

2022

ANNUAL
REPORT





2022 was a year of restoration and renewal. As staff returned to pre-COVID programming and workspaces, we also embarked on a number of new and exciting projects to support our watershed and its communities.

At our conservation areas, staff kicked off multiple capital projects including the long-awaited accessible pedestrian bridge at Baxter Conservation Area. Thanks to special funding secured through our Foundation's Nature For All committee, the new bridge and its accessible learning platforms will help people of all ages and abilities get up close and personal with Baxter's thriving marshlands. Outdoor education staff at Baxter and Foley Mountain also welcomed the return of school groups following the pandemic, while continuing to offer forest school which grew in popularity during remote learning.

Our stewardship team launched a new chapter of ALUS in partnership with the County of Lanark and Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority. This new program helps farmers in Lanark expand environmental services on their property. During the program's inaugural year, nine wetland projects were completed to protect local water quality and support biodiversity. This new program is in addition to ongoing wetland restoration projects along Stillwater Creek in Nepean and in the Hutton Marsh near Lombardy. Going forward, it will complement our robust stewardship grant programs that support tree planting, shoreline naturalization and clean water projects.

On the planning and regulations side, our septic team expanded its permit and approvals program to include seven new municipalities previously served by the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, while our planning and regulations staff welcomed a return to pre-pandemic workloads after several record-breaking years.

Science and engineering staff were also busy monitoring conditions across the watershed with help from new weather stations and the return of community volunteers who we missed during COVID. The return of volunteers and a full complement of summer students meant all programs were back to full capacity collecting critical data that municipalities and the RVCA use to make important decisions related to development, land use planning and resource management.

We are proud of the RVCA team for their dedication to conservation in the Rideau Valley. Whether they're adding resiliency through stewardship, protecting communities through permit approvals, maintaining our conservation lands, leading ground-breaking outdoor education programs or collecting critical watershed data, staff work tirelessly to ensure the watershed is healthy and thriving for all who call it home.

Pieter Leenhouts
Past Chair

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer



THE RVCA is one of 36 conservation authorities in Ontario working to manage local watersheds to protect people and property from natural hazards and conserve critical natural resources.

Since 1966, the RVCA has worked closely with its member municipalities, provincial and federal governments, local landowners, farmers, businesses and community groups to protect communities from natural hazards, guide sustainable development, improve water quality and connect people with nature.

The RVCA looks to build resilient communities in the face of climate change and population growth by promoting an integrated watershed approach — one that balances human, environmental and economic needs. Our success is based on partnerships that accomplish local initiatives at the watershed scale.

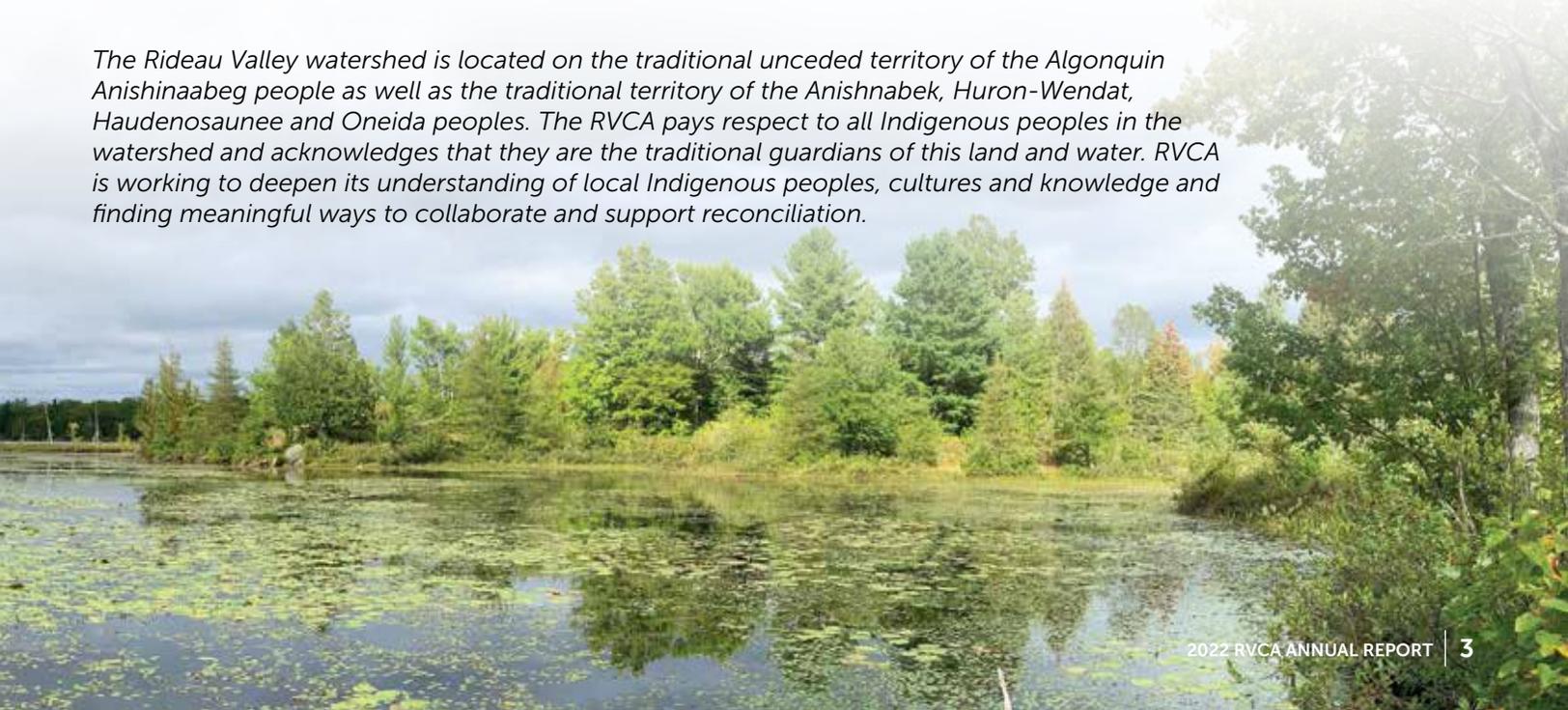
OUR VISION: A thriving watershed with clean abundant water, natural shorelines, rich forests and wetlands, diverse habitat and sustainable land use that is valued and protected by all.

OUR MISSION: To understand, manage, protect, restore and enhance the Rideau watershed through science, stewardship, education, policy and leadership.

2022 Board of Directors

- Pieter Leenhouts, Chair Ottawa
- Judy Brown, Vice Chair Perth
- Andy Jozefowicz Athens
- Dale McLenaghan Augusta
- Brian Dowdall Beckwith
- Victor Heese Central Frontenac
- Vacant* *Clarence-Rockland*
- Jamie Crawford Ottawa
- George Darouze Ottawa
- Julie Graveline Ottawa
- Scott Moffatt Ottawa
- Anne Robinson Ottawa
- Steve Fournier Drummond/North Elmsley
- Rob Rothgeb Elizabethtown-Kitley
- Bob Foster Merrickville-Wolford
- Vince Carroll Montague
- Gerry Boyce North Dundas
- Kristin Strackerjan North Grenville
- Carolyn Bresee Rideau Lakes
- Shawn Pankow Smiths Falls
- John McDougall South Frontenac
- Gene Richardson Tay Valley
- Robin Jones Westport
- Mel Foster Agricultural Sector

The Rideau Valley watershed is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people as well as the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Oneida peoples. The RVCA pays respect to all Indigenous peoples in the watershed and acknowledges that they are the traditional guardians of this land and water. RVCA is working to deepen its understanding of local Indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledge and finding meaningful ways to collaborate and support reconciliation.

