



A NEWSLETTER FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS
 April 2008

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Can Outdoor Lighting Harm the Environment?

Submitted by Robert Dick, 613-283-7815

My grandfather purchased our family property on the Rideau Lake in the 1920s. In the 1960s, the stars reflected off the water as we fell asleep. By the 1980s, this had all changed. The lake was evolving into a virtual urban subdivision with fast boats, outdoor sound systems and lighting systems that were left on after the occupants had gone to bed. The stars were gone. But we can bring them back.

The waterway is an important ecosystem that supports wildlife in the water and adjacent lands. There are setback requirements for buildings to protect this wildlife. But few people consider the impact of outdoor lighting on the nighttime environment.

The dark of night is just as important to wildlife as the daytime. Our ubiquitous outdoor light damages the river and lake environments in two ways.

From the human point of view, bright lights along the shoreline make it difficult to navigate the channel. Glare from unshielded lighting prevents us from seeing markers and channel hazards.



The second impact is on the aquatic and land plants, and fish. Fish are attracted to the light from their natural feeding depths. Artificial lighting also causes fish and plants to perceive a longer day and this confuses the cues to seasonal change. Plants flower too late (and some too early) to be properly pollinated.

But what about security lights? Although outdoor lighting makes some people feel safe – the light actually puts their property on display for thieves and vandals. The vandals don't even need a conspicuous flashlight to see what they are doing – the homeowner provides the light for them. Besides, most people leave on their outdoors lights when they go to bed. There is no one to see what is going on. Security must be monitored to be effective.

What can we do to help protect the environment, improve security and safety?

1. Keep lights back from the shoreline and shield them so their light does not shine onto or across the water.
2. Replace or shield all outdoor lighting fixtures so they don't shine over your neighbour's property and into their bedroom windows. Since you can see much better without glare, reduce the bulb wattage.
3. Turn off outdoor lights when you are indoors.
4. Use motion detector switches to trigger lights. They will signal someone's presents.

All this will help save electricity and it will help bring back the stars.

Source Protection Regions Draft Terms of Reference – Comments Wanted!

Municipalities and the public are invited to review and comment on the draft Terms of Reference for the Mississippi Valley Source Protection Area and the Rideau Valley Source Protection Area. There are several ways you can do this:

- Online – www.mrsourcewater.ca/tor/index.html, download the documents above and submit your comments
- Hard Copies – hard copies are available at our offices (8:30 am – 4:00 pm) or by calling 613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 ext. 1147
- Mississippi Valley Conservation – 4175 Highway 511, Lanark
- Rideau Valley Conservation Authority – 3889 Rideau Valley Drive, Manotick
- Public Meetings – attend one of 10 public meetings in early June, times are from 4:00 to 8:00 pm with a formal presentation at 6:30 pm
 - ▶ Almonte – Old Town Hall, 14 Bridge St., Almonte – June 3
 - ▶ Perth Town Hall – 80 Gore St. E, Perth – June 4
 - ▶ Carp Fairgrounds – 3790 Carp Road, Carp – June 9
 - ▶ Smiths Falls Legion – 7 Main St. E, Smiths Falls – June 10
 - ▶ Michele Heights Community Centre – 2955 Michele Drive, Ottawa (urban) – June 11
 - ▶ Merrickville Community Centre – 106 Read St., Merrickville – June 12
 - ▶ Richmond Fairgrounds – Dining Hall, 6107 Perth St., Richmond – June 16
 - ▶ Carleton Place Town Hall – 175 Bridge St., Carleton Place – June 17
 - ▶ North Grenville Municipal Centre – County Rd 44, Kemptville – June 18
 - ▶ Westport Senior's Hall – 30 Bedford St., Westport – June 19

Our open houses will also highlight:

- Where your drinking water comes from
- What the new *Clean Water Act* is and what it means to you
- How to access funding for stewardship projects

Submit your comments to:

Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee
c/o Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, Communications Specialist
3889 Rideau Valley Drive, PO Box 599, Manotick, Ontario, K4M 1A5
Telephone: 613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 ext. 1147
Fax: 613-692-0831
E-mail: sommer.robertson@mrsourcewater.ca

RVCA Meeting Dates,
Board of Directors and
Advisory Board Agendas,
Minutes (after approval),
Watershed Briefs and
Media Releases are
available on our website
at www.rvca.ca.

Next Meeting
Board of Directors
Thursday, May 22, 2008
Thursday, June 26, 2008

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