



Around the Rideau

Environmental Information For Municipalities In The Rideau Valley

March | April 2010

Below Average Flood Expected

The long range outlook is for below average spring flow conditions in the watershed based on current snow levels, weather forecasts of continuing warm days and expected normal rain/snow over the next few weeks. The snowpack is being actively depleted by the warm days with the potential for there to be little snow to contribute to the eventual spring freshet expected in late March or early April. Rain and temperature fluctuations could change the forecast in the future. Details from Patrick at ext 1110 or patrick.larson@rvca.ca.

2010 Budget and Municipal Levy

At the Board meeting on February 25, RVCA approved the 2010 budget in the amount of \$8,754,600 with a municipal levy portion of \$4,190,000 (47.9%). General Manager Dell Hallett reported to the Board that, as a result of municipal concerns, the levy increase has been reduced from the proposed 4.5% to 2.7% by using reserve funds. Vice-Chair Ken Graham of Smiths Falls said "... it is the right thing to do. We are listening to and appreciate input from our member municipalities." Details on the 2010 Budget and levy apportionment from Dell at dell.hallett@rvca.ca or ext 1114.

Middle Rideau Subwatershed

The *Middle Rideau Subwatershed Report 2009* gives quick and easy information on the current Forest Cover, Wetlands, Riparian Cover and Water Quality within Rosedale, Rideau, Irish, Barbers and the six other creek and stream valleys in the area between Smiths Falls and Merrickville. This is the first of a series of yearly reports on the subwatersheds of the Rideau Valley. Look for next year's edition, the *Jock River Subwatershed Report* in early 2011. You can find the Middle Rideau on the website at www.rvca.ca under What's New or contact Kellie (kellie.adams@rvca.ca or ext 1128) for a hard copy.

Urban Legend

The legendary City Stream Watch program is preparing for its eighth straight year of operation. Very popular (237 volunteer "citizen scientists" in 2009), very important (provides environmental information on some of our most neglected city streams) and very community-based (a collaborative of six groups), the program revisits three of the streams monitored first back in 2005 (Greens Creek, Graham Creek and Stevens Creek) and takes a first look at McEwan's Creek in the eastern part of Ottawa. Fish sampling, stream inventories, shoreline plantings and garbage cleanups are all on tap for this summer. This is hands-on, front-line environmental action. If you're interested in making a local difference, please call Julia at ext 1180 or julia.sutton@rvca.ca.

Sister Island

Sister Island #2 in Upper Rideau Lake was recently gifted to the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation by the generous and community-spirited Dr Eva Furesz of Ottawa. It is her wish that the island be kept in its natural state in perpetuity for enjoyment, education and the protection of greenspace along our increasingly-crowded river and lake shores. The one-acre island has an interesting marsh community and is habitat for species at risk, notably the Black Rat Snake. More from Kristy at ext 1178 or kristy.giles@rvca.ca.

Rideau Lakes Watershed Plan

The much-anticipated plan for the long-term maintenance and protection of the environmental health of the Rideau Lakes area is now available. Municipalities and partners are in the process of reviewing it and commenting on the seven simple priority recommendations. Implementation of the seven actions over the next five years will go a long way to counter the three main concerns identified:

1. lack of a single coherent strategy that puts the health of the lake system first
2. robust and consistent shoreline protection against inappropriate development
3. the need for increased consistent water quality monitoring across the area.

See the website for details (www.rvca.ca) or talk with Bruce at bruce.reid@rvca.ca or ext 1103.

Down the Drains

Drain classification allows drains to be maintained with very little redtape. Those with less sensitive fish habitat are approved for maintenance work very quickly. RVCA has surveyed and classified over 400 municipal drains throughout the watershed using the approved provincial procedures. RVCA, working with municipal Drainage Superintendents, produces updated drainage classification maps when needed. The 2010 edition has recently been sent to all municipalities with municipal drains. This ongoing work is supervised by Jennifer Lamoureux at ext 1108 or jennifer.lamoureux@rvca.ca.