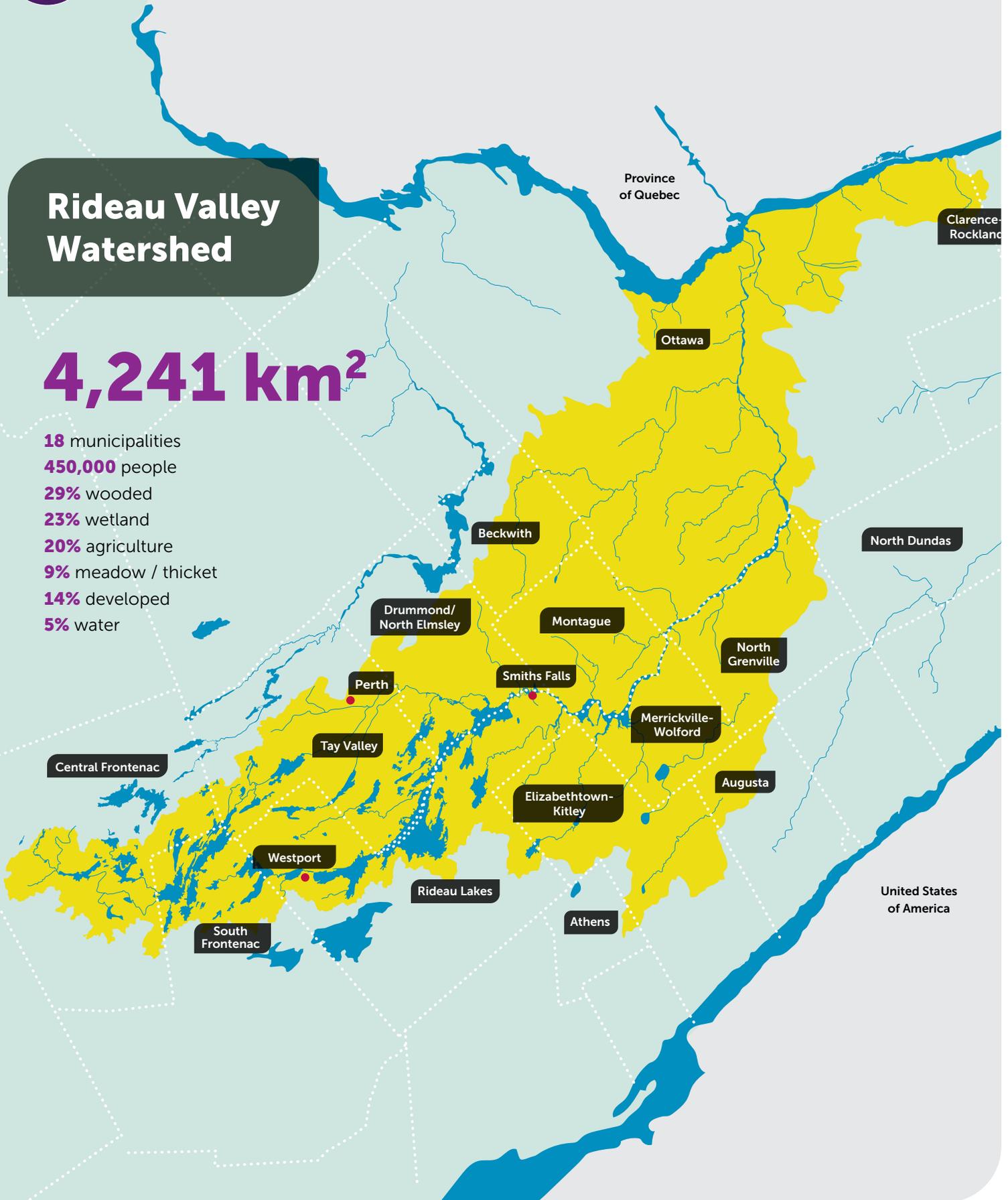


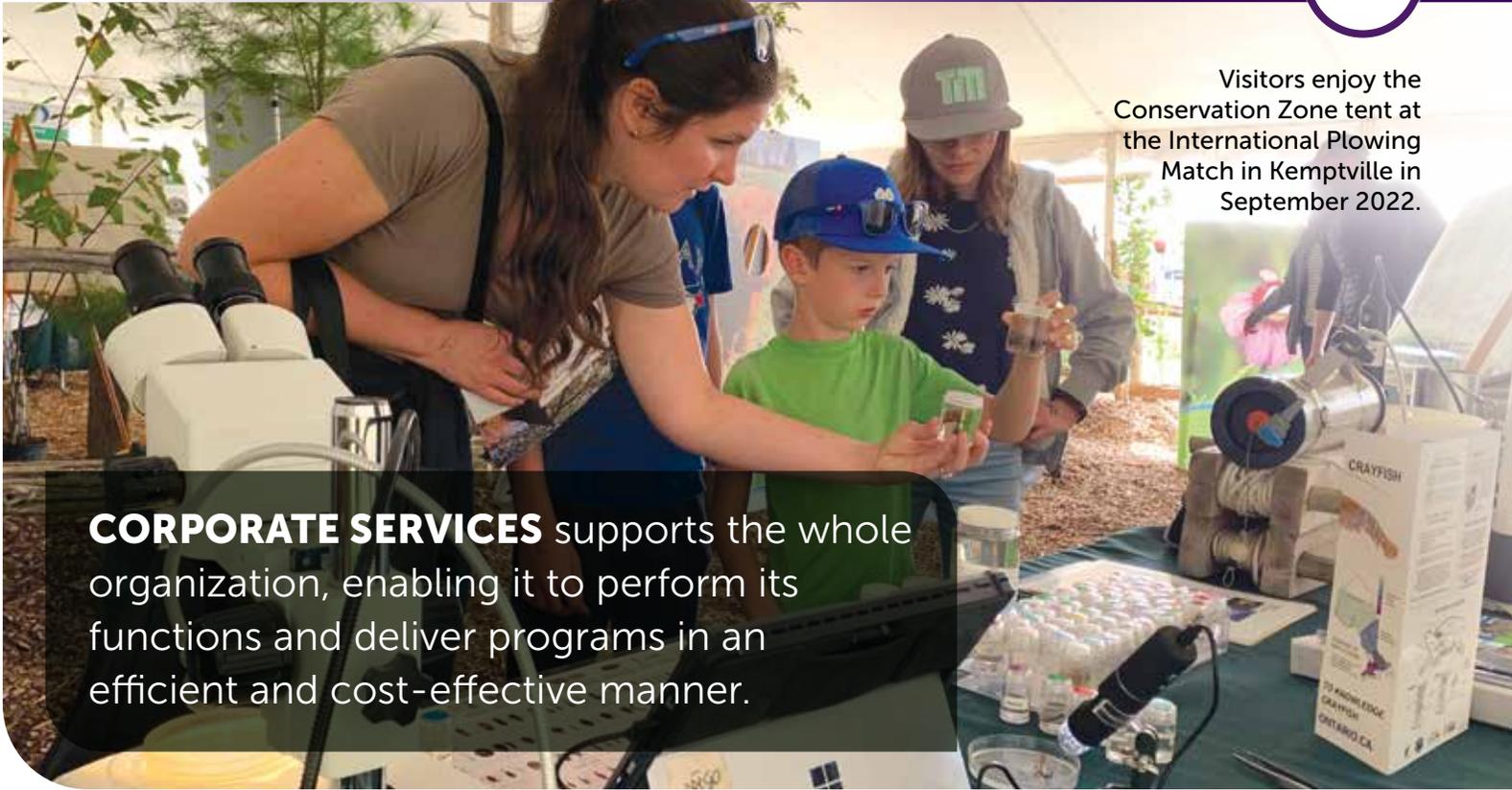


Rideau Valley Watershed

4,241 km²

- 18 municipalities
- 450,000 people
- 29% wooded
- 23% wetland
- 20% agriculture
- 9% meadow / thicket
- 14% developed
- 5% water





Visitors enjoy the Conservation Zone tent at the International Plowing Match in Kemptville in September 2022.

CORPORATE SERVICES supports the whole organization, enabling it to perform its functions and deliver programs in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

The department is responsible for strategic planning, budgeting, financial reporting, business improvement, human resources, communications, IT, GIS, member services, fundraising and administration.

\$11.64M

budget for 2022

69

staff plus 16
summer students

23

board members

- Welcomed a new board member appointed by the Province to represent the agricultural sector and assisted municipalities with their appointment of board members for 2023-2026
- Launched an online payment portal to enable clients to pay online for services (will expand to more program areas in 2023)
- Updated land cover data and received final LiDAR elevation data for the entire watershed which will support numerous municipal and RVCA programs
- Reopened the office to the public and implemented hybrid board meeting and return-to-work models
- Hosted annual watershed tour for board members and municipalities at the Rideau Ferry Yacht Club where staff showcased RVCA's programs and services
- Created a conservation education and demonstration tent at the International Plowing Match in Kemptville
- Reviewed Bill 23 (*More Homes Built Faster Act*) and worked with municipalities and other partners to prepare written comments and submissions



PLANNING AND REGULATIONS staff bring watershed science, provincial policies and individual municipal needs together to help build safe, sustainable communities.



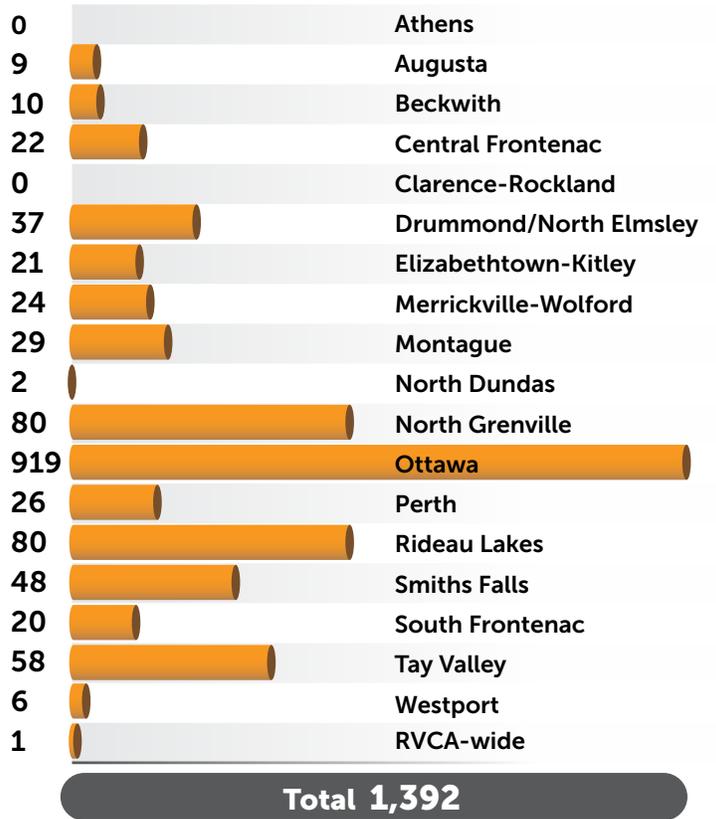


The RVCA provides planning advice to municipalities and is the approval authority for development affecting natural hazards like flooding, erosion, steep slopes, unstable soils and wetlands, as well as watercourses. Staff also approve the construction, enlargement or alteration of septic systems and provide septic re-inspection services to several municipalities.

