

## Summary of findings of the Rideau Lakes Watershed Management Plan Lake Association Meeting

June 18, 2005, Portland

Members of Lake Associations from the Rideau Lakes Watershed attended the first of two consultative meetings held by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority on June 18 2005 in Portland. The purpose of the meeting was to hear from the members about their vision for the Rideau Lakes Watershed and the actions they felt should be undertaken to overcome the challenges facing the area.

When asked to think about their vision for the watershed for the year 2025 (what the watershed looks like, how people and communities are interacting with the watershed, etc.) participants responses were similar and consistent. They envisioned a biodiverse watershed, plentiful in native species both in and around clean water. Water resources are managed in an environmentally sound manner by coordinated government agencies while residents and seasonal users are aware of their role as guardians of the water. While absorbing the natural landscape, patrons of the watershed enjoy a leisurely cruise on a noiseless watercraft, listen to the birds along naturalized shoreline, catch plentiful fish, or look at a clear night sky and count the stars.

With a clear vision for the watershed in mind, participants set out in pairs to address the present situation, including current challenges and suggestions on how to improve the current situation and set a path for their vision of the future. The results of this exercise are listed in the table below.

Current Challenges	Solutions
Trend of bringing city concepts such as manicured lawns, outdoor lighting and excessive water usage to cottage properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Education, education, education</li> <li>◆ Binding agreement that new landowners will maintain/restore shorelines and septic systems upon purchase</li> </ul>
Impact of increased demand on land and water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Develop criteria for each lake use based on lake capacity</li> <li>◆ Commercial harvesting after the resource has been deemed sustainable</li> <li>◆ Septic re-inspection and increased standards</li> <li>◆ Revise sport fishing laws</li> <li>◆ Increased monitoring</li> </ul>
Mining interests supersede municipal, environmental and private rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Revise mining laws so environmental, municipal and private interests are protected</li> </ul>
Inadequate funding of RVCA (staffing) given role in watershed planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increase funding for Authority specific programs (water testing)</li> </ul>

Environmental issues are not a high enough priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Education</li> <li>◆ Strengthen communication</li> <li>◆ Increased land-use management legislation</li> </ul>
Water craft speeds and shore erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Enforced speed limits</li> <li>◆ Increased boater safety awareness</li> </ul>
Overlapping and ambiguous government responsibility of water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Strengthen communication</li> <li>◆ Clearly defined roles with adequate funding</li> <li>◆ Standardized water testing</li> </ul>

When asked what priorities should be addressed right now or in the near future, participants were clearly concerned about **surface water quality** and **continued monitoring of water quality indicators**. **Septic re-inspection programs, stricter legislation regarding grey water discharge from boats** as well as related **enforcement and penalties** were suggested as immediate ways to improve water quality. By **linking building permits with mandatory shoreline improvement**, in addition to **lake specific shoreline planning** and **decreased water craft speeds near shore**, it was felt that shoreline **erosion problems** could also be brought under control. With regards to concerns over fish stocks, it was suggested that there be a **moratorium on commercial fishing** in Upper Rideau Lake until such time as the resource is deemed to be sustainable.