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Michigan DNR Recognizes Jeffers High School Students for Trail Creation, Maintenance

Students from Jeffers High School in Houghton County were recognized today by the Department of Natural Resources for their hard work and volunteerism over the past five years in creating and maintaining an interpretive trail around Lake Perrault.

Through the school's ongoing partnership with the DNR, the students are building a trail around the lake, along with designing and constructing a variety of interpretive signs along the trail describing the plants and animals that may be observed, and conducting trash pick ups on a regular basis.

The Jeffers High School students have also been involved with maintaining and enhancing the 18-acre Robert T. Brown Nature Sanctuary, which is owned by the Michigan Nature Association. The students have constructed two boardwalks and two viewing platforms, enabling visitors to enjoy the unique wetland without trampling the unique plants, including several species of orchids and carnivorous plants. The school's projects were primarily funded through a grant from the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative.

"The service that the Jeffers High School students continue to provide is invaluable to the DNR," said DNR Western Upper Peninsula Recreation Specialist Ron Yesney. "Not only do the students have the unique opportunity to learn skills by actually putting them to use in a very real way, they also are serving the community by creating and maintaining these important recreational areas."

Through their work on these outdoor recreation projects, the students are exposed to everything from trail building and mapping, to history and cultural studies – hitting on almost every subject taught in the traditional school setting, but in a unique, outdoor classroom. Beyond the textbook educational experience, the students are learning how to meet the needs of the local community, becoming valued citizens and taking ownership in protecting the place where they live in the Lake Superior watershed.

"The teachers and students consider Lake Perrault and the Brown Nature Sanctuary as their outdoor classroom, offering abundant opportunities to learn about water quality, forest and wetland management, invasive species control, and so much more," said Joan Chadde, education program coordinator for the Western U.P. Center for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education.

According to Chadde, the Jeffers High School students have helped conduct Family Forest Nights with elementary school students in the district, and hosted several community open house events, allowing local residents to gain awareness of the diverse recreational opportunities available.

"The Michigan DNR wants to extend a sincere thank you to the students and teachers at Jeffers High School for their continued work in making Lake Perrault a true recreational destination for everyone," added Yesney.

To learn more about Jeffers High School visit: <http://www.adams.k12.mi.us/> and <http://lakesuperiorstewardship.org/project-10.php>. For more information about volunteer opportunities with the DNR, go online to www.michigan.gov/dnrvolunteer.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. For more information, go to www.michigan.gov/dnr.

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Photo Caption:

Students from Jeffers High School have designed, built, and are maintaining a trail around Lake Perrault in Houghton County. They have also developed and constructed interpretive signs that have been placed along the trail, providing an invaluable service to the local community and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