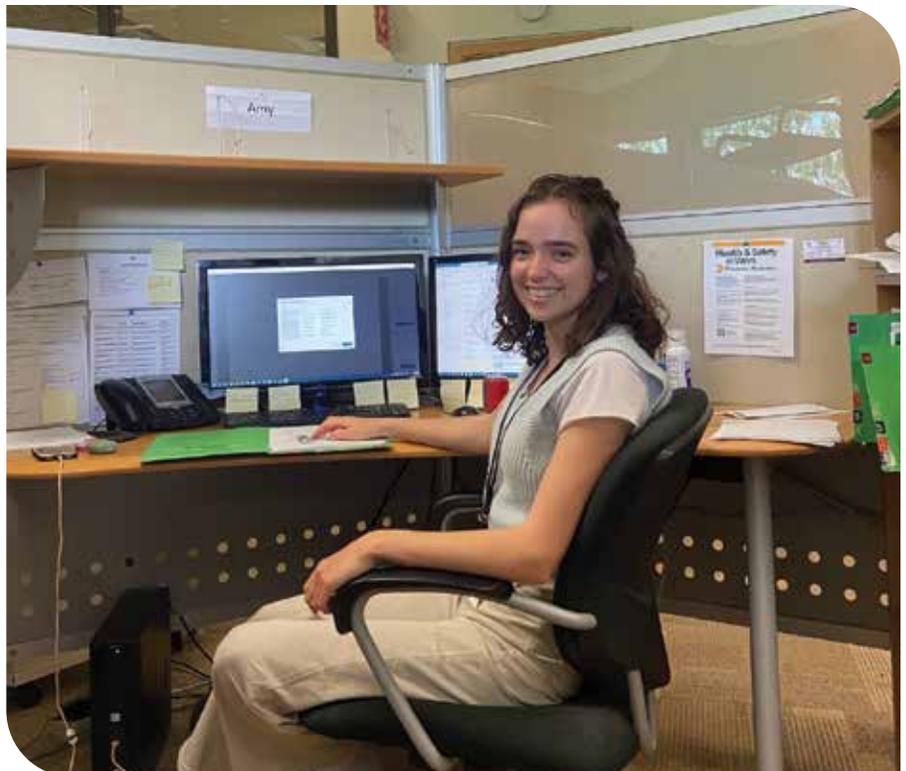
Planning Reviews

- **127** Pre-consultation Meetings
- **468** Severances
- **390** Minor Variances
- **192** Site Plan Control
- **144** Zoning By-law Amendments
- **17** Official Plan Amendments
- **12** Subdivision Reviews
- **14** Condominium Applications
- **1** Community Design Plan Review
- **7** Part Lot Control
- **8** Lifting of 30-cm Reserve
- **5** Environmental Assessment Act Reviews
- **5** Official Plan reviews
- **2** Comprehensive ZBA reviewed (Smiths Falls & Central Frontenac)

Planning Activities by Municipality, 2022



1,392
planning reviews

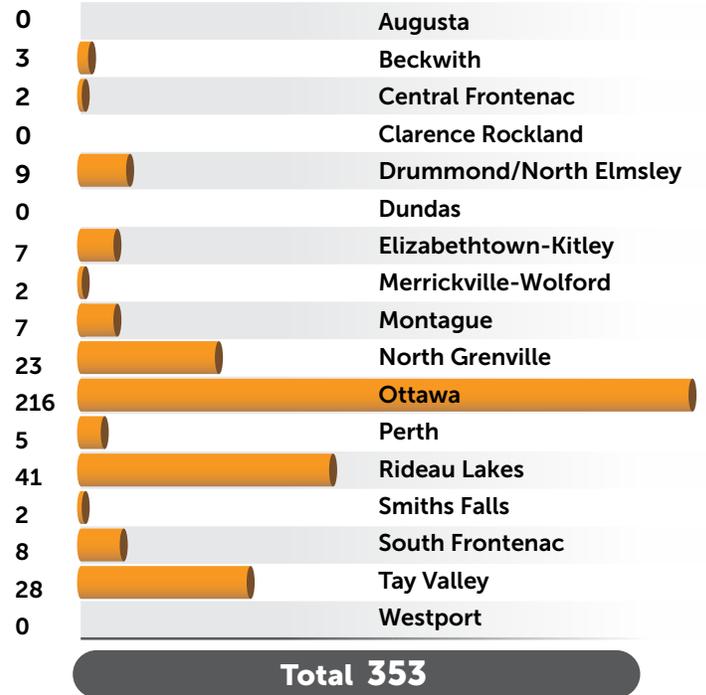


Section 28 Activities

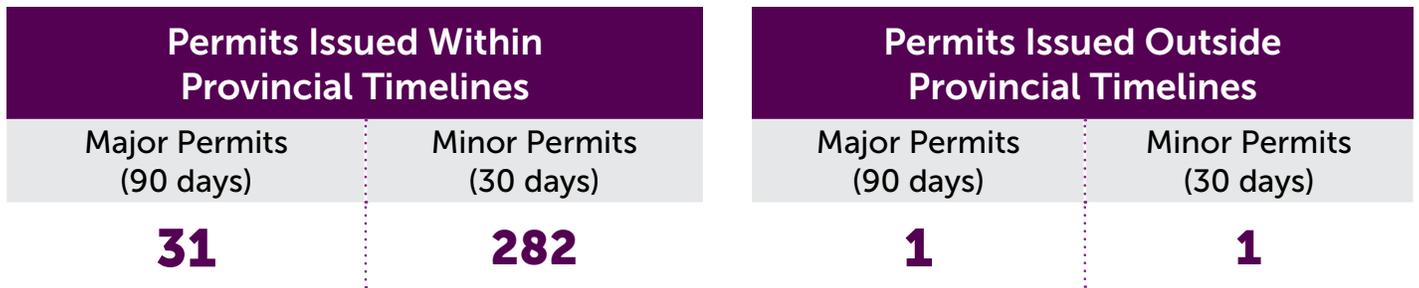
- **870** Property Inquiries
- **207** Clearance Letters
- **353** Applications
 - **86%** Approved
 - **13%** Under Review
 - **1%** Withdrawn
 - **3** hearings
- **75** Complaints/Occurrences
 - **7** Violations
 - **1** Charge laid under *Conservation Authorities Act*

353
permit applications

Section 28 Applications by Municipality, 2022



RVCA issued **99%** of Section 28 permits within provincial timelines:



In support of Conservation Ontario’s client service initiative, RVCA issued **58%** of its permits within the following enhanced service standards which it works to achieve where possible:

- **28** days for major applications
- **21** days for minor applications
- **14** days for routine applications

Source Water Protection Approvals

- Trained staff as Risk Management Inspectors and Officials
- Renegotiated Part IV Risk Management Agreement with Mississippi Mills
- Assisted the City of Ottawa with Risk Management work

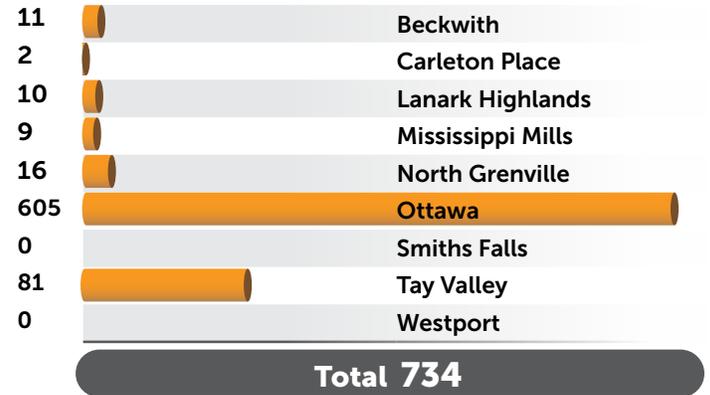


Septic System Services

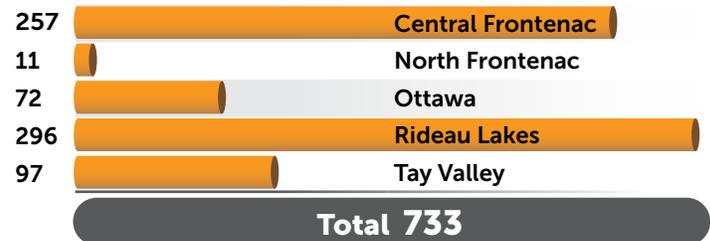
- Expanded septic approval services in partnership with Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority to seven new municipalities previously served by the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit
- 171** file search requests
- 622** applications for new or replacement septic systems
- 112** applications for septic renovations or alterations
- 24** complaints
- 733** septic re-inspections
- 3** virtual sessions of the *Ontario Building Code* Part 8 Installers Course delivered, welcoming **61** participants
- Distributed educational material to landowners about the care and maintenance of their septic system
- Published a new edition of *Septic Smart*, providing homeowners with information about the different types of septic systems and how to maintain them

Septic Applications by Municipality, 2022

New, replacement or renovation



Septic Re-Inspections by Municipality, 2022



RVCA issues most septic permits within half the time prescribed by the *Ontario Building Code*:

Building Code Requirement	Building Code Timeline	RVCA Timeline
New Sewage System Permit	10 days	5 days
Clay Seal Inspection	5 days	48 hours
Scarification Inspection	5 days	48 hours
Installation Inspection	5 days	48 hours
Final Grading Inspection	5 days	48 hours



CONSERVATION LANDS staff manage more than **3,300** hectares of conservation land for the strategic protection of natural hazards, critical natural resources and vulnerable habitats.



Our conservation lands include 11 developed conservation areas offering public trails, beaches, boat launches and a range of popular outdoor education programs. Conservation areas provide affordable recreation, education and tourism opportunities to watershed residents and communities.

