

RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY  
**Public Service Announcement**

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### **Watch for Stream Bank Erosion and Landslide Hazards**

**Wednesday, May 4, 2011, Ottawa Area** — With April's record monthly precipitation and local streams flowing at or near capacity, local soils are fully saturated and frost-free.

These conditions often lead to erosion of streambanks and associated slope failures along the area's valley systems.

The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) wishes to raise awareness in the community about the heightened risk of slope failures at the present time. The RVCA encourages people to be vigilant when using private or public spaces near watercourses and valley slopes.

As a general rule of thumb, be especially aware in areas where slope heights are greater than about 3 metres (10 feet) and steepness is more than 3:1 (horizontal:vertical).

Local areas that are most prone to slope failures are along stream systems have been evolving for thousands of years and eroding through the thicker clay and silty clay deposits that were laid down as sediment on the floor of ancient seas. These include:

- the Rideau River corridor and its tributaries north of Manotick, and
- the valleys associated with small tributaries of the Ottawa River: Becketts Creek, Cardinal Creek, Bilberry Creek, Greens Creek, Graham Creek and Stillwater Creek.

Since the early 1900's, more than 250 landslide events, resulting from unstable soils, have been identified within 60 kilometres of Ottawa. It is important to be aware of the warning signs:

Landslide warning signs to watch for:

- Changes occur in your landscape such as patterns of storm-water drainage on slopes (especially the places where runoff water converges) land movement, small slides, flows, or progressively leaning trees.
- Doors or windows stick or jam for the first time.
- New cracks appear in plaster, tile, brick, or foundations.
- Outside walls, walks, or stairs begin pulling away from the building.
- Slowly developing, widening cracks appear on the ground or on paved areas such as streets or driveways.
- Underground utility lines break.
- Bulging ground appears at the base of a slope.
- Water breaks through the ground surface in new locations.
- Fences, retaining walls, utility poles, or trees tilt or move.
- The ground slopes downward in one direction and may begin shifting in that direction under your feet.
- Unusual sounds, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together, might indicate moving debris.

- Collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flow can be seen when driving (embankments along roadsides are particularly susceptible to landslides).

(Source: USA Federal Emergency Management Agency)

For more information on erosion or slope stability issues or, if you own or are aware of property in the Rideau Valley Watershed that has recently sustained erosion and slope failure damage, please call 613-692-3571 ext. 1128 or 1132.

Tracking erosion and landside problems helps us evaluate the effectiveness of natural hazards risk management using land use planning and development control tools. In some instances, RVCA specialists may be able to provide useful technical advice to landowners and/or offer modest financial assistance through established RVCA stewardship programs.

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