

2007 Annual Report

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

clean water and environmental protection



We are pleased to present our 2007 RVCA Annual Report and share our achievements over the past year.

The Conservation Authority continues down an ambitious path. Working with our partners, we maintain healthy shores, provide advice on development issues and report on water conditions and trends. We provide public access to natural waterfront areas, deliver community-based stewardship programs, reduce water pollution and protect fish and wildlife habitat. We strive to protect source water, prevent flooding and erosion problems and research water movement and use in the valley.

2007 was also a year of change. Our move to a new corporate headquarters has been a long time coming and we are especially pleased to be moving into a unique, energy-efficient and environmentally-sensitive building that houses all our staff under one roof. Clean water and environmental protection are our prime concerns and our new building reflects those values.

Thank you to our municipal, provincial, federal and community-based partners especially our 18 municipal members. Sustained municipal support allows us to continue to build our capacity and competency. Working together, we share the costs and the long-term results watershed wide. Clearly, we are all in this together.

Thank you to our staff. These committed and enthusiastic conservation professionals have a diverse range of expertise that allows us to pursue serious, cost-effective protection of our resources.

We must especially acknowledge the valuable contribution of former RVCA Director Cliff Craig. His retirement brings to an end an impressive 32 year career in environmental protection at the RVCA. His lasting contributions are greatly appreciated and his presence at the Authority will be greatly missed.

We look forward to 2008 challenges and opportunities. We will not rest on our past achievements, but instead put to work the experience we've gained and the processes we've enhanced to ensure we make the most of new work and new opportunities.

Again, we are proud of our accomplishments and proud of the RVCA people – municipal members, staff and friends who made these accomplishments happen. Thank you.

Alan Arbuckle, Chair
Dell Hallett, General Manager

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- Alan Arbuckle **Chair** — City of Ottawa
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- Maria McRae — City of Ottawa
- John H. Miller — Tay Valley Township
- Cathy Willoughby — Village of Merrickville-Wolford

quality environmental programs

Our Focus — Our Vision

Environmental quality is the key to both social well-being and economic growth. The RVCA plays a key role in delivering quality environmental programs in participation with our many watershed partners. Working with our member municipalities, we combine efforts at a shared cost that is well below what our member municipalities would pay on their own.

Our work and resources are primarily aimed at achieving:

- improved water quality
- sustained water supply
- reduced flood risk
- conserved watershed habitats
- managed conservation areas and programs
- increased watershed information



Watershed Planning, Monitoring and Reporting

- The Lower Rideau Watershed Strategy received endorsement and moved into implementation phase with its municipal, provincial and federal partners. The *Lower Rideau Reader* Tabloid is distributed throughout the subwatershed.
- The Kemptville Creek Watershed Plan completed its first update as part of the five year watershed planning cycle.
- Pike and Christie Lakes joined the Lake Management Planning program as it entered into its third year.
- Macro-stream assessments, fish community sampling and thermal regime information are collected in anticipation of the start of the Middle Rideau Watershed Plan.
- The MVC and RVCA Boards of Directors established the Source Protection Committee. The Mississippi-Rideau Source Water Protection team continued research and analysis of local groundwater and surface water conditions.
- Over 450 sites throughout the watershed were sampled for water chemistry.
- Over 70 lake and stream sites were sampled and analyzed for water quality using benthic invertebrate sampling techniques under the Provincial Ontario Benthic Biomonitoring Network.
- The Watershed Watch program moved into its seventh year gathering water quality and environmental data on 39 lakes.
- Ottawa's City Stream Watch moved into year five assessing Nepean Creek, Cranberry Creek, Taylor Creek and many of the tributaries along Greens Creek. Volunteers took part in monitoring, stream cleanups and riparian planting opportunities.
- Thermal classifications for approximately 60 municipal drains were collected using instream temperature probes. Sixteen municipal drains that were classified as "unknowns" were also sampled using the Municipal Drain Classification system and are now classified.
- The RVCA monitored groundwater levels and quality at 15 monitoring wells as part of the Provincial Ground Monitoring Network.
- The RVCA secured provincial transfer payments in support of Ottawa's Rideau River Ice Management Operations.
- Stop logs are replaced at the Bellamy Lake Dam (Irish Creek) and new guide rails are installed along the adjacent Lake Eloida Road.
- The review of operational objectives at the Mott's Mill Dam (Hutton Creek) and the Heart's Desire Weir (Jock River) is initiated.
- Water and flow levels are monitored as part of low water response and flood forecasting and warning.
- Progress is made on hydrologic and hydraulic analyses to delineate flood prone areas along the Tay River above Glen Tay, and on Kemptville Creek (Kemptville to North Augusta)
- Development of a new "GIS Portal" is initiated to facilitate access to all RVCA geospatial datasets at all workstations on the RVCA network



