

St. George students show leadership



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On Sept. 23, teachers from St. George School took four Grade 7/8 classes on a field trip to the Seine River.

Ninety students spent the day cleaning up the riverbank south of Fermor Avenue as part of the Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up. Each piece of garbage was recorded on a data sheet. At the end of the day the mountain of garbage bags was weighed.

These enthusiastic students returned to the river on Sept. 29 and 30 to study it in greater detail using resources from a program called Adopt a River (AaR).

After gearing up in hip waders and rubber gloves, they entered the river in small groups. They collected water samples for testing. They timed a tennis ball floating downstream to measure flow rate. They collected invertebrates. Back on shore, they tested water quality (turbidity, pH, hardness, and dissolved oxygen). In the classroom, they identified and counted the invertebrates they caught.

Although an excellent resource, AaR is so comprehensive it can be a bit intimidating. In partnership with Save Our Seine, the LRSD devised a way to make it easier for all Grade 6 to 8 teachers in the school division

to incorporate the Seine directly into science programming.

The new approach is called Waterways/Sentiers d'eau. It encourages teachers to enter the program at different tiers depending on their comfort level. In Tier 1, teachers and students will "dip their toes" by starting with a few classroom activities. They will use a kit to test water samples collected around their school. In Tier 2, they "get their feet wet" by including an excursion such as a walk along the river to observe plants and wildlife. The teacher brings river water to the classroom for testing. In Tier 3, teachers "take the plunge" by delivering the full set of Adopt a River activities — including a class trip to the river to conduct an in-stream study.

The Seine River is ideal for teaching about the Diversity of Living Things (Grade 6), Interactions with Ecosystems (Grade 7), and Water Systems (Grade 8).

On Sept. 30, teachers from across the LRSD joined the St. George students at the river - to watch and to learn. They saw first-hand how the Seine River can bring the science curriculum to life with hands-on activities and real-life experiences.

For more information about Waterways/Sentiers d'eau, contact Harry Bell at LRSD by calling 204-257-7827. AaR is sponsored by Casera Credit Union.

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Photo supplied by Louis Riel School Division

Students from LRSD use the Seine River to learn about science.