

arth Day at Wildcat

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As a beautiful sunny day on April 24, as Acadian First Nations Wildcat Community celebrated Earth Day, the celebrations started with a performance of the Feast Song, followed by introduction and thank-you from Band member Todd Labrador.

Next up, the Mersey Tobetic Research Institute gave a talk on Wild Atlantic Monarch and Monarch Butterflies, both of which are facing challenges in Queens Co. across the Maritimes. Acid rain is one of the main contributors, and a pilot project in its early stages to drop lime along a river to reduce the acid levels.

One of the big challenges for the Monarch Butterfly is lack of food and habitat in Nova Scotia. Milkweed used to be common across the province, but is increasingly harder to find.

There was also time for a small nature walk on a trail set up behind the centre. The trail led to a small island on the Wildcat River, which the community is working to restore into a campground.

Acadia First Nations Chief Deborah Robinson was there as well, and remarked at how beautiful the area was.

"This is probably the closest to heaven I'll get today," she said.

Chief Robinson added she was proud to see everyone come together as friends and neighbors.

The last event of the day was a black ash tree planting, in memory of their ancestors. Black ash was chosen because it was traditionally used for basket weaving. The tree is slow growing however, and the number of trees has dwindled.

Four trees were planted on each corner of the property, along with a small garden. As trees were being planted, an Eagle was spotted circling overhead. Labrador remarked that was always a good sign.

Close to the trees small gardens were planted, as well as a butterfly garden planted behind the community hall.

The community hall also had on display a tank of 150, which have reached the fry stage. North Queens Rural High also has a tank, and on May 13 the community and school will release their fish into the river system.

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Members of the Acadian First Nations sing the Honour Song on Earth Day. The Wildcat Community celebrated Earth Day on April 24. From left are Corbin Hartt, MacKenzie Jermey, James Jermey and Todd Labrador.

Nick Moase Photos

