October 5, 2017.

Editorial opinion: What are your thoughts on this year's Childre's Water Festival?

The Highlander (pg7), October 5, 2017.

Junior highlanders: Water, water everywhere...

The Highlander (pg17), October 5, 2017.

Workshops make waves

The Haliburton County Echo (pg2), October 10, 2017.