

# Official opening of Nationview Centre

by Shelley Cumberland  
Advance Staff Reporter

Nationview Public School's Education Centre officially opened the great outdoors centre, Wednesday, October 11th, with a congregation of interested well-wishers and donors, gathering to see the finished result of their labours.

A brainstorm happened upon quite by accident in 1987, by teachers Rob Saunders and John Pollack while completing a development assignment for an Outdoor Education course they were taking at the time. Mr. Saunders is currently on an exchange program in the United Kingdom but will be returning next year. During the work on the learning assignment, the pair found the land they were mock-developing for their course actually turned out to be six acres of property the school didn't know it had claim to. Due to the rich rural heritage of the area, John and Rob decided to aim high, to make their project a reality, and thus Nationview Outdoor Education Centre is born! Not quite. They were about to be faced with co-ordinating a very difficult plan with oodles of red tape, but also with community spirit that has gone unmatched.

The natural outdoor theater harnesses an unlimited amount of knowledge which will hopefully raise the level of awareness surrounding environmental threats. "There is a tremendous amount of knowledge to be gained here," stressed Mr. Pollack. Since the school first flung its doors open wide, over 5,000 trees have been planted on the grounds. The hope for the future of the Outdoor Centre is to see at least three or four examples of each species native to Eastern Ontario resting on its site. Presently, over two kilometres of nature trails have been chipped away, compliments of Ontario Hydro and their massive chipper truck. This has promised to open a host of activities year round. Throughout the summer, students employed by the South Nation River Conservation Authority (SNRCA), cleared unwanted and unattractive debris from the riverbed area, exposing an abundance of wildlife species. As well, a whole natural botanical garden awaits the explorer. So far, six different varieties of poisonous plantlife have been identified!

There is still much to be done, and hopefully, 1990 will see the completion of the Boardwalk, and stairs leading from the upper level to the river.

"Eternally grateful," and, "Truly remarkable," are but a couple of phrases Bill Roddy, Superintendent in charge of the project, used to describe the feeling that different organizations, service clubs and individuals have given of themselves to the success of the facility. A short ceremony was held to offer appreciation to these dedicated groups.

Trustee Roy Hastings arrived with greetings from the SD & G Board of Education. He recognized Mr. Pollack and Mr. Saunders for all they have done toward the Centre, noting, "Very outstanding community involvement."

Board Director Jim Dilamarter, himself a Lion member for 16 years, offered gratitude to the Mountain and District Lions Club, and the staff of Nationview for their active participation.

Honours were bestowed upon the SNRCA who, commented Mr. Pollack, have been partners from the beginning, and without them, the facility would not have been possible. Representing the SNRCA, and accepting a token plaque were Dennis O'Grady, Williamsburg Reeve John Whitaker and Hewart Sims.

The Mountain and District Lions

Club offered more support than was initially expected. Through their generous efforts, a trail and dock added to the centre. President Terry Foley and Gerry Lacuyer accepted the plaque commemorating the occasion.

Linda Touzin, on behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources, accepted an award for continuous help and guidance with tree selections.

Last but not least, the parents and students of the area accepted recognition. This group handled many of the menial and less glamorous chores surrounding the project, from digging weeds to stripping wallpaper. Principal George Hollingdrake was called to accept on behalf of this large group.

Absent from the glory circle were Ontario Hydro, who chipped out the nature trail, Bell Canada for donating 25 telephone poles, and the Canadian Wildlife Foundation, who forfeited grant money to aid in the development as well as donating bird houses and feeders.

Mr. Roddy informed everyone that in the future, other schools will be welcome to take advantage of this unique educational facility. In the rear of the school, a former apartment was transformed into a classroom, complete with amenities, so classes using the outdoor centre will actually be acting independently of the school building. "We would like to have it open to all children in SD & G," noted Mr. Pollock. Other Boards will be offered the service for a small support fee to the centre.

The opportunities are endless. Already the area has been used for cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, outdoor education and art classes. However, there is still much to be done. Continued support is still needed to ensure the success of the centre. The only way to go is up, and interested individuals and organizations wishing to become involved can call Nationview Public School at 989-2600. Environmental threats affect us all. We all need to educate ourselves to lessen the dangers of the future, and promote nature for what it is...serenity, colour, peace.

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The official opening of Nationview Public School's Outdoor Education Centre surmounted from the combined efforts of community spirit, generous donations, and a lot of hard work. Acknowledged for their much needed help were (back) Ewart Sims, Johnny Whitteker and Dennis O'Grady of the S.N.R.C.A.; President Terry Foley and Gerry Lacuyer representing the Mountain and District Lions Club; and Roy Hastings, George Hollingdrake, Jim Dilamarter, Karl Duncan and John Pollack, liaisons of Nationview and the School Board. Up front, students Marilyn Brooks and Kerry Howse accept a plaque for the parents and community involvement, while Linda Touzin represents the Ministry of Natural Resources.

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The Nationview Public School Outdoor Education Centre received its second donation from the Mountain Township and District Lions Club Friday. Lions Club president Terry Foley presents a \$1,000 check to Nationview students Tara Kerr and Craig Halpenny. Nationview PS science teacher and the outdoor education co-ordinator, John Pollock

Up in the tree are Emily Pollock, left, Leslie Weagant and Amanda Lewin.

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