



PRESS RELEASE

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Students Take Part in Outdoor Experience

Students of St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga enjoy a day of outdoor learning and community service for a belated Earth Day celebration.

(Putnam, NY)—Sixth and seventh grade students from St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga participated in a belated Earth Day celebration on May 10 at Gull Bay Preserve in the Town of Putnam. The students joined staff from the Lake George Land Conservancy and Lake George Association to plant tree seedlings, build wood duck nesting boxes and examine some of the preserve's unique natural resources.

The preserve, which is owned and managed by the Lake George Land Conservancy, has erosion issues caused primarily from human disturbance, particularly from people accessing its natural resources and consistent (illegal) ATV use. The trees planted by the students will act as ground stabilizers, helping with water drainage and to decrease soil erosion. This, in turn, will aid in protecting the health of the Lake George watershed as a whole. The newly planted trees joined nearly fifty tree seedlings that were planted in 2005 by previous St. Mary's students.

In addition to planting trees, the students were led by the Lake George Land Conservancy's Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator Sarah Hoffman and Lake George Association's Education and Outreach Coordinator Emily DeBolt on the preserve's trails to explore its spring-time treasures—vernal pools, and its active great blue heron rookery.

St. Mary's School teacher Eleanor Berube described the day as, "a wonderful experience for our students to learn about wildlife and ecology in a hands-on environment."

With nets and bug boxes in hand, students discovered amphibian egg masses, newts and a variety of other creatures of the springtime forest, including great blue herons. The migrating birds return to Gull Bay Preserve's nesting area (rookery) each spring to raise their young and leave around June and July.

The students also put together several wood duck nesting boxes, which will be erected around the rookery to encourage increased nesting populations of wood ducks.

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When asked what they liked most about the experience, sixth grade students Erin Connor said, “I liked exploring the rookery and watching the blue herons,” Duke Mildon said he “loved the hike in the woods,” and Alex Macey said she “liked catching the amphibians and observing them.”

The event was supported by donations from the Timberland Company Foundation, which provided a grant to the Lake George Land Conservancy for the event, and the Saratoga Tree Nursery, a program of the New York State Department of Conservation, which donated 50 tree seedlings as part of their School Seedling Program.

The event was a collaborative effort between the Lake George Land Conservancy and the Lake George Association in an effort to reach out and educate communities in the northern region of Lake George. Those interested in learning more about the preserve or about either organization is encouraged to call the Lake George Land Conservancy at (518) 644-9673 or the Lake George Association at (518) 668-3558.

The mission of the Lake George Land Conservancy is to preserve the world-renowned water quality of Lake George and the rare plants and animals within the lake’s 150,000-acre watershed by permanently protecting natural lands through conservation easement and fee acquisition.

The Lake George Association is a not-for-profit membership organization of people interested in working together to protect, conserve, and improve the beauty and quality of the Lake George Basin.

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St. Mary’s students show off the wood duck nesting boxes they made during a visit to Gull Bay Preserve in Putnam. The day was hosted by the Lake George Land Conservancy and Lake George Association.