



Around the Rideau

Environmental Information For Municipalities In The Rideau Valley

January | February 2007

Special Feature — Focus on Flood Forecasting and Warning

It's that time again...time to prepare for spring flood. One of the main reasons behind the formation of Conservation Authorities back in 1946 was to protect valley residents from flooding and solve flooding problems. Sixty-one years later, the RVCA and 35 other Conservation Authorities across Ontario continue to predict flows and water levels, operate flood control structures and distribute flood warnings.

Like many of the watercourses in Ontario, the Rideau has its share of flood susceptible developments that were settled prior to more current planning standards. There is

also the reality of Mother Nature — she is unpredictable and anything can happen. The key is to monitor and forecast flood conditions and provide local agencies and the public with advance notice,

information and advice so that they can respond to potential flooding and flood emergencies.

Flood forecasting is highly dependent on reliable and timely data. The RVCA has several tools to forecast spring flooding: stream gauges, snowpack measurements, weather forecasts and computer modeling.

The RVCA uses 15 stream gauges that are continuously recording water levels within the Rideau Watershed. RVCA technicians also head out twice a month to take snowpack surveys. Measuring snowpack (snow cover) helps the RVCA understand how much precipitation has fallen and what the impacts of snow melt will have on runoff and water levels. Five different locations are monitored by the RVCA in the lower watershed east of Smiths Falls. Another six sites in the upper watershed are monitored by Rideau Canal, Parks Canada staff.

All this information, when combined with weather forecasts and computer modeling, allows RVCA staff to estimate flows and predict potential floods.

If a flood is likely to happen, the RVCA warns local municipalities and other government agencies that emergency response plans should be implemented. The RVCA will also notify the public through the media allowing individuals to take appropriate precautions.

The RVCA is currently reviewing its warning system equipment and plans in preparation for the 2007 flood season. Now is also the time that municipal flood emergency response plans are reviewed to make sure all employees, equipment and communications are in place just in case. Property owners should also assess their plans for minimizing flood-related property damages. Should a flood event occur, the first response is up to the individual homeowners. If the flood is beyond the capability of the homeowner to combat, municipal Emergency Response Plans kick-in to assist those in need.

You can view regular updates of streamflow conditions at the RVCA website at www.rideauvalley.on.ca.

Flood forecasting is just part of the preventative measures that Conservation Authorities take to protect the general public from flooding. The RVCA also regulates development and promotes proper land use in our local flood plains. The RVCA also works in cooperation with valley municipalities, Parks Canada and the Ministry of Natural Resources to manage the water levels throughout the system at dams and other water control structures.

Worried About Spring Flooding?

Call DIANE at 613-692-3571 ext. 1126 to have your name added to our e-mail list and have flood messages sent direct to your home!
diane.downey@rideauvalley.on.ca

Want to learn more? Contact PATRICK at ext. 1110 or patrick.larson@rideauvalley.on.ca

Floods are natural phenomena and cannot totally be abolished no matter what remedial action is taken in the watershed. As long as people continue to live in the flood plains, there will be flood victims.

*Commissioner, His Honour
Judge W.W. Leach
Report on the Royal
Commission Inquiry into the
Grand River Flood 1974*



Flooding on the Rideau River



Working Near Water? You may need a permit!

If you're planning any work around a lake, river, stream or wetland, be sure to call the LandOwner Resource Centre for a quick and efficient review of your plans and guidance on the permits or applications you may need. You can also visit www.rideauvalley.on.ca under "planning, regulations and permits" to see what local rules and regulations may apply to your project. Be sure! Find out first! The LRC also has environmentally-friendly information available on fish habitat, sediment control, shoreline naturalization and more. Call JAMIE at ext. 1132 or jamie.batchelor@rideauvalley.on.ca.

2007 Board of Directors

The RVCA has a new Board of Directors with the election of Chair Alan Arbuckle from the City of Ottawa and Vice-Chair Ken Graham representing the Town of Smiths Falls. Mr. Arbuckle, a retired Communications Manager, has four years of experience on the Board of Directors since being appointed by the City in 2003. Mr. Graham, a recently-retired senior investigator for the Ministry of the Environment, was appointed by Smiths Falls in 2004 and joined the Board of Directors in 2005.

