



Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha

children's water festival

2013

Final Report

Prepared by Irene Heaven, Out to Learn

Many thanks to ...



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Water Depot

... Thank You!



Table of Contents

Overview	4
Steering Committee	4
The 2013 Festival.....	5
Registration	5
Activity Centres	6
Volunteers	10
Budget & Supporters.....	11
Additional Highlights.....	12
Recommendations	12
Conclusion	15
Appendix 1: 2013 HMK Children's Water Festival Media Listings	16

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 Water Festival Strategic Plan 2011.

The Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival (HMK Children's Water Festival or HMKCWF) is a fun filled educational event free 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. Three different watersheds (Trent, Severn and Muskoka) flow within these districts 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. 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. Each day of this two day 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 the day. The HMK Children's Water Festival Teacher's Resource Guide was developed and made available to teachers in 2012 and this year the Water Hero program was enhanced with the inclusion of a "Big Splash" contest. In both cases, the aim is to increase participation in water education and the 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 ninth successful annual festival on September 30 and October 1, 2013. 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
Kawartha Conservation – Brent Kulba, bkulba@kawarthaconsevation.com
– Media Sub-committee lead
- Kinark Outdoor Centre – Jim McHardy, Jim.McHardy@kinark.on.ca
– Facilities Sub-committee lead
- Trillium Lakelands District School Board – Tony Armstrong, tony.armstrong@tldsbn.on.ca
U-links Centre for Community Based Research – Sonja Marx, ulinks@on.aibn.com
– Volunteers Sub-committee lead

Other interested individuals making up the HMKCWF Steering Committee are:

- Rick Whitteker –rickwhitteker@sympatico.ca , Program Sub-committee lead
Ron Reid – re9id@interhop.net , Set up/Take down lead
Jo MacArthur – jo@piforhire.ca
Jim Milne – milnes1094@sympatico.ca
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 2013 Festival

The 2013 HMK Children’s Water Festival was held on Monday September 30th and Tuesday October 1st 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

In May 2013, a digital invitation and registration flyer for the 2013 HMK Children’s Water Festival was distributed to schools within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board and past participating teachers. Support from the TLDSB communications department ensured that all elementary schools within the TLDSB were delivered registration invitations as well as a reminder in June.

A total of 1136 elementary students from grades 3-6 and 220 adults including teachers, educational assistants and parents participated in the 2013 HMK Children's Water Festival. Sixteen elementary schools from the TLDSB as well as 9 children and 4 parents from Haliburton Home School participated in this year's event. An average of 568 students each day at the festival surpasses participation numbers for all previous years. This is an indication that the reputation of the HMK Children's Water Festival as a meaningful and positive learning

experience is growing. 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 reach out, educate and impact the whole of Trillium Lakelands District School Board area benefiting 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.)			
	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

Activity Centres

In 2013, the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee increased the number and scope of activities available to participants with the development of 3 new activity stations, 2 new Outside Presenters and a new lunch time session. This year the HMK Children's Water Festival offered 47 activity stations, up from last year's 42 stations. Increasing the number of activity stations increases the variety for those students and teachers returning from previous years as well as providing ample centres to better accommodate larger numbers of participants.

The HMK Children's Water Festival committee will continue to enhance the number and range of activity centres for the future but wishes to focus more resources on detailed maintenance and upgrading of existing activity stations.

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 2013 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 #
<i>NEW</i>	Algonquin Highlands Fire Service	WC	(10:30-2:00 & lunch session)	23
	Amazing Aquifer	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	31
<i>NEW</i>	Beaver Fever	WP	The Challenge Course/The Pines	39
	Bugs in the Mud	WS	Waterfront	10
	Constructed Wetlands – Nature's Purifier	WT	Eagle's Nest (Inside Lower Level)	29
	Creeks and Critters	WP	Waterfront	12
	Floating Wetlands to Improve Water Quality	WT	Eagles' Nest (Outside)	34
	Getting to Know the Osprey	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	24
	Gchi-Nbi - "Sacred Water"	WA	Waterfront	14
	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	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	33
	How Wet is Our Planet?	WS	Dining Hall (Outside)	17
	It's a Trout's Life	WP	Waterfront	6
	Just Dam It!	WP	The Challenge Course/The Pines	40
	Lather Up!	WC	The Pines	42
	Lay My Egg!	WP	Waterfront	15
	Life on the Edge	WP	Waterfront	13
	Migration Headache	WP	The Pines	47
	Mother Nature's Respirator	WS	Waterfront	9
	Municipal Wastewater Treatment	WT	The Pines	44
	No Water Off A Duck's Back	WP	Eagle's Nest (Outside)	36
	Ontario Provincial Police Marine Unit	WA	Eagle's Nest (Outside)	27
	Osprey Survivor	WS	Baseball Diamond Field	25
	Pioneer Water Race	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	22
	Prey I Won't Get Eaten	WP	Dining Hall (Outside)	19
	Reduce – Reuse – Recycle	WC	Eagle's Nest (Outside)	38
<i>NEW</i>	Reptiles at Risk!	WP	The Pines	46
	Reservoir Rendezvous	WC	Eagle's Nest (Outside)	35
<i>NEW</i>	Riparian Repair	WP	Waterfront	1
	Rolling Through the Shed	WP	Baseball Diamond (Hill Beside)	20
	Septic Sights/Rural Home Wastewater Treatment System	WT	The Pines	43
<i>NEW</i>	Shoreline Do's & Don'ts	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	32
	Somethin's Fishy Going On	WS	Waterfront	7
	Stream Savers	WP	Eagle's Nest (Inside Upper Level)	30
	The Fish is Right	WP	Baseball Diamond Field	26

