

## For a group of students on the Northern Peninsula, it's more than a summer job

You might have seen them around your community and wondered what these green and white clad youths were up to.

Many people dismiss them as glorified "garbage collectors," but Green Teams on the Northern Peninsula are much more than that.

On a day when most people are hiding inside, four figures clad in rain gear are hard at work behind the John M. Gray Centre in St. Anthony. They're members of the Grenfell Historical Society Green Team and they're putting the finishing touches on a landscaping project.

Gina Elliott, Susan Ricks, Ryan Manuel and Dean Pilgrim are beautifying the property and working on the trails behind the hospital complex. They are one of 26 Green Teams across the province and four on the Northern Peninsula. Each team works on a different project aimed at protecting and preserving cultural heritage or the environment.

"It started off as just a summer job," says Ms. Elliott, the Grenfell team leader, "but we learned about many issues that I should have been aware of."

She produces a binder of statistics.

"There are approximately 700 landfills in Canada. Some 240 of them are in Newfoundland," she points out. "I didn't know that before I started this job."

Green Team leaders attended a week-long leadership camp, where they learned about environmental issues. Making other people aware of these issues is another part of their job.

Each team organizes Environmental Awareness Days,

where they give presentations and lead kids in activities.

"There are important issues that need to be addressed,"

Ms. Elliott says, "And in small communities, this is the best way to get it done."

This year marks the 10th anniversary for the Green Teams. The Newfoundland and Labrador Conservation Corps has employed some 1,200 youths since it began organizing the teams. The non-profit organization aims to provide meaningful

work for youth between the ages of 16 and 30.

The four teams on the peninsula are under the direction of regional supervisor, Tanya Simms. She's been a member of the conservation corps for the past three years and says the work of the teams is important.

"Raising awareness is important, especially in an area where we depend so much on the environment," she says.

The importance of the Green Team work is lost on some people, according to Ms. Simms.

"There is a misconception that the Green Teams go around and pick up garbage," she explains. "Some parents don't want their kids to go to the Environmental Awareness Days because they think we'll have them cleaning up trash."

Changing that type of attitude is part of what the Green Teams aim to do. Members of the L'Anse aux Meadows Green Team say this aspect is rewarding.

"After the Environmental Awareness Days, you just know that the kids go home and say, 'Mom, you should recycle that,'" team member Amanda Patey says.

Ms. Patey, along with Angel Hedderson, Damien Bartlett and team leader Christa Tucker are working on a project to help restore the eider duck population.

"The eider duck population was dropping," explains Ms. Tucker. "We build shelters for them to nest under, so other birds don't eat their eggs."

The shelters are built with beach rocks and plywood slabs and provide a place for the ducks to build their nests.

The team also identifies plants in the area.

Stephanie Hancock, Adam Larkin, Lyndon Patey and Tonia Pilgrim are also helping with eider duck restoration. The St. Anthony-based Ducks Unlimited team takes a boat out to the islands near Main Brook whenever the weather co-operates.

All the members agree that this is their favourite part of the job.

"It's great to work outside. We've seen caribou and rescued baby birds," says Ms. Hancock. "We've learned how to recognize the seabirds and ducks."

When the weather is too rough for them to go out in the boat, the team builds cavity nest boxes for goldeneyes or wood ducks.

"People don't realize that we're doing something meaningful," she says.

The work that's being done by the four members of the Green Team at Flowers Cove is part of the long-term development plans to preserve rare plants and enhance knowledge of geological formations.

Team leader Philip Genge of Anchor Point says they've learned much about the unique environment in which they live.

"We've been gathering a lot of information and material in this area, and that should give next year's group a good start in their work," he states. "We're working on an information brochure before we finish for the season."

Joining Mr. Genge are Randy Coles, Lyndon Coles and Dena White, all of Sandy Cove. They're working with the Limestone Barrens Habitat Stewardship Program in conjunction with the Braya Recovery Team at Memorial University.

One of the team's goals was the design of an interpretive tour. It consists of a tour of Lawless' Point to see thrombolites, limestone mounds that were developed over time through biological activity. The second stop are the limestone barrens near Flowers Cove, which once formed an ancient floor of a tropical sea. The last stop on the tour is a visit to nearby Lower Cove to see Fernald's Braya and Long's Braya, small plants that grow on the limestone barrens.

Lyndon Coles points out that their work is helping to educate local people and visitors about the significance of the limestone barrens and plants which are considered endangered.

"Some of the local people have taken the tour because they want to know more about what's here," he states.

Ms. White points out that her stint with the Green Team has been more than a job.

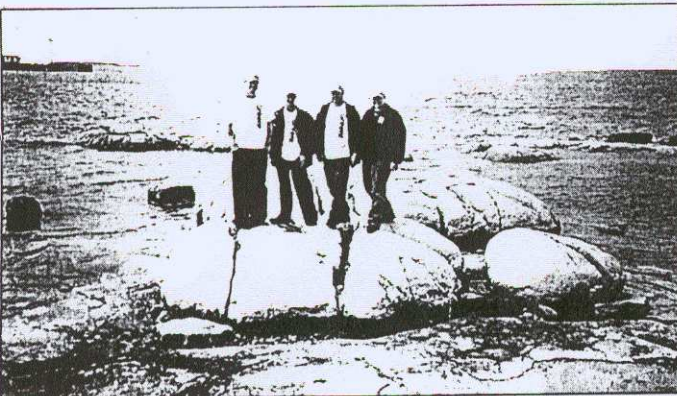
"I've liked this work because we're doing something which will benefit the area in the long-term," she explains.



Dean Pilgrim shovels wood chips that will be used as mulch on a landscaping project at the John M. Gray Centre at St. Anthony.



Nesting boxes constructed by members of the St. Anthony Green Team — Stephanie Hancock, Lyndon Patey, Tonia Pilgrim and Adam Larkin — will be put placed in trees for golden eyes or wood ducks.



Members of the Flowers cove Green Team — Philip Genge, Randy Coles, Lyndon Coles and Dena White — sand on a thrombolite at Lawless' Point.



The rain doesn't keep Grenfell Historical Society Green Team members Susan Ricks (left), Gina Elliott, Dean Pilgrim and Ryan Manuel from completing their landscaping work.

By Natelle Fitzgerald