



Four Seasons Conservancy Marches on with New Nature Trail

Anyone who has walked through the Four Seasons Conservancy's Forest Sanctuary along the nature trail to the beautiful bird viewing platform on Betty's Marsh knows what a lot of work has gone into creating this special facility for community members to enjoy our natural environment. Now the same team of dedicated and creative workers are extending the boardwalk across the marsh to provide even more access to the Four Seasons trails.

The Deep River Community Woods Environmental Education Project, as the project is called, has the objective of "enhancing the outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities available in the large nature reserve located in Deep River." The project includes the development of a four-season trail, the construction of sections of boardwalk into the marsh, and the creation of an outdoor environmental education program for school children from Grades 1 to 12 in both the public and Catholic schools. Indeed, students from Mackenzie Community School, under the supervision of shop technology teacher, Matthew McEwen, constructed fiberglass and aluminum platforms to be incorporated into the new trail.

During recent cold but clear spring days, numerous members of the Four Seasons Conservancy team worked diligently on the frozen marsh by sawing logs and dragging them in canoes across the frozen marsh to where they are constructing the boardwalk. It will cut across the marsh in places, supported by galvanized steel and used truck tires for a design lifetime in excess of fifty years.

The Project is indeed community based, not just in the recruitment of skills, resources, labour and ideas. Funding for the project comes from a wide range of sources. Purchase of the lands which have recently been added to the Four Seasons Forest Sanctuary was made possible by donations from local community members and supplemented by a generous \$22,000 donation from Mountain Equipment Co-op.

In addition the Deep River and District Community Foundation contributed \$6,500 towards the Project, and North Renfrew Rotary Club and Rotary International provided \$4,500. Mackenzie Community School also committed money through the Four Seasons Conservancy to support educational excursions that will focus on the environment once the trail has been completed.

Project spokesperson Ray Metcalfe says: "The whole project is yet another example of how our vibrant community works so well together to create unique opportunities. This new MEC trail (Marsh Ecology Circuit) should enhance the future enjoyment and appreciation of our natural environment for all residents and visitors to our area."