UPGRADED

The Ribbon of Life	WS	Waterfront	2
The Soap Box	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	21
Three Times A Day	WC	Waterfront	3
Tread Lightly	WA	The Pines	41
Turtle Trauma	WP	The Pines	45
Unwelcomed Guests	WP	Waterfront	5
Up on the Watershed	WA	Eagle's Nest (Outside)	37
Wash Out!	WA	Dining Hall (Outside)	18
Water Hero Scavenger Hunt	WA	Throughout Festival Grounds, Finish at "The Soap Box"	21
Water World	WS	Waterfront	4
Why So Porous?	WS	Dining Hall (Outside)	16

Funds provided by the Ontario Wildlife Foundation (OWF) were utilized by the HMK Children's Water Festival committee to develop a new activity station, "Beaver Fever". This activity introduces students to the unique adaptations of the North American Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) to their aquatic environment through the use of human related metaphors (props). A beaver puppet helps facilitate discussion on the interdependence of these large rodents to their aquatic habitat and complements an existing activity station about beaver dams and forest succession, "Just Dam It".

Additional funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation were to purchase a new dissolved oxygen meter for Mother Nature's Respirator. This popular activity station demonstrates how oxygen becomes dissolved in water, making it available for animal and plant life. Due to time limitations, the committee was unable to make this purchase in time for this year's festival and intended to purchase the meter after the 2013 festival for next year's festival. However, with another year of intense use, the activity station itself needs to be rebuilt and the HMK Children's Water Festival committee will be using the remaining 2013 OWF funds to reconstruct "Mother Nature's Respirator" for the 2014 festival.

Funds raised were also used to develop "Shoreline Do's & Don'ts", expanding upon the shoreline model borrowed from the Bancroft Stewardship Council and increasing the inter-activeness of this station. Through the use of mounted posters, the model, a facilitator and discussion, students visually compare healthy shorelines to unhealthy shorelines and come to understand how human use can impact these areas, both positively and negatively

The Water Hero Scavenger Hunt activity was developed for the 2012 festival and helped disperse larger numbers of participating students by having students find hidden water facts throughout the festival grounds. This successful initiative created excitement in students about being water stewards and encouraged them to continue being good "water heroes" beyond the festival day. Funding from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (TD FEF) and help from MacArt Studios made it possible to re-energize this program on-site and expand upon it.



This year, a Water Hero mascot was created to promote the Water Hero program. The idea behind a mascot is that it would create a memorable and exciting experience for the children at the festival as well as become an outreach tool in disseminating water education beyond the festival's two days. The Water Hero greeted school busses as they arrived at the festival and gave out group challenge sheets to student groups.



Group challenge sheets replaced the individual postcards from last year and not only decreased the amount of paper given out but also encouraged small groups to work together in finding the water related answers. Water Hero Challenge signs were placed throughout the festival grounds and provided answers to the questions on the challenge sheets.

Upon completion of the challenge sheet, groups visited the Water Hero Headquarters where answers were checked and Water Hero mementos were given to each member of the successful team. Items included a Water Hero sticker, bracelet, bookmarker and bumper sticker. The Water Hero also walked around the festival grounds with an assistant and gave out Water Hero tattoos to interested students. All of these fun keepsakes are intended to act as reminders that the students are water heroes and encourages them to continue being good water ambassadors in their classrooms, homes and the broader community.