Land Management

- **2,210** hectares of conservation land owned across the watershed
- **3,300+** hectares inspected and assessed annually
- **3** new properties totalling **127** hectares donated to our Foundation
- **52** nest boxes monitored at nine conservation areas
- **23** Species at Risk projects maintained at six conservation areas in support of bobolink, butternut and barn swallows

Conservation Areas

- **11** public conservation areas maintained for public enjoyment
- **317,000** visitors in 2022 (up from 200,000 annually pre-pandemic)
- **42** kilometres of trails and **3** beaches maintained
- Replaced the boat launch ramps at W.A. Taylor Conservation Area
- Started construction on a replacement pedestrian bridge and learning platforms over the marsh at Baxter Conservation Area that will be accessible for people with varying mobility
- Began construction on a replacement accessible pedestrian bridge at Chapman Mills Conservation Area

317,000
conservation area
visitors



6,783

children participated
in outdoor education
and summer camps

Outdoor Education

Baxter Conservation Area:

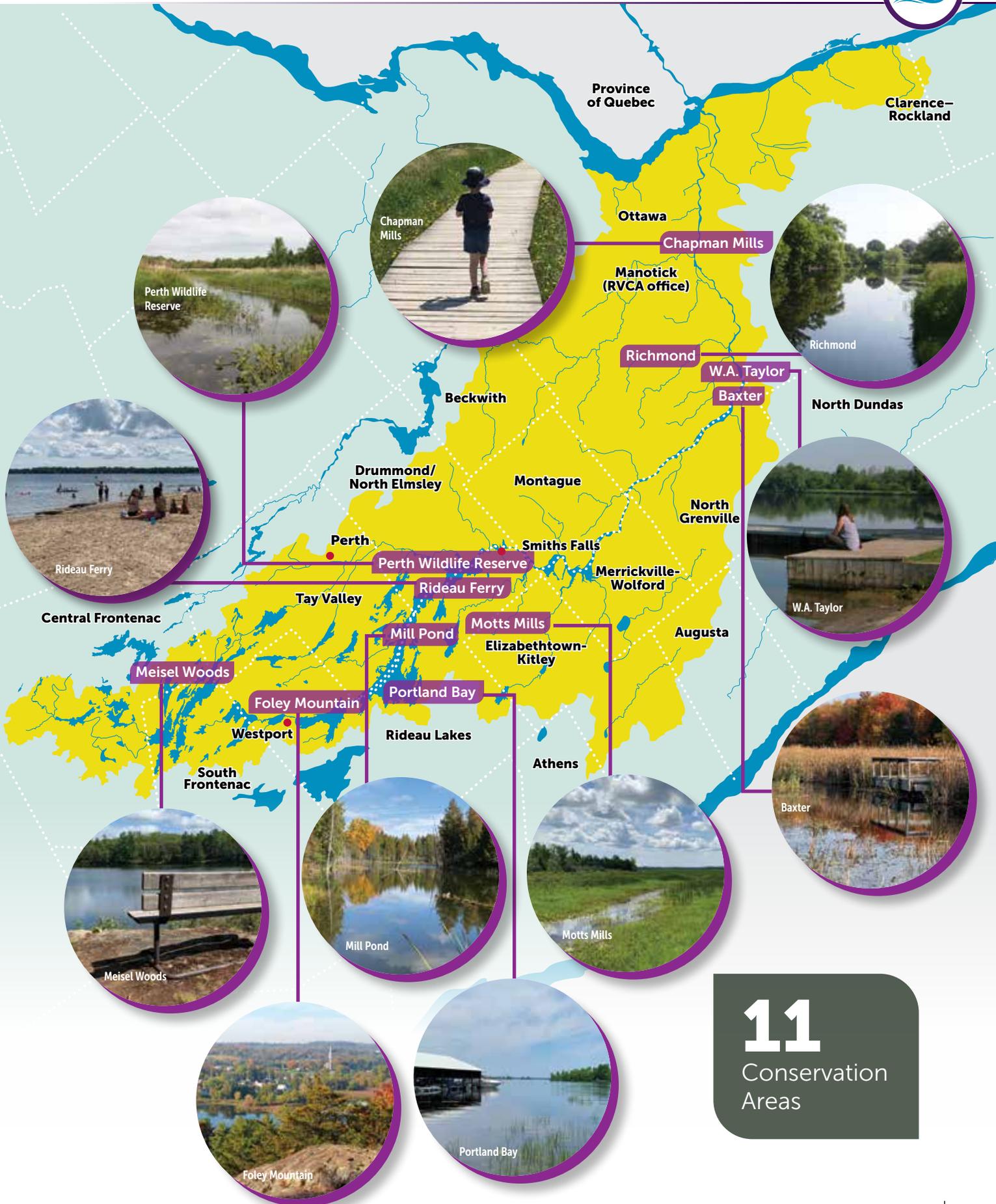
- **3,697** students from 62 schools, five school boards and numerous community groups participated in in-person outdoor education programs
- **145** students attended weekly in-person Forest School in spring and fall (Winter Forest School was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions)
- **144** children participated in Summer Day Camps

Foley Mountain Conservation Area:

- **2,671** students participated in in-person outdoor education programs, including Forest School sessions in spring and fall (Winter Forest School was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions)
- **29** schools from across three school boards came for field trips
- **126** children participated in Summer Day Camps

Facilities and Rentals

- **2,402** people enjoyed rental facilities at Baxter Conservation Area (group camping areas, picnic shelter, Interpretive Centre, River Cabin)
- **2,000** participants and supporters welcomed to Baxter Conservation Area for the Ottawa Carleton District School Board Cross Country Meet
- **579** people enjoyed rental facilities at Foley Mountain conservation area (Interpretive Centre, Silversides, Group Campsite)
- Continued our partnership with Cabinscape, adding a second tiny cabin at Mica Mines Conservation Area



11
Conservation
Areas



STEWARDSHIP staff work with landowners, farmers, lake associations, businesses, government agencies and the public to undertake on-the-ground projects that improve the health and resilience of the watershed. Programs such as tree planting, shoreline restoration, clean water incentives, wetland enhancement and habitat creation help reduce flooding, erosion and droughts, protect water quality and reduce the impacts of climate change and development.

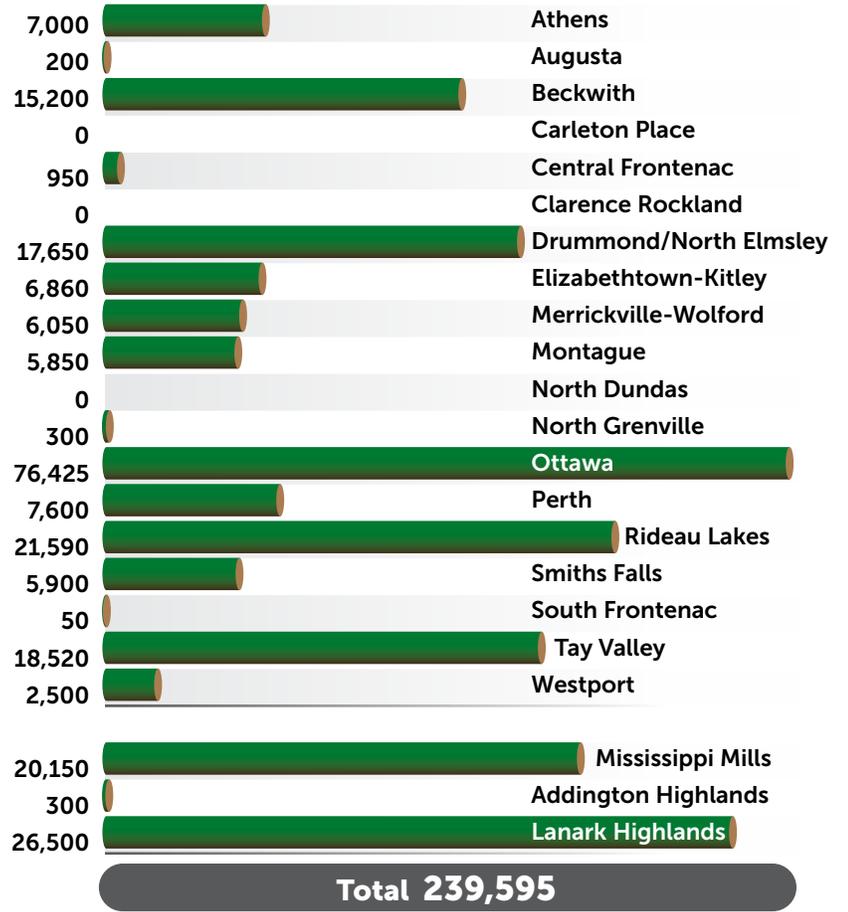


Tree Planting

- **239,595** trees planted in the Rideau and Mississippi watersheds (**76,425** in the City of Ottawa through the Green Acres program)
- **\$323,091** fundraised to help offset landowner costs



