



Nature and Technology: Connecting Students for Wetland Conservation
Students share stories and experiences through a national network

Burlington, Ont. - November 23, 2016 – Today, students and teachers from New Brunswick to British Columbia will talk wetlands and the actions they’re taking to conserve them.

They’ll tell stories of constructing boardwalks, banding owls and ducks at night, wading through cold swamps in hip waders, building nest boxes, planting and restoring wetlands, and most importantly, learning and sharing their experiences in their schools and their communities.

Young people and educators representing 24 schools engaged in Ducks Unlimited Canada’s (DUC) Wetland Centres of Excellence (WCE) program will connect via video and in some cases join in-person at sites in Ontario and New Brunswick. This networking session will include representatives from the internationally renowned Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre in Manitoba, Tantramar Wetland Centre in New Brunswick, CEMH Côte-de-Beaupré in Quebec and other sites across Canada.

Wrapped around the videoconference will be a wetland workshop at Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) for nearly 60 Ontario students. They will begin the day with a hands-on “meet and greet” with live animals that inhabit wetlands, and then present their stories to the rest of the country by video. Finally, they will journey through Carolinian forest to visit Cootes Paradise Marsh, a site recognized as nationally significant for birds, reptiles, amphibians and other wildlife.

Today Ducks Unlimited Canada will also take the opportunity to recognize RBG as its newest Wetland Centre of Excellence partner.

According to Merebeth Switzer, DUC’s national manager of education, “each WCE is unique, and each is having amazing impacts on wetland conservation. We are delighted that RBG, with the strong role it plays in conservation and education, can help us to further these efforts.”

“Royal Botanical Gardens has always worked with DUC and other partners to move our conservation efforts forward. We have also seen the impact that our programs have on students, especially when they are involved in stewardship projects that make a difference in their community. We look forward to connecting more children and youth to wetlands through hands-on learning and leadership development opportunities,” says Barb McKean, head of education, RBG.

“This year we expect more than 750 WCE students to engage in wetland studies and conservation projects,” adds Switzer. “Many will also mentor over 5,000 younger students by taking them on field trips to local wetlands.”

Wildlife Habitat Canada is a program partner that helped fund today’s videoconference. “We’re happy to help DUC to strengthen this network and connect the teachers and students to share their experiences and learn from each other,” says Cameron Mack, executive director, WHC.

Because when it comes to wetlands, these students don’t just talk the talk. They walk the walk. And that means an encouraging future for Canadian wetland conservation.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is the leader in wetland conservation. A registered charity, DUC partners with government, industry, non-profit organizations and landowners to conserve wetlands that are critical to waterfowl, wildlife and the environment.

Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) is a national, not-for-profit, non-governmental, charitable conservation organization whose objectives are to: provide funding for wildlife conservation programs in Canada; conserve, restore and enhance wildlife habitat; foster coordination and leadership in the conservation community; and, promote the conservation contributions of waterfowl hunters and encourage participation in waterfowl hunting.

Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) is a living museum, which serves local, regional and global communities while developing and promoting public understanding of the relationship between the plant world, humanity and the rest of nature.

Contact:

Stephanie Walker, Ducks Unlimited Canada

Phone: 705-321-4380, Email: s_walker@ducks.ca

About Ducks Unlimited Canada's Wetland Centres of Excellence:

The Wetland Centres of Excellence (WCE)/Centres d'excellence des milieux humides (CEMH) program is based on DUC's experience in 2003 with the restoration of a 36-acre wetland in conjunction with students at Tantramar Regional High School in Sackville, N.B. DUC recognized the combining education, conservation and community partnerships in conserving Canada's wetlands and chose to pursue it as part of its overall education efforts. Since then, DUC has raised funds and provided support and recognition across Canada to selected schools with similar programs. There are now nearly 30 schools involved in WCEs nationally in every province except Alberta. Several more are planned or under development.

Media: Contact DUC if you would like assistance in following up on stories involving WCEs in your province.

British Columbia

Clarence Fulton Secondary School, Vernon

Manitoba

Nellie McClung Collegiate, Manitou

Rivers Collegiate, Rivers

Virden Collegiate Institute, Virden

New Brunswick

Daly Point Nature Reserve, Bathurst

- Bathurst High School
- École Secondaire Népissiguit

Simonds High School, Saint John

The Tantramar Wetlands Centre, Sackville

Ontario

CLOCA – Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

- Donald A. Wilson
- Courtice Secondary School
- St. Stephen Secondary School
- Clarington Secondary School

Holy Trinity School, Richmond Hill

Ontario (continued)

Marc Garneau CI, Toronto

Nepean High School, Ottawa

West Carleton SS, Ottawa

Rare Charitable Research Reserve

- Paris District High School
- Waterloo Collegiate Institute

Royal Botanical Garden (RBG), Burlington

- Aldershot School

Sir John A. Macdonald CI, Toronto

Timiskaming DSB/Hillardton Marsh Education Centre, New Liskeard

Wellington Heights Secondary School, Mount Forest

Quebec

CEMH Côte-de-Beaupré (École secondaire du Mont-Sainte-Anne, Beaupré)

Saskatchewan

DUC – Saskatchewan for Mossbank School

UNABLE TO TAKE PART TODAY East Elgin Secondary School, Alymer, ON; Fort Richmond CI, Winnipeg; Fredericton High School, Fredericton, NB; Peninsula Shores District School, Wiarton, ON; Somerset District Elementary School, Berwick, N.S. and three new centres proposed for Ontario, Quebec, and B.C.