Stewardship Services

- The Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program approved 80 projects with grants totaling \$85,475 which amounts to \$560,000 of on-the-ground investment. Since 2005, the Ottawa program has issued \$242,000 in grants in the Rideau watershed which is part of the \$1.4 million being invested by landowners in on-the-ground work. Thanks to our municipal partners and 2007 sponsors (OMYA, R.W. Tomlinson Ltd. and the Monterey Inn) as well as past program donors.
- Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program approved 43 projects with over \$51,500 worth of grants which amounts to \$257,000 of on-the-ground investment. Since 2002, this program has issued approximately \$338,000 in grants for clean water projects which part of the \$1.3 million being invested by rural landowners in on-the-ground work.
- The RVCA's Trees for Tomorrow program and the City of Ottawa's Green Acres program planted 135,000 trees. Overall, that's 3.7 million trees planted in the watershed.
- The RVCA and its partners continued to support the Eastern Ontario Butternut Recovery Program. Over 375 healthy and mature trees have been found, mapped and added to our seed source database. An additional 2,000 healthy butternut seedlings were planted this spring.
- The RVCA's Beaver Management Advisory Program helped landowners by providing information on trapping and dam removal while balancing the needs of the aquatic ecosystem. RVCA also assisted Rideau Lakes Township and local residents of Otter Creek and Otter Lake with stream surveys and beaver and dam removal.
- The LandOwner Resource Centre continued to provide clients with quality environmental information on stewardship, planning and regulations.

Conservation Land Management

- The RVCA operated, maintained and serviced over 2,286 hectares and 10 developed Conservation Areas.
- The Baxter Conservation Area welcomed over 5,000 children who participate in a variety of outdoor education programs. An additional 600 students participated in the specially funded Ottawa Children's Water Festival that happens each spring at Baxter. Baxter also upgraded its trails with forty metres of new boardwalk thanks to the HIVA Environment Fund.
- The Foley Mountain Conservation Area welcomed Rebecca Whitman as the new Outdoor Educator and Supervisor. Foley had a very successful spring program with a total of 1,100 students, 60 teachers and 250 additional adults attending the program. The new summer series was also well enjoyed with 20 to 40 people attending each session. Thanks to the Friends of Foley Mountain, the wheelchair ramp at the interpretive centre is complete and the new snowshoes for the education program have been purchased.
- A new, environmentally-friendly dock is installed at W.A. Taylor Conservation Area thanks to Fendor Glass and Aluminum and the Osgoode Township Fish, Game and Conservation Club.
- The legendary Rideau Ferry Regatta returned to the Rideau Ferry Yacht Club Conservation Area for the first time in close to 30 years. Over 1,200 visitors attended the two-day event.
- Student volunteers, through the OARS program, provided labour for the maple syrup program at the Mill Pond Conservation Area. They also provided support for bird habitat and trail enhancements.

Special Thanks to our Tree Planting Partners: City of Ottawa, Ontario Trillium Fund, McGarry Family of Chapels, Pratt and Whitney Canada, The Monterey Inn, Leeds, Lanark and Ottawa County Stewardship Councils, Trees Ontario Foundation, Ontario Power Generation, Wetland Habitat Fund, The Willow Group, Tree Canada Foundation, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation, and Eastern Ontario Model Forest.