Tree Planting by Municipality, 2022

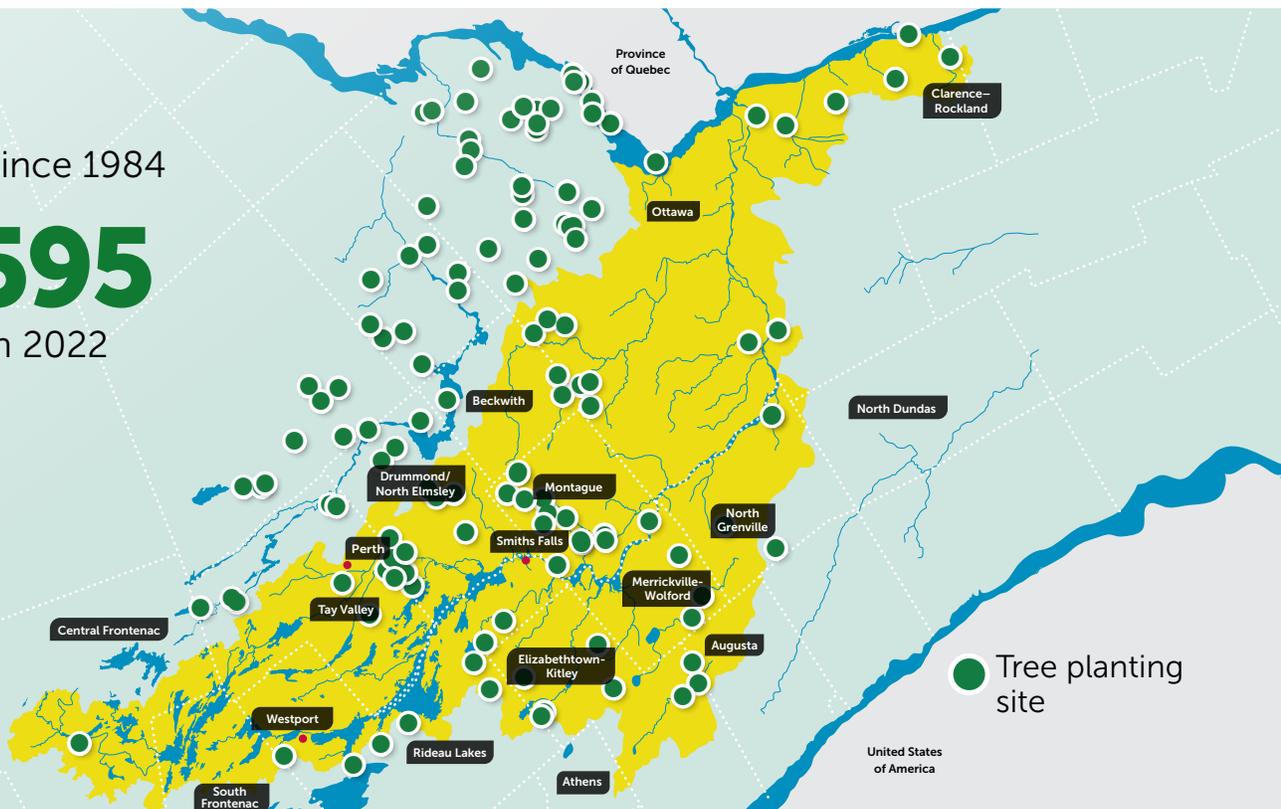


7M

trees planted since 1984

239,595

trees planted in 2022





Shoreline Naturalization Program

- **10,127** trees and shrubs planted on 69 properties
- **800** metres of shoreline naturalized
- **1,000** trees and shrubs distributed to lake residents through over-the-counter plant sales through Upper Rideau Lake Association and Otty Lake Association
- **12** free shoreline planting projects provided to Bobs and Crow Lake residents thanks to top-up partnerships with Bobs and Crow Lake Association Foundation
- **130** native pollinator-friendly perennials distributed to landowners through over-the-counter sale

Lake Planning

- **100** local lake stewards and residents participated in the 21st annual Lake Links Workshop which was held virtually in October

