

Friends of Misery Bay group receive financial boost

Tom Sasvari
The Recorder

MISERY BAY - The Friends of Misery Bay (FOMB) has received a financial boost for its universal access trail at the Park, through the Mountain Equipment Co-operative's (MEC) Access and Activity Fund.

"The Friends of Misery Bay have been successful in their application to MEC and will receive \$5,000 towards the construction of the easy access gazebo at the bay, and the ramped boardwalk across the wet area just before the bay," said Gaynor Orford, chair of the FOMB, last week.

Ms. Orford pointed out the company's access and activity fund supports initiatives and infrastructure projects that inspire and enable people to be active outdoors through product donation and funding.

A quote from the MEC webpage states: "we are inspired by adventure. Adventure is about being active, pushing boundaries, reaching for our goals and dreams. It's about finding places that fuel our passions and sustain the planet, about taking a stand on places that matter. From urban neighbourhoods to the awe-inspiring beauty of Canada's wild spaces, adventures lead us around the block, off the beaten path, or all the way off the map. MEC helps keep space for adventure by conserving ecologically and recreationally important places and by inspiring and enabling Canadians to be active outside."

"When I read this information I knew that their mandate and our trail project were a great match," said Ms. Orford.

Work on the project is well underway, said Ms. Orford. Jay Swain and John Diebolt, with the assistance of several FOMB volunteers, have been working hard to get these

ready for visitors to use by July. The rest of the trail modifications will be completed this fall, after our busy time, she said.

“This is an awesome organization (Mountain Equipment Co-operative),” stated Mr. Diebolt. “My wife Rose and I have been members of their group for 40 years.”

As for the trail access project, Mr. Diebolt explained, “there are three components to this project. One is to upgrade an existing trail, making sure the slope and materials being used are smooth enough to make it accessible for wheelchair use. The gazebo building is at the end of the handicapped access trail. The trail starts at the visitors centre and uses the existing road to the trail system, about 1.1 kilometres. As well, a boardwalk is going to be put up across a sensitive wet area.

“The gazebo is on the edge of the tree line, so visitors will be able to look across the Great Lakes wetlands to see Blanding’s turtles, sand dunes and other notable features of Misery Bay,” said Mr. Diebolt.

“The gazebo is just about complete,” said Mr. Diebolt,

“then we will do the work on the boardwalk.”

Mr. Diebolt explained, “this access trail is going to provide access to everyone and let them see things in the park they normally wouldn’t be able to.”

It was pointed out by Mr. Diebolt that Ontario Parks have committed \$2,500 to the access trail work and several donations have been made by FOMB members as well.



In photo (r to l) are Ryan Gardner, park superintendent for Misery Bay, and FOMB volunteers Ted Kilpatrick, Jay Swain (foreman for the project), John Diebolt, and Peter Barnett.