Septic Safety

Spring time is a good time to take the six steps to septic security:

1. pump your tank every three years (and keep records to help you remember)
2. don't overload the system (run dishwashers only when full, spread washing over two days, compost kitchen wastes)
3. don't give your system indigestion (human waste only; paints, chemicals, medicine, toilet bowl cleaners go to the toxic waste disposal site)
4. don't drive or park machinery on the bed (air space in the soil is necessary for proper digestion and evaporation of liquids)
5. don't plant trees or shrubs near the tile field (roots clog the tiles and cause unsocial surface seepage; not good)
6. let your system grow with the family (as new toilets, hot tubs and dishwashers appear, have your tile bed inspected for enough septic area)

The good people at the Ottawa or the Mississippi-Rideau Septic System Offices will be glad to advise you on your particular situation. Ottawa: Roz at ext 1123 or rosalind.kee@rvca.ca; Mississippi-Rideau: Eric at 613-259-2421 or eric.kohlsmith@rvca.ca or you can download Septic Smart for more tips at www.rvca.ca/news/septic_smart_index.html.

Top Three

... kinds of heat-producing wood for your woodstove?

1. bitternut hickory
2. oak (white, red, bur)
3. sugar maple





Keeping Kids Safe

Outdoor Education staff are offering free, in-school safety programs all about the dangers of Spring Water and Ice in our area. Bookings are now being accepted for the last two weeks in March on a first come first served basis for teachers of Grades 4, 5 and 6 in the Rideau Valley watershed. Huge thanks to our community-minded partners at Ontario Power Generation. Call Peter at 613-489-3592 or peter.goddard@rvca.ca.

Stop Work Near Water Time

Waterfront property owners, cottagers and construction project managers should be aware that restrictions on in-water work in various waterways and lakes are now in effect. The schedule when in-water work is not allowed in the Rideau Valley:

- warm water fish communities: from March 15 to June 30
- mixed fish communities: October 1 to June 30 (eg. Big Rideau Lake)
- cold water fish communities: October 1 to May 31

The goal is to stop erosion runoff from entering area waterways during the fish spawning period. Research shows that silt-laden construction runoff can smother eggs and prevent hatching, suffocate young fish, change water temperature and reduce water quality. Call RVCA Biologist Mike Yee (613-692-3571 ext 1176), MNR Area Biologist (613-258-8204) or Rideau Canal Office (Parks Canada) at 613-283-7199 for more information.

Family Entertainment Value

RVCA has had to finally increase the user fees at Conservation Areas from \$5 per day to \$6 per day per vehicle for the first time in 10 years! The very popular Annual Pass goes from \$40 to \$45 per year giving unlimited access to all eight developed Conservation Areas. The new Fee Schedule can be found at www.rvca.ca under Conservation Areas. The good news is that you can still buy the 2010 Annual Pass at the \$40 rate anytime before July 1. For information on the fees, please call Kristy at ext 1178 or kristy.giles@rvca.ca. To buy your Annual Pass before July, please call Jan at ext 1100 or jan.gobey@rvca.ca. Even with the modest increase, it's still one of the greatest entertainment values around.

The Big 4-0

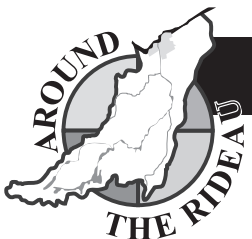
People don't much like getting older but for organizations, it tends to mean experience and respectability. The Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation (RVCF) was founded in 1970 by Dennis Coolican, Patrick McManus and four conservation colleagues. Its declared interests are land conservation, water conservation and conservation education. In 2010, RVCF expects to surpass the \$2 million mark in funds raised for conservation in the past 15 years alone thanks to the generosity and loyalty of our many partners in conservation. One of the biggest supporters is the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority. If you are looking for a reputable environmental charity right here at home in Eastern Ontario, look no further...call Charles at ext 1116 or charles.billington@rvca.ca for more details.

Source Water Protection Update

The Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee (MRSPC) is hard at work preparing the information-laden Assessment Report due in September. This report brings together and summarizes all the technical work of the past five years identifying the vulnerable areas and activities that could have an impact on the health of the water supplying 12 municipal drinking water systems in the two valleys. The MRSPC is scheduled to approve a draft of the document for public consultation in June. The final step is to use this report to develop the Source Protection Plan itself which will detail the ways and means of long term protection of sources of municipal drinking water. More from Sommer at ext 1147 or sommer.robertson@mrsourcewater.ca.



Native species enjoy beach habitat at Rideau Ferry Yacht Club Conservation Area



Around the Rideau

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

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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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