Tattoo



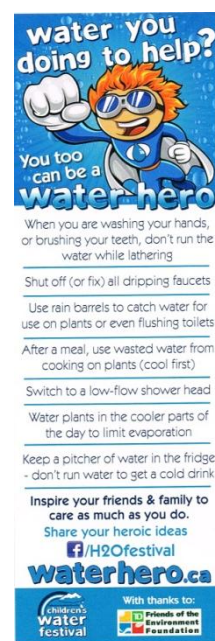
Sticker



Bracelet



Bumper Sticker



Bookmarker

Riparian Repair was created by Bark Ecologic Gardens & Nursery and was presented in partnership with Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning. At this activity, students learn how healthy watersheds depend on healthy riparian zones and are introduced to the role of native plants. After being familiarized with the thought process behind stewardship, students are encouraged to "manage" a shoreline through the use of photo cards.

Two new additional activity stations were provided by Outside Presenters: "Tread Lightly" and "Reptiles at Risk". Haliburton Highlands Water Trails presented, "Tread Lightly", an activity which explores the importance of minimizing impact on waterways while enjoying a wide range of activities near or on the water. This activity replaced "Low Impact Camping" in order to capture a greater range of outdoor interests of participants. "Reptiles at Risk", an outreach program with Scales Nature Park, provided a live demonstration of turtles and snakes which are at risk in Ontario. Participants learned about the plight of these reptiles and their relationship with water and wetlands. There was also the opportunity for participants to touch and hold the snakes which seemed to be a highlight for many of the students. This demonstration complemented the HMK Children's Water Festival activity "Turtle Trauma".

In total, fourteen organizations (Outside Presenters) donated time, resources and 53 person days, to provide demonstrations for nineteen activity stations at the 2013 HMK Children's Water Festival. Listed below are the Outside Presenters of the 2013 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. **"How Wet Is Our Planet?"** presented by Let's Talk Science (City of Kawartha Lakes)
6. **"Why So Porous"** presented by Let's Talk Science (City of Kawartha Lakes)
7. **"Tread Lightly"** presented by Haliburton Highlands Water Trails
8. **"Septic Sights/Rural Home Waste Water Treatment"** presented by the Bahai of Haliburton
9. **"Municipal Waste Water Treatment"** presented by the Bahai of Haliburton
10. **"OPP Marine Unit"** presented by Ontario Provincial Police
11. **"The Ribbon of Life"** presented by Gamiing Nature Centre (City of Kawartha Lakes)
12. **"Gchi-Nbi: Sacred Water"** presented by TRACKS Youth Program (Peterborough)
13. **"Getting to Know the Osprey"** presented by Friends of the Osprey (City of Kawartha Lakes)
14. **"Floating Wetlands to Improve Water Quality"** presented by City of Kawartha Lakes Water and Waste Water staff (City of Kawartha Lakes)
15. **"Reptiles at Risk"** presented by Reptiles at Risk and Scales Nature Centre (Orillia)
16. **"Stanhope Fire Truck & Services"** presented by Township of Algonquin Highlands Fire Services
17. **"Creeks and Critters"** activity borrowed from Bancroft Stewardship Council
18. **"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.

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. This activity has always been, and continues to be, very popular. In addition to this special lunch time activity, Haliburton Dance Academy (HDA) joined the festival this year and offered students the opportunity to take part in a fun and active dance session. This new addition was well received and it is hoped that HDA will be able to join the HMK Children's Water Festival in future years.

The repertoire of activity stations at the 2013 the HMK Children's Water Festival was at its best this year and it is the goal of the HMK Children's Water Festival committee to maintain this diversity.

Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to the success of the HMK Children's Water Festival. Over its two day run, there were 210 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, Outside Presenters, Kinark staff, 16 members from the community (mainly from Haliburton Highlands), 123 students from Trent University and 2 students from Sir Sandford 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 123 students from this program.

Budget & Supporters

The total operating budget for the 2013 HMK Children's Water Festival was \$85,615.13. The In-Kind support for the HMK Children's Water Festival contributes to approximately fifty-seven percent of the operating budget, bringing the actual fiscal cost of the 2013 festival down to \$37,285.13. Without In-Kind support 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.

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 develop new activity stations and expand on the Water Hero program. The overall educational content of the festival was enhanced through these actions by providing more diversity of activities and enhancing the outreach potential through a more interactive Water Hero program, including a Water Hero website (www.waterhero.ca) and "Big Splash" contest that will run until December.

