

PROJECT MAIN OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this project was to encourage people, of all ages, to spend more time outdoors.

This was accomplished successfully in a number of ways.

ACTIVITIES THAT MADE IT HAPPEN

The work on the enhancement of the Akin's Marsh woodland area was carried out with the enthusiastic grade 10 Options & Opportunities class from Avonview High School. The students completed a great deal of work during their multiple visits to this area including clearing brush around the target trees/shrubs and the constructing and placing of rest benches on the existing Akin's Marsh trail system.

While doing this work the students learned about the local wildlife and the habitat in the marsh area. Also, the vice-principal/teacher commented on the positive influence this program had on this group of students.

The target trees and shrubs are thriving with many blossoms on the flowering types of trees and shrubs. Sightings of wildlife (both birds & mammals) are up in the immediate area due to the increased food and shelter opportunities provided by new growth, brushpiles, etc

The nesting box component of this project involved seven elementary school classes (approx 150 students) and one class from Hants West Middle School participating in a discussions/presentations on tree cavity users, constructing of nesting boxes and erecting these boxes in the Akin's Marsh woodland. The outdoor component (a woodland walk and erecting of the boxes the students had constructed) is not only a lot of fun for all participants (volunteers included) it is also a great educational exercise for both the students and teachers. Feedback from the teachers was extremely positive with all teachers encouraging HWWA to continue this project in future years.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The habitat enhancement component of the project was very successful as it encouraged new plant growth and provided a means, for the high school students involved to become more aware of the value of teamwork and the outdoor environment. Also, members of the public who use this area (hikers, birdwatchers, etc) have benefited from increased wildlife sightings and the rest benches placed on the trail system overlooking the marsh.

The nesting box component of the project was also very successful as it provided a means for elementary students to a hands on experience of the areas ecosystem.

With all this activity in the Marsh area, word quickly spread around the community and there has been a noted increase in hikers and birdwatchers in the area. Also, some of the students, that participated in this project, have returned to the area with their families to enjoy this area.

All members of the Hants West Wildlife Association are extremely appreciative and thankful for the access to funding through the Nova Scotia Habitat Fund for this project.