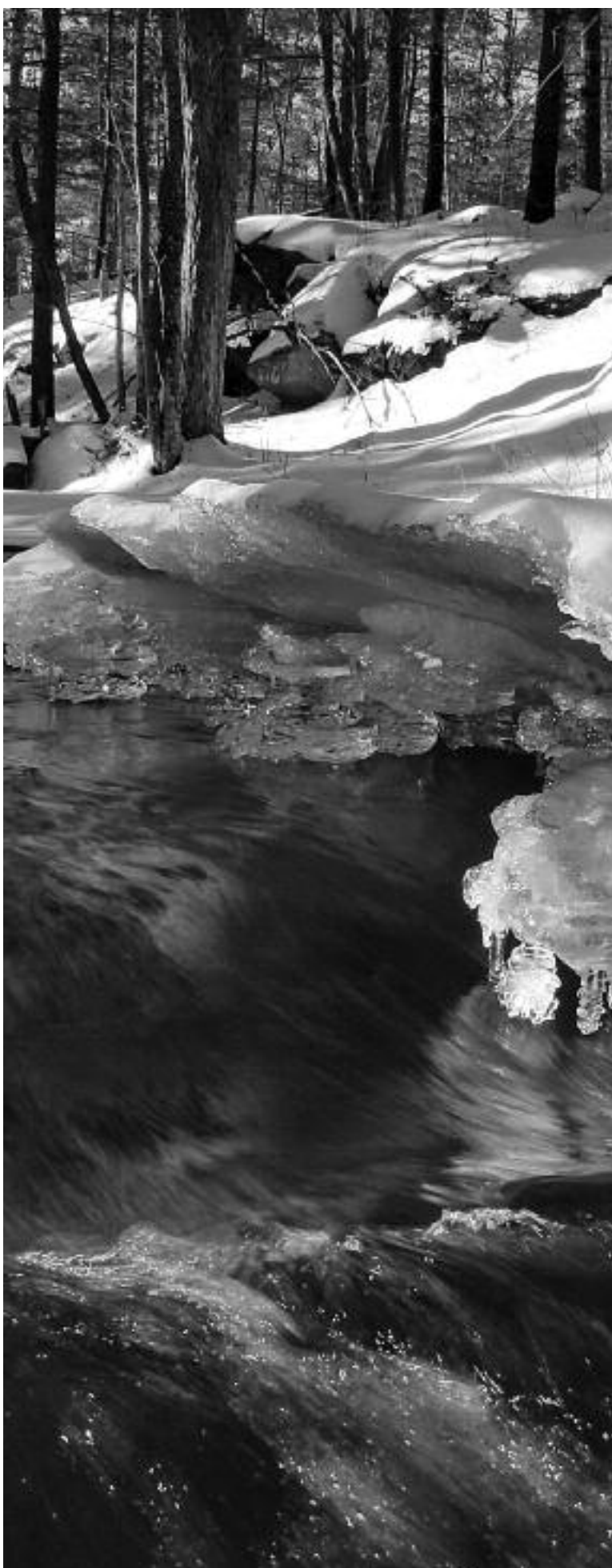




Around the Rideau

Environmental Information For Municipalities In The Rideau Valley

March | April 2009



Black Creek — Photo: Simon Lunn

Normal High Water Period is Now

The “normal” period of high water and sometimes flooding on the Rideau and its tributaries is March and April. This is usually due to rising temperatures, snowmelt and precipitation. Ice jams at constricted places on the river such as bridge crossings can also cause flooding. Everyone is reminded to be well aware of the dangers of rising water for personal and property safety.

- to see if your house is in the flood plain, call the LandOwner Resource Centre at 613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 (ext 1128 for Kellie or ext 1132 for Megan) and ask for an appointment to view the flood plain maps
- to receive flood messages directly at your own computer, write Diane Downey at diane.downey@rvca.ca and get on the list
- check the RVCA website at www.rvca.ca for regular updates of Watershed Conditions.

Keeping Kids Safe

Outdoor Education staff at RVCA are offering a free, in-school safety program all about the dangers of Spring Water and Ice in our watershed. The program is available daily from March 9 — 13 and again from March 23 — April 3. Bookings are now being accepted from teachers of grades 4, 5 and 6 in schools in the Rideau Valley watershed on a first come-first served basis. Games, demonstrations and talk about Spring Water Awareness for kids. Call or write Rebecca Whitman at Foley Mountain Conservation Area (613-273-3255; rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca) or Peter Goddard at Baxter Conservation Area (613-489-3592; peter.goddard@rvca.ca). Special thanks to the community-minded folks at Ontario Power Generation for their major support!