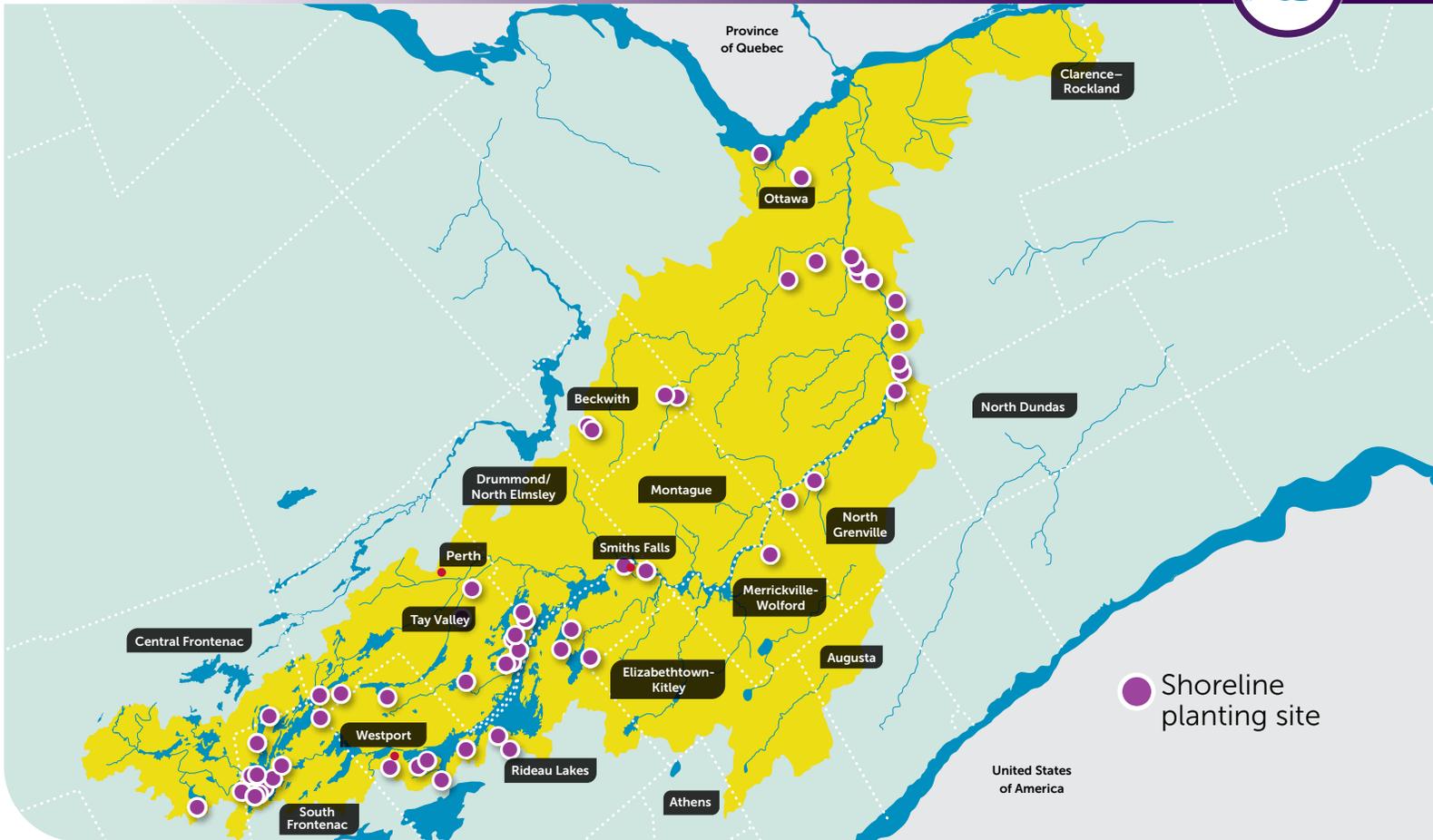
10,127

trees and shrubs planted on 69 properties

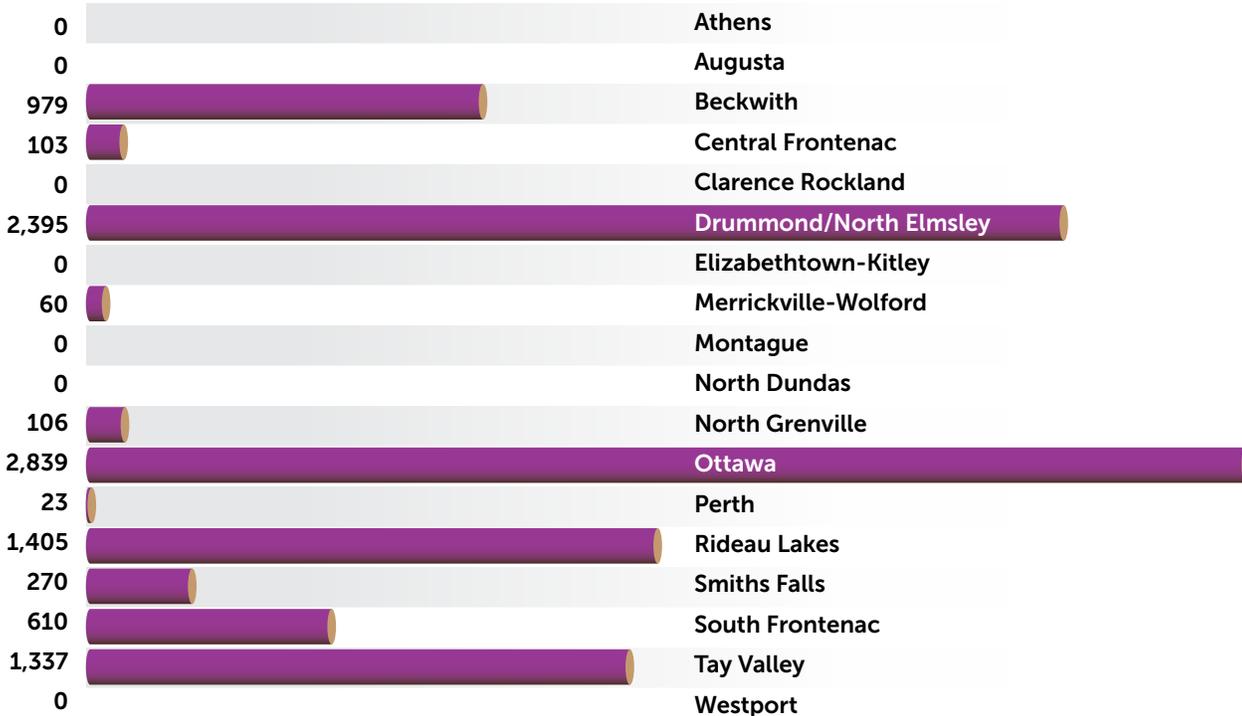
800m

of shoreline naturalization





Shoreline Plantings by Municipality, 2022



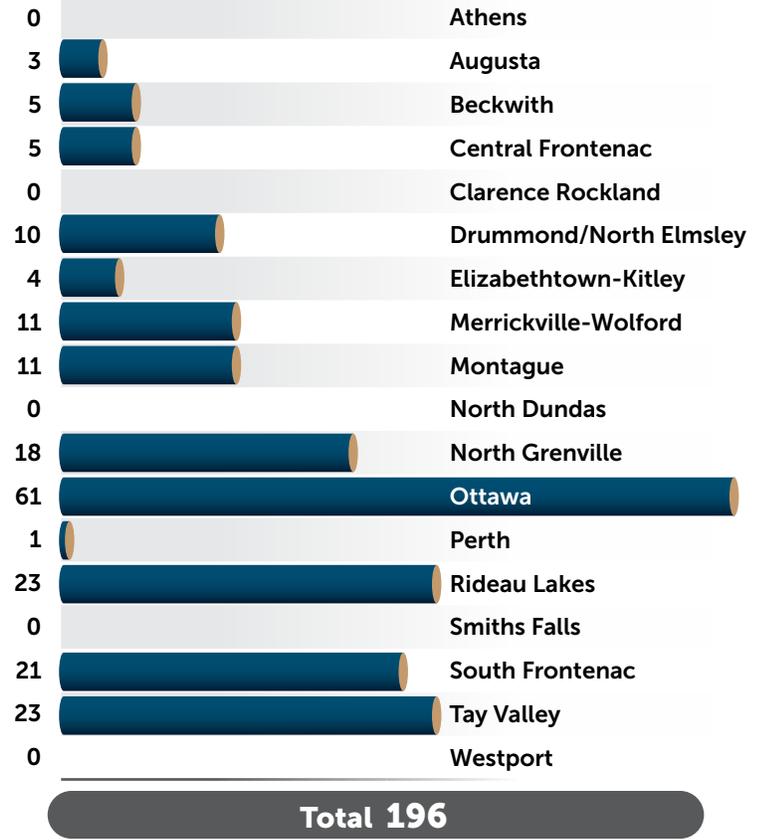
Total 10,127

Rural Clean Water Programs

- **135** projects approved through the Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$265,167** in grants with landowner contributions totaling **\$1,076,185**
- **61** projects approved through the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$284,916** in grants with landowner contributions totaling **\$615,297**

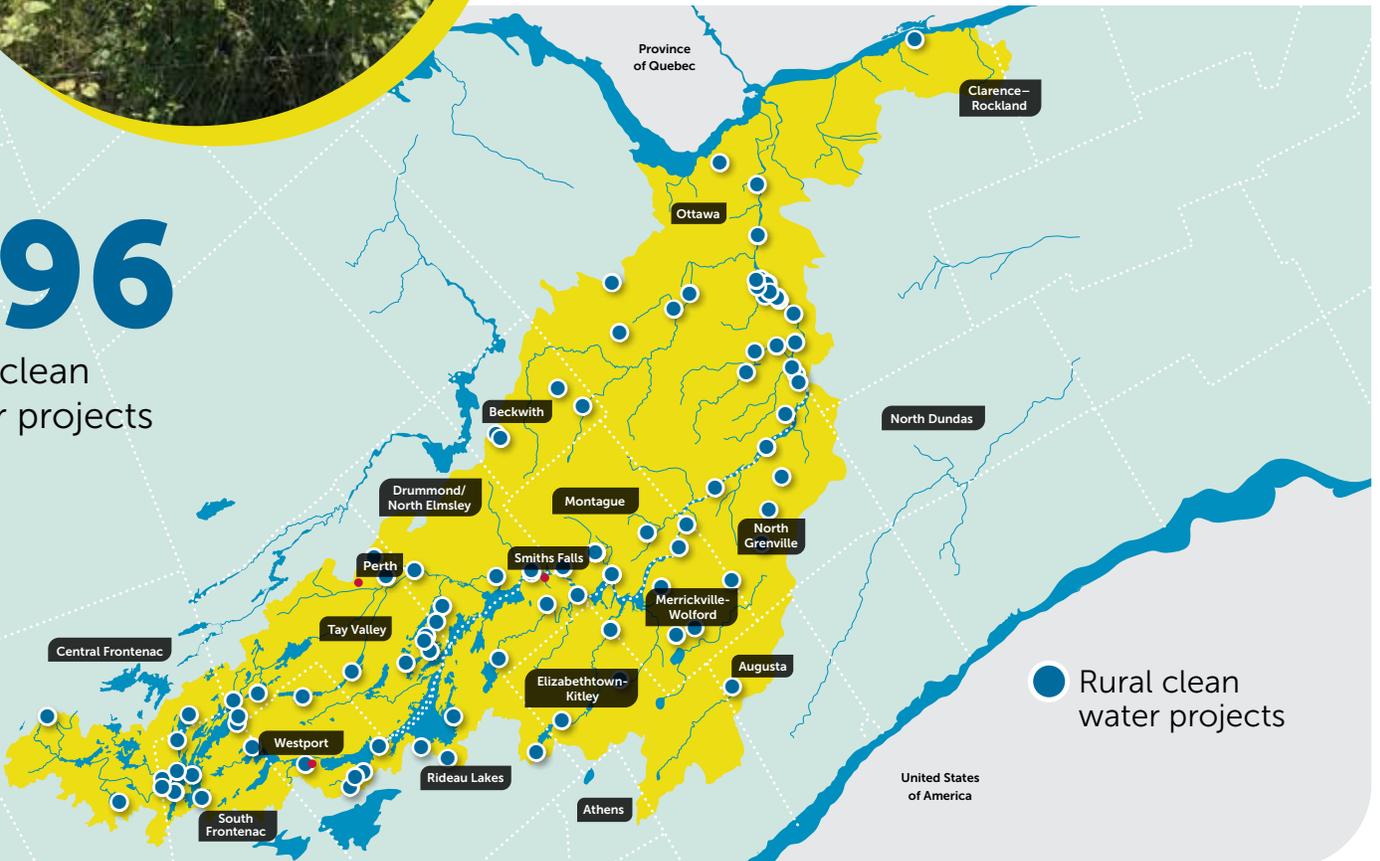


Clean Water Projects by Municipality, 2022



196

rural clean water projects





New wetland construction in Smiths Falls, 2022

ALUS Lanark

- Worked with the County of Lanark and Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority to establish a new ALUS chapter to help farmers in Lanark County create environmental services on their land
- Established a Partnership Advisory Committee with members from the local farming community as well as business leaders and local government officials
- **9** wetland projects completed, distributing **\$79,658** in grants towards projects valued at **\$91,235**
- **4.03** acres of new wetlands were constructed and **10.09** acres of wetlands were restored