Planning and Regulations

- RVCA staff provided watershed-wide technical assistance to municipalities regarding land use planning and development services including hydrogeology, and stormwater management and the review of environmental impact statements.
- Almost 1,200 site specific planning applications were reviewed. We also responded to over 400 property inquiries for prospective purchasers who were seeking information on development constraints and environmental conditions. The scope and intensity of our review is changing as sites previously considered marginal are now becoming more attractive for development. Municipal approval authorities in the upper watershed accepted our recommendations and incorporate them into their decisions more than 90 percent of the time.
- Staff reviewed new lot creation, site plans, zoning amendments and minor variances. They also participated in large scale development applications: Mahogany Community (Minto, Manotick), Riverside South Master Drainage Plan and Master Servicing Study Update, Cardinal Creek Subwatershed Study.
- Over 250 applications were processed under the *Conservation Authorities Act* Section 28 regulation relating to "Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses," a more than 50 percent increase in activity from previous annual averages. Activity is split almost equally between interference with watercourses (related to construction of roads, bridges, replacement of culverts, etc.) and on-site development (new construction, additions, fill placement for landscaping and septic systems and related) activity.

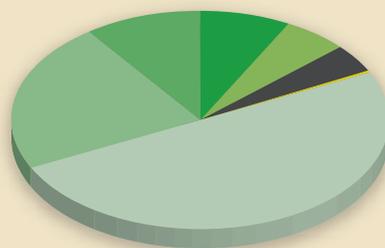
- Some 26 occurrences or violations were investigated, ten of which involved Provincial Offences charges under the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Nine hearings were conducted by the Executive Committee with two appeals to the Minister both of which were resolved.
- 120 reviews completed under Section 35 of the federal *Fisheries Act* — highest ever recorded by RVCA
- The RVCA, in partnership with neighbouring Conservation Authorities, continued to act as the municipal approval authority for private septic systems in the City of Ottawa and the Tay Valley Township. Over 850 septic applications were processed at the Ottawa Septic System Office and over 90 were processed through the Mississippi-Rideau Septic System Office (MRSSO). The MRSSO continued its septic re-inspection program. Seven hundred older systems were re-inspected along lake shores in the Townships of North Frontenac, Rideau Lakes and Tay Valley.

Corporate Services

- After some 35 years of being located in the heart of historic Manotick, the RVCA relocated to its new Conservation Centre. The building is destined to become Eastern Ontario's finest example of green construction with silver LEED certification.
- Continued investment into quality financial reporting, human resources, corporate communications and customer service.

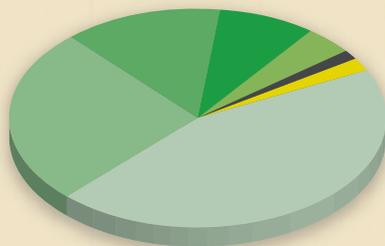
Financing Conservation

2007 Expenditures



Office Building	— \$7,012,771
Watershed Planning, Monitoring & Reporting	— \$3,128,208
Planning Advisory and Regulatory Services	— \$1,402,568
Stewardship Services	— \$1,075,383
Conservation Land Management	— \$797,464
Corporate Services	— \$588,049
Capital Water Structures	— \$5,868
Total	— \$14,010,311

2007 Revenues



Office Building	— \$6,227,722
Municipal Levy	— \$3,667,000
Other Revenue	— \$1,903,777
Provincial Source Water Protection Grants	— \$1,189,362
Special Levies	— \$566,052
Reserves	— \$213,711
Provincial Operating Grants	— \$242,687
Total	\$14,010,311

Conservation Foundation

Healthy Rivers...Healthy Communities

The Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation (RVCF) is a registered charity that plays an important part in making conservation projects happen throughout the watershed. In the past 15 years, the RVCF has raised over \$1.5 million in cash and in-kind services for the education programs, boardwalks and trails, biodiversity monitoring and the acquisition of key environmental properties in the valley. In 2007, the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation raised over \$45,000 for conservation programs in the valley and an additional \$340,000 to secure the LEED designation for the new RVCA Conservation Centre in Beryl Gaffney Park.

Highlights for 2007:

- Meisel Woods trail construction continues
- 40 metres of boardwalk at the Baxter Conservation Area boardwalk
- Monarch Donation of \$7,500 to the RVCF Environmental Land Fund
- Conservation Centre Gala raised \$340,000 for LEED certification
- The Conservation Award for 2006 goes to Susan O'Brien-MacTaggart and the Bobs and Crow Lakes Association for completing their lake management plan called *Imagine...A Stewardship Plan for Bobs and Crow Lakes*.

Thanks to our many loyal and generous donors who made 2007 such a successful year.

To learn more about the RVCF, visit www.rvca.ca/foundation

*"With your goodwill,
some of the most
beautiful things in life
can last forever..."*

RVCF Planned Giving
Program brochure

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