

Fairy Lake is now open

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Working hard to create a beautiful, sustainable space June 28 at Fairy Lake were, front right Victoria Serda of SauGreen for the Environment, front left neighbour and volunteer Brenda Ginn, back, left to right, Amanda Hutter of Green Feet Ecosystems, Colby Ritchie, Austin Henry, River Roote, Stacey Ritchie and Paydan Ritchie. Absent: volunteer Shane

Ritchie.

Hub Staff

After months of rehabilitation following the removal of approximately 500 trees due to Emerald Ash Borer infestation, Fairy Lake in Southampton is now open to the public.

A collage of community partners came together, some volunteering their time to help plant, create and build something beautiful and sustainable around the beloved lake. The soggy weather that crews had to deal with were good for the plants, said Amanda Hutter of Greenfeet Eco Systems Services, who worked at restoring the natural environment and worked as a mentor to volunteers.

“The work that we’ve got into this point, we can already see things change back for the better. A lot of the plants, we’ve got from four different sources and two of the sources are from native plant nursery,” said Hutter, adding that one such source, from Saugeen First Nation, was Ark Native Plants. “Those are all wild source plants... those plants are using their knowledge of healthy ecosystems and bringing that into this ecosystem here,” she added.

Hutter and a crew from Saugeen First Nation planted mushrooms to filter the water. “One of the things that should really catch the eye are the oyster mushrooms that will be sprouting up, those are being used as filters,” Hutter said, adding that they remove 95 percent of oil based substances that go into the water such as road oils and road salts. “You’ll see burlap sacks and in the spring they’ll sprout with mushrooms, so that’s sort of eye catching,” she added.

Native plants to the area were planted as well as wild medicines and edibles, such as artichokes, cattail, wild beets and

wild strawberries. "All native flowers, they're beautiful... they're already climatized to this area... every different species we've picked has a purpose, it has a job to do and we're just giving the jobs back to the plants." Bat houses and bird houses were also created by Ron Stewart and installed around the lake. Since February community partners have all come together to help complete this project, said Victoria Serda of SauGreen, who worked as a fundraiser and partial project manager alongside Town of Saugeen Shores Parks Manager Frank Burrows.

Community partners included: Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre, the Historic Saugeen Metis, Saugeen First Nation, Saugeen First Nation Forest and Garden, Saugeen First Nation Drystone Crew, Green Feet, Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores, Town of Saugeen Shores Community Services, G.C. Huston Public School, the S.D.S.S. construction class, Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority and SauGreen.

Serda noted that when people come to see the lake they will notice a few new things. "There's almost a totally accessible new trail around the lake so that people with wheelchairs and scooters are going to be able to go around pretty comfortably. It's making it a lot more open for people to come with their families. And new features like the Drystone Stair Case and a lookout that we're pretty excited for a lot of people to be able to better experience the lake," said Serda.

Saugeen Ojibway Nation, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Conservation Authority all had direct involvement on the project. Serda said that she sees this as a reconciliation project with Saugeen First Nation as Fairy Lake is part of their original territory. "It's nice to have something where there's people working together," she said, adding that it's also important for people to take part in keeping our environment clean. "Stewardship of the natural world is part of their values so I'm pretty excited to have a good mix of communities on a number of different pieces of this project."

An audio story for the project is in the works and will be made available to the public at a later date with information pods around Fairy Lake. Funding for many of the projects including the dry stone staircase came from a donation from Bruce Power of \$20,500 and a grant of \$25,000 from the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund.

With the park now open to the public the first bandshell concert will take place on July 2 at 7 p.m. A ribbon cutting event is scheduled for July 20 at 2 p.m.



Working in another downpour to create the butterfly garden and planting 30 different species of plant were Melitta Smole (left) and Kerry Jarvis from Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores, Alen Fenwick of Saugeen First Nation Forest and Garden and Amanda Hutter of Green Feet Ecosystems. The Saugeen First Nation Drystone

Crew created a drystone staircase around the old cannery space. The stones were placed for water runoff. Saugeen District Secondary School construction students created a lookout path for people to sit and enjoy the lake.

Ron Stewart created many different animal boxes for various species to build new habitats.

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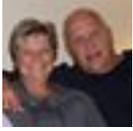
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Monica Gerber White

Can't wait to see it in person!

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Thank you to the volunteers.....can't wait to check it out!

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