

Leamington District Secondary School

Lake Erie Watershed, Leamington, ON.

Eco Team Education and Action

The students of Leamington District Secondary School's Eco Team set out to educate their community about the importance of their local wetlands for maintaining water quality and biodiversity, and to engage in wetlands protection within their watershed. They began their year studying the problem by attending a Carolinian Canada Grow Wild workshop, and later the Great Lakes Binational Forum.

Concerned about the recurring harmful algae blooms in Lake Erie, students spoke at a town council meeting requesting that the municipality reduce or eliminate its use of phosphorus-containing fertilizer on municipal property. Included in their presentation were drawings of native plants for use in town planters as an alternative to the plants the town had been using. These native plants do not require fertilizer, and they attract pollinators. Impressed by their suggestions, the city council referred the team to the Public Works Department to collaborate on the planters.

The Eco Team also partnered with the Essex Region Conservation Authority in a local initiative to remove invasive plants (Phragmites) which are a great threat to the Hillman Marsh. Students were trained this year, and will continue for several years to monitor amphibian populations before, during and after the removal program to determine its efficacy. Students also planted native trees near Hillman Marsh to reduce erosion and the run off of pollutants into the watershed.



Removing invasive species and planting native trees near Hillman Marsh - Leamington.

Additional information

A highlight for students was meeting Dr. David Suzuki, who visited them at Hillman Marsh. Dr. Suzuki, who grew up playing in the Hillman Marsh, encouraged the team to continue their environmental leadership in wetlands protection. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna showed a video they had created at the UN's Climate Conference COP21 in Paris, 2015! Talk about change makers!

Thank you to our Volunteer writer Dawn Pearson

Grades: 9-12

Teacher: Lisa Jeffery

Dive A Little Deeper

For more information visit the following websites:

[Leamington District S.S. Eco Team on Twitter](#)

Follow the Eco Team's numerous initiatives.

[Ontario Invasive Species Awareness Program](#)

Learn about invasive Phragmites and what you can do.

"The most important insight we gained is that young people can play a very valuable role in protecting our fragile watershed - both as educators and as citizen scientists."

Lisa Jeffery, Teacher



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