Although the 2013 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. 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 municipal governments and organizations 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 from businesses. It is necessary for the HMK Children's Water Festival to increase funds raised for the 2014 festival 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.

The 2013 HMK Children's Water Festival had a total of twenty-four financial supporters who contributed essential funds to the delivery of this year's event. 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 2013, some new financial contributors were added to the list of sponsors and these new relationships will be nurtured in hopes that these organizations will become long-term supporters.

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



Related to the on-site Water Hero program, some funds from TD FEF were directed towards the development of an interactive Water Hero website, www.waterhero.ca. At this website students and classes can test their water knowledge and download their "official" Water Hero certificate. The Water Hero website is an extension of the Water Hero on-site activity in an effort to further engage teachers, students and parents by providing a source of water related information that can be drawn upon throughout the year. In this manner, the Water Hero program will become an outreach component of the HMK Children's Water Festival, extending the water festival experience and water education in general.

A Water Hero contest, the "Big Splash" contest, was also initiated at the 2013 festival and will run until December. Students are encouraged to post water saving ideas with their teachers and/or families on the Water Hero website or the HMK Children's Water Festival facebook page. With their water saving ideas, students post the name of their school and at the end of the contest, the school with the most entries will be awarded the "Big Splash" Award. This award will be presented to the school and will be another reminder that it is important to be good water stewards throughout the year. It is the intention of the HMK Children's Water Festival to continue with this contest on an annual basis.



The Water Hero program builds on recommendations within the strategic plan developed in 2011/2012 to expand educational outreach and promote water education throughout the year. It is the hope of the HMK Children's Water Festival steering committee and its charitable organization, Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning, that the Water Hero will become a spokesperson for water education throughout the year and that the Water Hero program will be utilized at other community events. This promotes water education within the greater community and increases awareness of the HMK Children's Water Festival and FEEL as well as provides funders with an opportunity to financially support a yearlong program.

The 2013 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 1: 2013 HMK Children's Water Festival Media Listings*. An article written by Brent Kulba, "Connected by Water": Children's water festivals involve communities in protecting shared water resources" is to be published in the "H₂Opinion" column of the 2013 November/December issue of Water Canada.

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 HMKCFW 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. Over the past few of years, more support has materialized from the City of Kawartha Lakes area and it is recommended that these relationships be furthered nurtured as well as to continue seeking and garnering more financial support from this area.

The greater challenge has been in gaining financial support from the District of Muskoka. It is hoped that the HMK Children's Water Festival and its role in water education within this District 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 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 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 new Water Hero Program is intended 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 maintain and update the new 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 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 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. 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 other such partnerships be explored with other educational institutions such as Fleming College in Lindsay, Georgian College and Nippising 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.**

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 2014 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 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.

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 this year 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.

Efforts will continue to support program enrichment however the 2013/2014 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.

Appendix 1: 2013 HMK Children's Water Festival Media Listings

Children's Water Festival receives donation

The Minden Times, August 7, 2013.

HMK Children's Water Festival

CKLY (Bob FM), September 11, 2013.

September 30-October 1, 2013: Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival

watercanada.net, September 11, 2013.

Children's Water Festival Looking for Volunteers

<http://inbobcaygeon.com/>, September 12, 2013.

Children's Water Festival Volunteers Sought

<http://infenelongfalls.com/>, September 12, 2013.

Children's Water Festival Volunteers Sought

<http://inlindsay.com/> September 12, 2013

Children's Water Festival Looking for Volunteers

<http://www.fyihaliburton.com/>, September 12, 2013.

Children's Water Festival at Kinark Outdoor Centre Booked Up

moosefm.com, September 12, 2013. 07:24.

Children's Water Festival Looking for Volunteers

The Haliburton County Echo (p.2), September 17, 2013.

Interview with Sue Black for Moose Magazine

moosefm.com, September 20, 2013.

Interview with Barry Willhelm for Canoe.FM Haliburton

canoefm.com, September 27, 2013.

Two-day festival teaches students lessons about the value of water

CAPS Northbound (p.16), October, 2013.

Ecological lessons at water festival

The Minden Times , October 2, 2013.

Kids plunge into water festival

The Highlander (p.1, p.13), October 3, 2013.

Water Festival spirit gushes with excitement

The Haliburton County Echo, October 8, 2013.

Big Splash Contest on until December

Minden Times (p.6), October 16, 2013.

RBC supports Water Festival

The Highlander, October 17, 2013.

Interview with Sue Black for Moose Magazine

moosefm.com, October 21, 2013.

Festival receives funds

The Haliburton County Echo (p10), October 22, 2013.