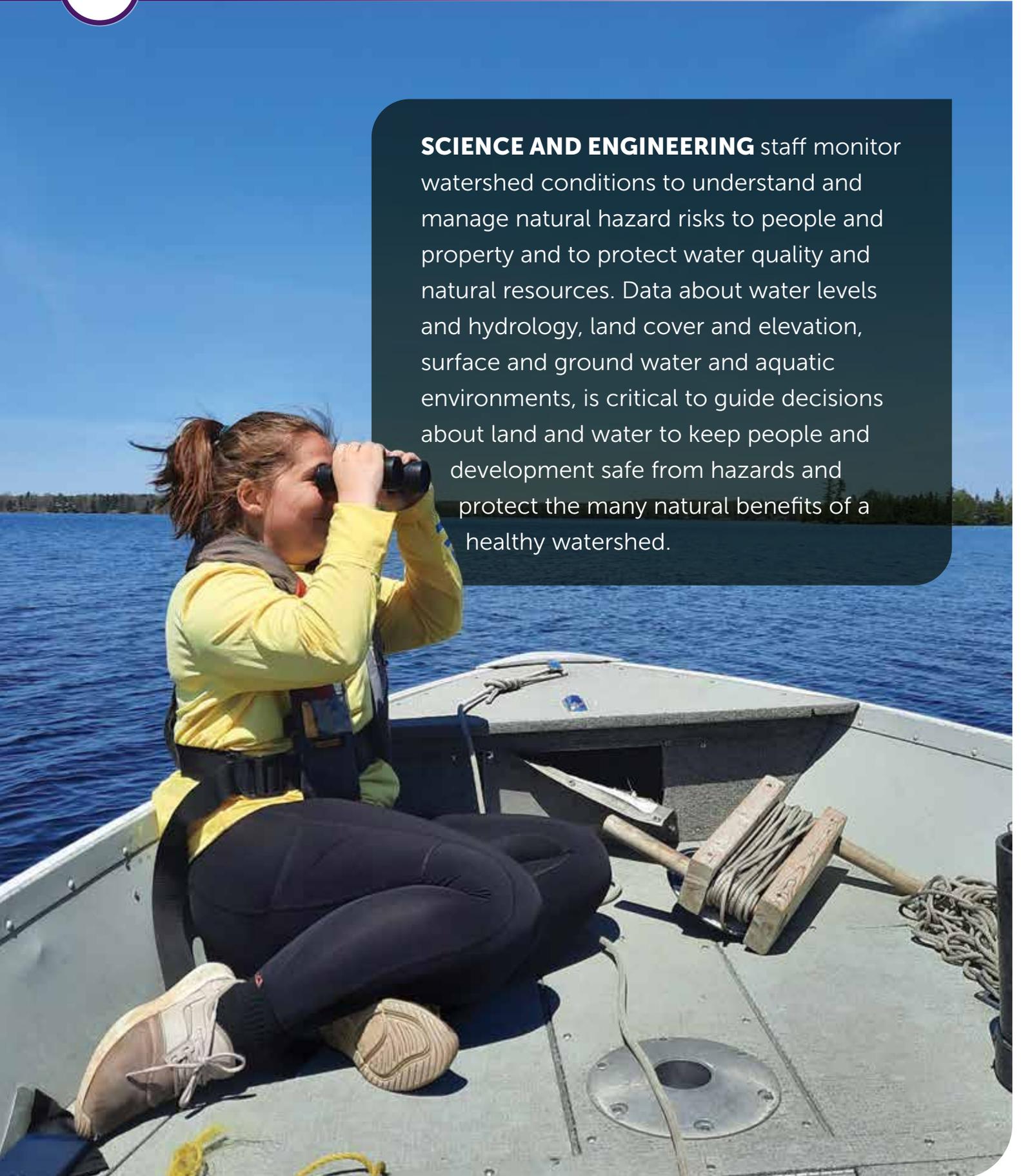
Butternut Recovery

- **2,050** free butternut seedlings distributed to help replace dead and dying butternut trees in Eastern Ontario
- Continued effort to locate and assess healthy trees and track survival and health of planted butternut seedlings
- New three-year contract with the Canadian Wildlife Service to manage the butternut population in the Mississippi Lake National Wildlife Area. This includes releasing a number of natural seedlings on site and releasing seed tree crowns to give them more space and less competition from nearby trees
- Continued partnership with Ontario Nature to search for the endangered American Ginseng on landowner properties involved in the Butternut Recovery Program





SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING staff monitor watershed conditions to understand and manage natural hazard risks to people and property and to protect water quality and natural resources. Data about water levels and hydrology, land cover and elevation, surface and ground water and aquatic environments, is critical to guide decisions about land and water to keep people and development safe from hazards and protect the many natural benefits of a healthy watershed.



Flood Forecasting & Warning

- **10** flood messages issued for the Rideau River
- **2** flood messages issued for the Ottawa River
- **0** low water messages issued
- **24** sites monitored for water levels and flow
- **7** Parks Canada water level gauges monitored by staff through public info-net site
- **24** sites monitored for precipitation, including 11 new RVCA Weather Stations installed in 2021
- **6** sites monitored for snowpack
- Hosted the Annual Flood Forecasting and Warning Meeting in February for all municipalities and partner agencies



Natural Hazard Mapping

- Completed new or updated mapping for Mosquito Creek and Upper Jock River
- Consulted on draft mapping for Stevens Creek
- Continued work on mapping for Middle Rideau River and Wolf/Sand Lake System

Stream Characterization Monitoring

- **44** sites sampled across the watershed in spring and fall for the Ontario Benthic Biomonitoring Network (OBBN)
- City Stream Watch Program resumed after a two-year COVID-19 hiatus, monitoring four creeks in the City of Ottawa: Sawmill Creek, Barrhaven Creek, Black Rapids Creek and Cardinal Creek
 - **187** volunteers for a total of 580 volunteer hours
 - **253** stream survey sections completed
 - **14** temperature loggers installed
 - **18** fish sampling sites monitored
 - **9** stream cleanups completed
 - **3** invasive species removals completed
- Catchment level watershed conditions were classified across the watershed by aquatic score, benthic community score, fish community score and thermal classification

Source Water Protection

- **8th** year implementing the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Plan
- Updated Source Protection Plan and technical Assessment Reports to reflect updated rules from the Province, a new municipal intake in the City of Ottawa and a new well in the Town of Kemptville
- Completed Phase 1 of a Best Practices Guide for private drinking water users
- Launched educational resources about highly vulnerable aquifers, including an interactive StoryMap
- Welcomed a new Source Protection Committee member and recognized the retirement of long-time Committee Chair Ken Graham

Surface Water Quality Monitoring

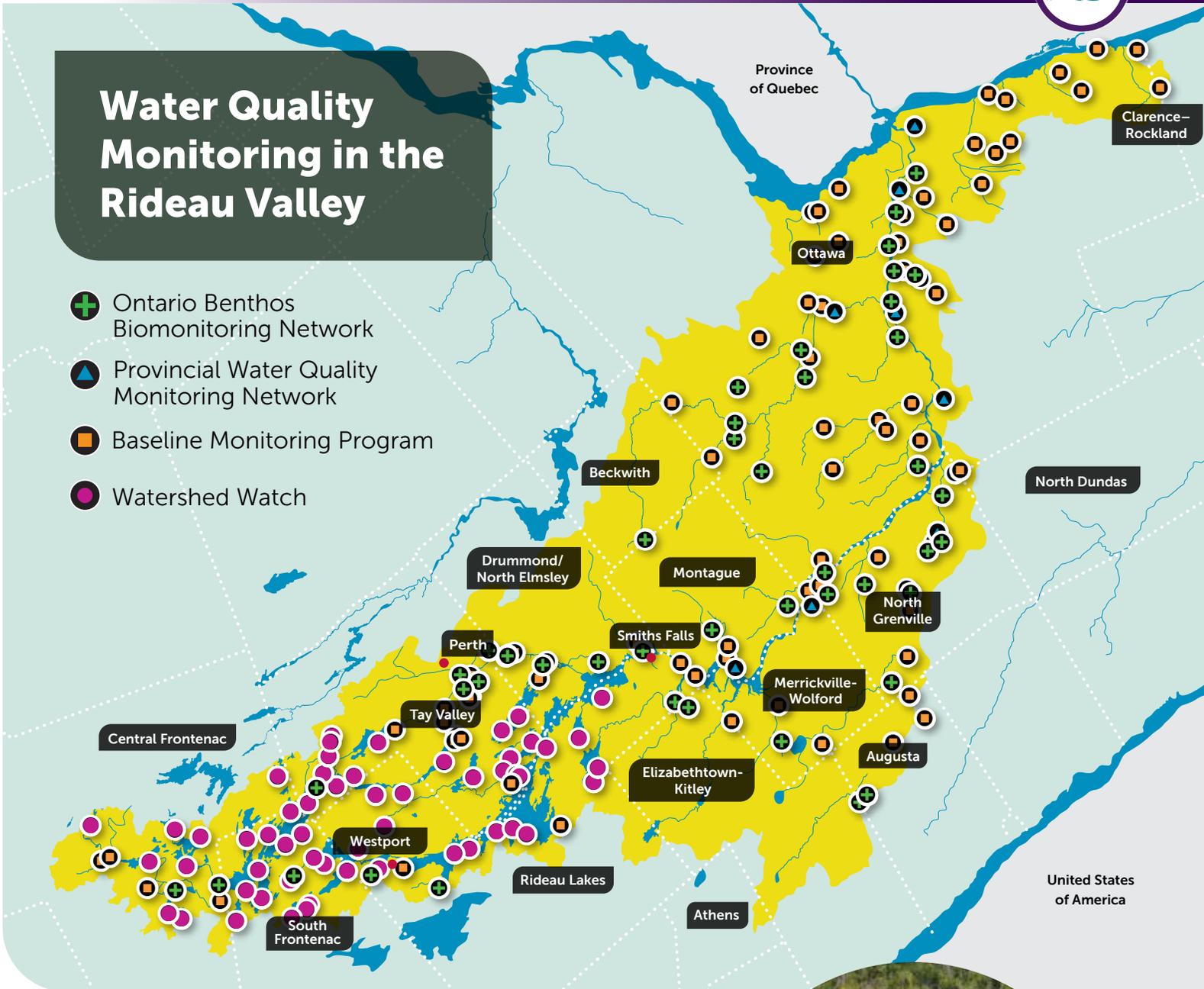
- **117** sites sampled for baseline monitoring and the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Program, which monitors the water chemistry of major rivers and tributaries
- **39** lakes sampled from May to November
- **51** water quality parameters monitored annually
- **19** landowners facilitated sampling by providing access to lakes and streams through their properties
- **80** volunteer hours were donated by **10** waterfront property owners who provided on-water transportation for staff as part of the Watershed Watch program
- **2** drainage features within the Portland area were monitored as part of the Sustainable Drainage project in partnership with the Township of Rideau Lakes, Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, and Big Rideau Lake Association
- Completed a literature review of sustainable drainage and low impact development practices to support improvements to drainage and water quality protection within Rideau Lakes Township



117

sites sampled for baseline monitoring and the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Program, which monitors the water chemistry of major rivers and tributaries.

Monitoring Cardinal Creek, 2022



Wetland Restoration Post-Effectiveness Monitoring

- Continued restoration and enhancement of Stillwater Wetland Complex in Nepean
- Post-effectiveness monitoring at Jebbs Creek Wetland Embayment (Year 4)
- Continued restoration of the Hutton Marsh in Motts Mills with the excavation of several more ponds and channels to create more open water and encourage biodiversity)



Stillwater Wetland



Financing Conservation

Science & Engineering Services	\$3,391,379
Planning Advisory and Regulatory Services	\$2,641,947
Stewardship Services	\$1,636,843
Conservation Land Management Services	\$1,306,689
Corporate Services	\$1,273,740
Transfer to Reserves	\$747,660
Investment in Capital Assets	\$473,035
Repayment of Capital Lease	\$202,704



Municipal Levy	\$6,461,296
Program Revenue	\$3,605,502
Special Levies	\$1,124,970
Provincial Funding	\$336,626
Foundation	\$145,603



2022

ANNUAL REPORT



Baxter Bridge reconstruction,
Fall 2022

2022 Annual Report

For several years we have been focused on resiliency: not just in our natural environment, but in our communities as well. This continued into 2022, but perhaps for different reasons as we moved forward from the COVID-19 pandemic and began to focus once again on the protection of our natural spaces.

