

Snow storms and freezing rain warnings did not prevent a dedicated group to gather at the Community Hall in Elmvale to celebrate World Water Day on March 22, 2014. The event began with a moving First Nations Water Ceremony led by Elder Gloria King (Beausoleil First Nation) and assisted by her daughter, two granddaughters and Beth Elson. Sharing a smudge smelling of cedar and sweetgrass, we all shared some water from the artesian flow which we gathered to celebrate. We were each given a fresh strawberry which itself is mainly water; the heart shape of this indigenous fruit reminds of us of our own hearts and our connection to the water around us.



After a break for refreshments, the crowd gathered round to hear Dr. William Shotyk of the Elmvale Foundation announce the sponsors of the Elmvale Water Kiosk and to thank them for their generous support. Ainley and Associates, Barrie Welding and Machinery, Canadian Well Drilling, Elmvale and District Lions Club, Elmvale Home Building Centre, Georgian Paving, Midhurst Roof, and Sarjeant Co. all contributed to the creation of the new Elmvale Water Kiosk. Dr. Shotyk also announced the members of the team who have volunteered their time to now create an educational display for the Kiosk, and introduced those who were present.





Each of the sponsors of the Elmvale Water Kiosk received a Franz Johnston print, either “The Sparkling Wye” or “The Beckoning Stream”. Franz Johnston was a founding member of the Group of Seven but left to establish an art school in Wyebridge. These prints were professionally reproduced and framed by John A. Libby Gallery in Toronto exclusively for our sponsors. Here Brian Smith of Barrie Welding and Machinery is seen receiving “The Sparkling Wye”.

Dr. Shotyk also gave a brief report of the 2013 Elmvale Water Festival as well as some updates on the latest activities of the Elmvale Foundation. Included in this news was the public announcement of the generous donation from the Macquarie Group via Mr. Gary Rasiuk, one of the founding members of the Board of Directors of the Elmvale Foundation. Dr. Shotyk also presented the latest scientific findings from the Elmvale Groundwater Observatory. The Elmvale Groundwater Observatory now includes a third research well, this one reaching the aquifer at 60 m and constructed entirely of surgical stainless steel. Thanks to the generous donation of Canadian Well Drilling, a complete sediment profile was also recovered at the site. The sediment core has since been used for a detailed reconstruction of the Quaternary geology of the area (by Riley Mulligan, as part of his M.Sc. at McMaster University), and this information will become part of the display at the new Kiosk.

In his presentation, Dr. Shotyk reminded the audience of the vital importance of soil in filtering rainwater and helping to maintain the quality of the groundwater, and of the importance of native trees, shrubs, and other vegetation of the riparian zone in preventing soil erosion and maintaining the quality of surface waters. Roads, sidewalks, and parking lots obviously do not provide this function, so the message was clear: preservation of our water resources requires the preservation of our farmlands and forests, wetlands and riparian areas.



Franz Johnston, The Sparkling Wye



Franz Johnston, The Beckoning Stream