

BHS students get a hands-on lesson in environmental science

BY DONNA RHODES
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BELMONT — Environmental science lessons extended outside the classroom last Friday when Belmont High School teacher Dan Pleeter's class got some hands on experience in conservation as they worked side by side with members of the Student Conservation Association and other volunteers.

More than a dozen students from Belmont High School were transported to the Toga River Wildlife and Conservation Area along Route 140, where they were greeted by SCA workers and members of the New Hampshire Landscape Association. They received a brief safety lesson and an introduction to an invasive plant species known as Glossy Buckthorn.

The work to eradicate Glossy Buckthorn on more than 20 acres of the conservation land began last year, and was made possible for the second year in a row through volunteerism and a grant obtained by Belmont's Land Use Technician, Rick Ball, on behalf of the Belmont Conservation Commission. Commissioner Denise Naiva said the



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Belmont High School junior Kevin Mitchell swung an axe to chop the roots of a Glossy Buckthorn as his teacher, Dan Pleeter, worked to pull the invasive plant from the ground as part of a volunteer work day at the Toga River Wildlife and Conservation Area last week.

group realizes it is an uphill battle to rid the land of the noxious species but one they are willing to fight.

"Our goal is to stay on top of it," she said. "We're going to do as much as we can to allow the natural species found here to take over."

Buckthorn was brought to the United States before the 1800's, and by the 1900's, had spread rapidly. Today, it can be found along the eastern seaboard and as far west as Wisconsin. It first appeared in the wetlands along the Toga

River when a previous owner bulldozed the property in order of creating a motor sport park. That clearing operation opened up the tree canopy, allowing seeds of the Glossy Buckthorn to take hold. If left alone, it would eventually take over the entire property, creating a monoculture, as its dense foliage chokes out all other plant species.

Scott of Athens, Ga. was one of the SCA members at the site last week, and said he felt work such as Belmont's Glossy Buckthorn eradica-



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tion project were good ways for students to have a real hands on experience with conservation work.

"When you work on something like this, you're increasing the quality of the land and the drinking water. This is how to serve a wetland," he said.

The SCA students were camping in Belmont for ten days, working eight hours a day, five days a week to pull and pile the buckthorn for eventual burning. From there, they will travel to other

pulled, dug and chopped the extensive root systems from the ground wherever they spotted the woody plant.

"We all volunteered because Mr. Pleeter is really interested in things like this, so we thought it would be a good idea to help out," said Junior Skye Thomson.

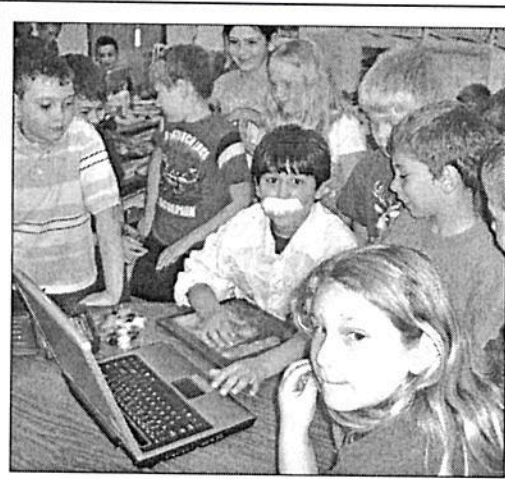
Pleeter said he had received a request for help on the project and felt it wasn't something he could pass up.

"It's a great environmental project for the community. Invasive species are just so nasty," he said.

Besides two crews from Belmont High School, middle school teacher Liz Tardugno also brought ten students who pulled up hundreds of small sprouts that were beginning to reappear in an area cleared last year.

"It was altogether an amazing effort," said Dale Squires of Belknap Landscaping and coordinator of the volunteer efforts once again this year.

Squires said Belknap Landscape Company continues to take an active role in the eradication of invasive plant species, the protection of water quality and in the environmental education of local youth.



COURTESY

Career Day at SCS

Fifth grade students at Sanborn Central School recently shared their family members and younger students at SCS as part of an integral unit between the school counselor and the teaching staff. Students completed interest inventories, and then chose a career that "fit" their interests and personalities. From there, they then researched their individual careers as an integral part of their project. Once students completed their research, they created PowerPoint presentations about their chosen careers, which were then shared with parents and all of the other SCS students during a Career Fair last week. It was an informative project and everyone in the building learned a lot about careers through these amazing presentations. In the photo above, a student offers up his PowerPoint presentation on what it takes to become an artist.

Power Point presentations with



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Thursday 7 am to 11 pm
Friday 7 am to 11 pm
Saturday 8 am to 11 pm
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COURTESY

All hail the King and Queen

Winnisquam Regional High School students enjoyed a special evening during their prom on May 12, with dining and dancing at Steele Hill Resort in Sanborn. At the formal affair, the students crowned Katie Bungay and Colton Piper King and Queen of this year's prom.

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