RVCF Board of Directors

- Andrew Harkness, Chair
- Tom Scott, Vice Chair
- Jason W. M. Kelly, Past Chair
- Kathy Dallaire, Secretary-Treasurer
- Allison Gibbons
- Gary Howard
- R.E. (Bob) Smith
- Kathy Thomas

Wetlands, forests and shorelines are increasingly under threat; legislative changes, increased development pressure across the watershed and a changing climate all have cumulative impacts on the longevity of these natural features. Thankfully, our community continues to come together to protect and conserve our watershed resources. Many understand the need for continued stewardship of these lands – so they can be protected now and enjoyed in the future.

2022 was a banner year for corporate and governmental support, with multiple major grants allowing us to move forward on several significant capital projects to improve accessibility and biodiversity in our watershed. Our partners also continued to support stewardship programs and outdoor education for the benefit of the entire watershed.

Thank you to our board members, donors and many partners who stepped up to lend their time, expertise and resources to the conservation cause. Your enthusiasm, leadership and generosity are greatly appreciated. With your commitment, we continue to safeguard critical natural spaces, protect species at risk, plant trees, naturalize shorelines and support accessible, outdoor education for our youth.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge and thank the many hundreds of generous and community-minded people who made a gift to conservation in 2022. Thank you for making your local natural environment a priority.

On behalf of the RVCF Board of Directors, I am proud to share our 2022 highlights. We appreciate your continued confidence in our conservation projects and look forward to a healthy, resilient future together.

Yours in conservation,

Andrew Harkness,
RVCF Chair



LEFT: Hulse, Playfair & McGarry President Sharon McGarry joins RVCF Chair Andrew Harkness to plant a ceremonial tree in celebration of the funeral home's 20 years of memorial tree planting.

RIGHT: RVCF Executive Director Diane Downey, left, thanks LiVE 88.5's Dave Schellenberg for the radio station's 10 years of Carbon Neutral commitment. Forestry Manager Ian Cochrane and RVCA General Manager Sommer Casgrain-Robertson joined in to offer their appreciation, too!

In 2022, the RVCF was generously supported by



600

individuals and families



11

corporate partners



3

not-for-profits



3

government partners



8

in-kind donors



8

directors

2022 Highlights

- Celebrated \$429,000 in grants from Canada's Community Revitalization Fund in support of two major accessibility infrastructure projects: Baxter Conservation Area Accessible Bridge and Boardwalk Project and the Chapman Mills Conservation Area Accessible Bridge;
- Honoured year two of our partnership with Modern Niagara, which will provide \$300,000 over five years to help acquire and protect vulnerable land in the watershed;
- Accepted three new land donations to ensure long-term protection of 127 hectares of green infrastructure;
- Raised \$8,270 for the Steve Simmering Conservation Land Endowment Fund during our Giving Tuesday campaign, thanks to generous matching funds from the Simmering Family;
- Continued protection of more than 3,176 hectares of conservation land throughout the Rideau watershed;
- Raised \$134,000 in support for Phase 2 of the restoration of Hutton Marsh thanks to a dedicated group of local stakeholders and funders, including Ducks Unlimited Canada, Leeds Grenville Stewardship Council, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters Zone F, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG), Wildlife Habitat Canada, Ontario Land Trust Alliance, and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority;
- Partnered with One Tree Planted to plant 40,000 tree seedlings in spring 2022;
- Celebrated 62,700 trees planted by LiVE 88.5 over its 10 years of Carbon Neutral commitments;
- Commemorated our 20-year tree planting partnership with Hulse, Playfair and McGarry with the planting of a ceremonial oak at their Kemptville chapel;
- Planted 807 memorial and special occasion trees in tribute of loved ones;
- Applauded new and returning Carbon Neutral individuals, businesses and events including Capital Pyro, LiVE 88.5, Elephant Print, Greek Fest Ottawa, McCooye Wealth Management – Mandeville Private Client Inc., Somersault Events, and velofix Ottawa;
- Supported the Nature for All Committee in its fundraising efforts for a transformational accessibility project at Baxter Conservation Area;
- Continued partnership with GiveShop to raise funds through its online community marketplace;
- Helped families in need participate in Forest School programming at Baxter and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas;
- Partnered with BOGS® Outdoor Fund to reduce or eliminate bus and registration fees for students attending outdoor education programs at Foley and Baxter Conservation Areas;
- Welcomed support from special partners including the City of Ottawa Rural Community Building Grant, FedEx Cares and RBC Foundation;
- Enjoyed the confidence of several land development companies who use the Foundation's Species at Risk Compensation Program services to compensate for the unavoidable loss of butternut or bobolink and meadowlark habitat during their business activities. We are currently managing 37 projects.

RVCF has raised

\$ 7.9M

for conservation since 1994.

Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation

Box 988

3889 Rideau Valley Drive
Manotick, ON K4M 1A8

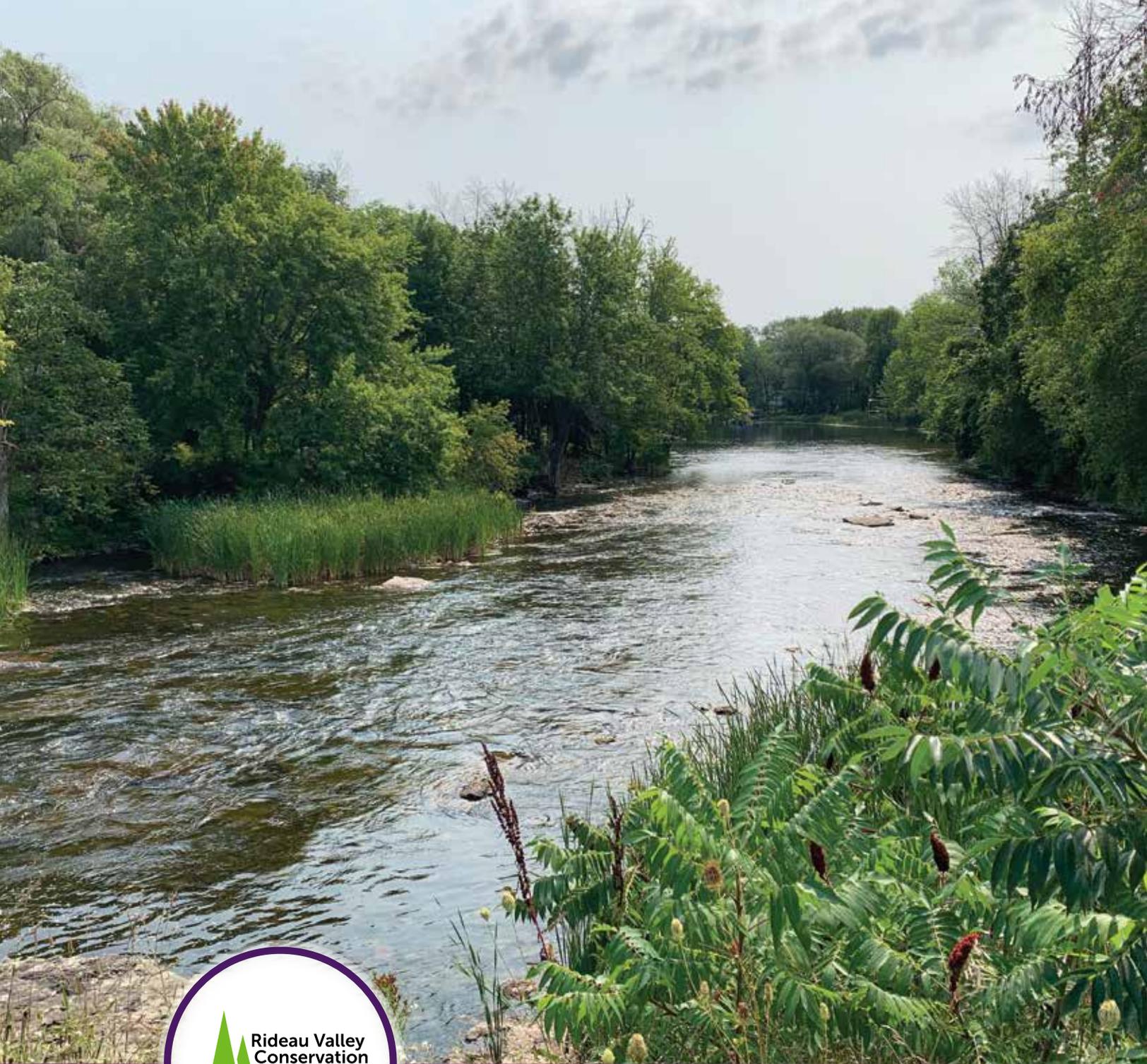
613-692-3571 ext. 1126

info@rvcf.ca www.rvcf.ca

Visit our donor board at rvcf.ca/supporters
or visit us at our office!

The RVCF is proudly accredited under Imagine Canada's Standards Program having demonstrated excellence in board governance, financial accountability and transparency, ethical fundraising, staff management and volunteer involvement RVCF is also a proud and practicing member of both the Ontario and Canada Land Trust Alliances.





Rideau Valley
Conservation
Authority

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

Box 599, 3889 Rideau Valley Drive

Manotick, ON K4M 1A5

613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504

www.rvca.ca

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