Other members of the Board include five rural members (Dwight Bennett from North Grenville, former Chair Dave Crowley from the Town of Perth, Councillor Michael McEwen from Drummond/North Elmsley, Past-Chair John H. Miller from Tay Valley Township, and Cathy Willoughby of Merrickville-Wolford) and five members from the City of Ottawa (David Biggs, Magda Kubasiewicz, and Councillors Glenn Brooks, Steve Desroches and Maria McRae). RVCA believes that the balance between rural directors (elected from appointed municipal representatives in the rural areas) and urban directors (appointed directly by the City of Ottawa) is an important contributing factor to the success of the Board in dealing with matters on a watershed basis. For more, contact DELL at ext. 1114 or dell.hallett@rideauvalley.on.ca

Septic Courses

Watch for a full schedule of septic courses in 2007. The Ontario Rural Wastewater Centre, in cooperation with the Ottawa Septic System Office, is offering practical professional courses on septic systems at the RVCA's Baxter Conservation Area south of Kars. Courses will range from special training for real estate professionals to certification courses to become licensed sewage system installers to advanced design for experienced installers and designers. Watch for upcoming courses at www.rideauvalley.on.ca under "Events Calendar." Pre-register for a tour of the ORWC Demonstration Centre on Friday March 9 and Friday March 23 from 9 to 11 a.m, contact ROZ at the Ottawa Septic System Office – 613.692.0160 x 1131 or rosalind.kee@rideauvalley.on.ca for more details.

Pike Lake News!

It was recently chosen as the second lake (after Otty) to undergo Lake Management Planning on the Tay. More next issue. SHEANNA at ext. 1178 or sheanna.tinlin@rideauvalley.on.ca

Watershed Checkup 2006

Watch the website for the first *Annual Rideau Valley Watershed Checkup 2006* on February 23. Analysis and reporting on four key watershed characteristics.

Need a Tax Receipt?

As we reluctantly slide into tax season, it reminds us of the good opportunity to make a charitable contribution to a clean and healthy environment right here at home in the watershed of the Rideau River. The Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation (RVCF) has been accepting gifts for environmental work for over 30 years. We use donations for tree planting, shoreline improvements, water quality monitoring, outdoor education for kids, conservation area improvements and homeowner information programs.

To make a donation or to receive more information on our charitable programs, please call CHARLES at ext 1116 or charles.billington@rideauvalley.on.ca.

On-Site Wastewater Conference

The 8th Annual Ontario On-Site Wastewater Conference and Exhibition will be held March 26 to 27 at the Deerhurst Resort and Conference Centre in Huntsville Ontario. This year's theme is "The New Ontario Objective Based Building Code — New Challenges and Opportunities." Visit www.oowa.org for more details.

Answer the Call of the Wild & Win!

The whole family can enjoy the benefits of outdoor activities all year long with the 2007 RVCA Conservation Area Pass. Buy your conservation areas pass before May 31 and you could win a \$120 gift certificate to the Baldachin Inn. This \$40 pass gives you unlimited access to nature hikes, boat launches, picnic spots, forest trails, fishing spots and beaches! Seven developed Conservation Areas in the valley including Baxter, Foley Mountain, Perth Wildlife Reserve, W.A. Taylor and Rideau Ferry Yacht Club are yours to enjoy.

Call JAN at ext 1100 or drop by the Manotick office (Visa and MC accepted) to buy your pass today. Upper watershed residents can buy their passes at the Foley Mountain Interpretive Centre or Murphy's Barber Shop in Westport.



Around the Rideau

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
Office de protection de la nature de la
vallée de la rivière Rideau

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 692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 www.rideauvalley.on.ca

Around the Rideau circulation has risen to 3,200 Heads of Council, Councillors, senior municipal and provincial staff, interested persons and the media throughout the 18 municipalities in the Rideau Valley watershed courtesy of our friends at:



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