In-Water Work Restrictions

All superintendents and roads supervisors should be aware of the annual timing restrictions for in-water and shoreline work on rivers, lakes and streams is now until June 30 for most Rideau Valley waters. Construction activity in or near the water is restricted by law to give an appropriate time and stress-free environment for fish to spawn and raise their young in our local area. Fishing and associated recreational activities is a multi-billion dollar industry in Ontario. Different timing restrictions apply in some mixed and cold water fish communities. Avoid the penalties and the possible loss of fish by calling the RVCA's LandOwner Resource Centre for precise information before starting work at 613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 ext 1128 or ext 1132.

Putting the “We” in Wetlands

RVCA is in the final stages of assessing the role of wetlands in reducing floods in the Rideau watershed. With about 15% of the valley in wetlands, the question is important for residents and municipalities. Preliminary results confirm watershed theory and show that wetlands do retain water causing lower flood levels downstream in the valley. The value of wetlands in groundwater recharge and water quality protection are already well established. Details to follow. More from Ferdous Ahmed at ferdous.ahmed@rvca.ca.



SWP Assessment Report

The Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee is guiding production of the next major phase of municipal drinking water protection: the Assessment Report. This key document has four main parts:

- general watershed characteristics (an encyclopedia of watershed facts)
- water budget information (how much water, where and when)
- description of vulnerable drinking water areas
- identification of drinking water issues and threats.

The Assessment Report due in Spring 2010 will be a clear, practical, science-based snapshot of the municipal drinking water situation in the Mississippi and Rideau valleys. Watch for public consultation sessions throughout 2009. More from Sommer at sommer.robertson@mrsourcewater.ca or ext 1147.

OGWA

OGWA, the Ottawa-Gatineau Watershed Atlas, is a new watershed information sharing website serving the Gatineau, Mississippi, Ottawa, Rideau and South Nation valleys. RVCA was one of the many partners involved in this Pollution Probe project. The goal is to provide quick and easy access to information that was previously password-protected, scattered among several sources or difficult to understand. You can take a look at www.ogwa-hydrog.ca or call Sasha Kebo at PP for information 613-237-4815.

City Stream Watch 2008

The very popular City Stream Watch has published its 2008 Annual Report cataloguing the stream assessments made on Black Rapids Creek, Cardinal Creek, Mud Creek (Manotick) and Sawmill Creek. A partnership of six community groups steer this very cost-effective volunteer program. Impressive numbers: 148 trained citizen scientists; 1,100 volunteer hours of stream work; 32 km of stream monitored; fish sampling at 30 sites around the City of Ottawa. See the Report by the end of March at www.rvca.ca. Watch for new volunteer training times in mid-May. In the meantime, talk to Julia at julia.sutton@rvca.ca.



Volunteers working along Sawmill Creek as part of the City Stream Watch Program.

Lake Volunteers Needed

As we gear up for the 2009 Watershed Watch program for monitoring water quality in the 45 lakes in the Rideau Valley, we are looking for a little assistance from lake residents. Would you or someone you know be willing to offer to drive our summer staff around your lake this summer for a couple of hours of water quality sampling using your boat, gas and motor? If so, please contact your lake association and leave your name or give a quick email or phone message to Patrick Larson at 613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 ext 1110 or patrick.larson@rvca.ca. Much appreciated!

Muskrats & Drains

Muskrats are known to cause damage to streambanks, drainage systems and water quality by digging burrows in the soft banks of farm and municipal drains. Recent research shows that muskrats are three times as abundant in drains with grassed shorelines than in drains with trees/shrubs along the banks. The difference is explained by easier access to food, easier digging of burrows and fewer predators (mainly mink) in the grassed drain situations. Conclusion: a treed buffer reduces the number of muskrats in shallow water drains. More from Charles at ext 1116 or charles.billington@rvca.ca.

Children's Water Festival

The famous Children's Water Festival at the Baxter Conservation Area has moved to September. Watch for announcements about this exciting no-cost program for all grade four classes in the watershed in the next issue. Or talk with Peter at peter.goddard@rvca.ca and get your class booked in early.

Envirocamp on Cow Island

The Big Rideau Lake Association and RVCA are teaming up to offer a one week environmentally-themed day camp on Cow Island in the Big Rideau Lake. The EnviroCamp runs daily from July 20-24. For more information or to register, contact Rebecca Whitman at 613-273-3255 or rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca.



Around the Rideau

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

Box 599, 3889 Rideau Valley Drive, Manotick, ON K4M 1A5
 692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 www.rvca.ca

Around the Rideau circulation has risen to 3,800 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:



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