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## Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, September 28, 2023  
6:30 pm  
3889 Rideau Valley Drive, Manotick ON  
(RVCA Boardroom)

*Members and the public are also welcome to join via Zoom.*

Please contact Marissa Grondin at [marissa.grondin@rvca.ca](mailto:marissa.grondin@rvca.ca) or 1-800-267-3504 ext. 1177 in advance of the meeting if you wish to receive instructions to join.

## AGENDA

<b>Meeting 6/23</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1.0 Roll Call</b>	
<b>2.0 Land Acknowledgement Statement</b>	
<b>3.0 Agenda Review</b>	
<b>4.0 Adoption of Agenda</b>	
<b>5.0 Declaration of Interest</b>	
<b>6.0 Approval of Minutes from July 27, 2023</b>	
<b>7.0 Business Arising from Minutes</b>	
<b>8.0 Completion of Truck Purchases</b> Staff Report Attached (Terry K. Davidson) .....	01
<b>9.0 Partial Washroom Renovation at Baxter Conservation Area</b> Staff Report Attached (Dan Cooper) .....	03
<b>10.0 Category 3 Cost-Apportioning Agreements Status</b> Staff Report Attached (Sommer Casgrain-Robertson) .....	05
<b>11.0 Activity Report: August to September 2023</b> Staff Report Attached (Sommer Casgrain-Robertson) .....	08
<b>12.0 2024 Budget and Workplan Direction</b> Staff Presentation (Sommer Casgrain-Robertson)	

### 13.0 Meetings

- a) Elizabethtown-Kitley Council Meeting: August 14, 2023
- b) Rideau Lakes Council Meeting: August 28, 2023
- c) Ontario East Municipal Conference (OEMC): September 6-8, 2023
- d) Athens Council Meeting Presentation: September 11, 2023
- e) Tay Valley Township Council Presentation: September 12, 2023
- f) RVCF Board of Directors Meeting: September 13, 2023
- g) North Grenville Council Meeting Presentation: September 13, 2023
- h) Beckwith Council Meeting Presentation: September 19, 2023
- i) Foley Mountain 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration: September 22, 2023
- j) Conservation Ontario Council Meeting: September 25, 2023
- k) Central Frontenac Council Meeting Presentation: September 26, 2023
- l) Drummond/North Elmsley Council Meeting Presentation: September 26, 2023

### Upcoming

- m) Montague Council Meeting Presentation: October 3, 2023
- n) Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, City of Ottawa: October 5, 2023
- o) Source Protection Committee Meeting: October 5, 2023
- p) Merrickville-Wolford Council Meeting Presentation: October 10, 2023
- q) Clarence-Rockland Council Meeting Presentation: October 11, 2023
- r) North Dundas Council Meeting Presentation: October 17, 2023
- s) Latonell Conservation Symposium: October 23 & 24, 2023
- t) RVCA Board of Directors Meeting: October 26, 2023

### 14.0 Member Inquiries

### 15.0 New Business

### 16.0 Adjournment

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### Action Items from Previous Meetings:

Item	Lead Staff	Anticipated Timeline
Cost Analysis of Electric Vehicles	Terry Davidson	October 2023
Update Purchasing policy (staff signing limit)	Kathy Dallaire	October 2023

**Proudly working in partnership  
with our 18 watershed municipalities**

Athens, Augusta, Beckwith, Central Frontenac, Clarence-Rockland,  
Drummond/North Elmsley, Elizabethtown-Kitley, Merrickville-Wolford, Montague,  
North Dundas, North Grenville, Ottawa, Perth, Rideau Lakes, Smiths Falls, South Frontenac, Tay Valley, Westport

## 8.0 Completion of Truck Purchases Report #: 01-230928

To: RVCA Board of Directors  
From: Terry K. Davidson, P.Eng.  
Director of Engineering and Regulations  
Date: September 20, 2023

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### Recommendation:

**THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority receive this report for information.**

### Purpose

To update the Board of Directors on the purchase of two ½ tonne trucks and one ¾ tonne truck approved by the Board on March 23, 2023.

### Background

In the past, staff would conduct an extensive pricing review to obtain the lowest price before purchasing a new vehicle, but this resulted in dealerships giving a quote based on ordering a new truck. However, some dealerships had vehicles in their inventory that had manufacture discounts along with dealership discounts that would be a less expensive option, but staff could not obtain these vehicles because they would be sold before staff could obtain Board approval at the next meeting. In March 2023 staff asked the Board to authorize staff to purchase 3 trucks within an upset limit based on the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP). Staff could then shop around over a longer period and take advantage of various discounts, including discounted trucks on the lot. The approval included a condition that staff report back to the Board with the final purchase prices.

### Analysis

The following table indicates the purchase price for all three vehicles as well as the original MSRP price contained in the March 23, 2023 staff report. As shown, staff were able to purchase all three vehicles below the MSRP.

Category of Truck	Manufacturer	MSRP (March 2023)	Purchase Price
½ Tonne	Dodge	\$56,048	\$53,008
½ Tonne	Dodge	\$55,048	\$54,089
¾ Tonne	GMC/Chev	\$71,357	\$69,527

**Input From Other Sources**

N/A

**Financial Considerations**

These purchases do not have budget implications as they were funded from RVCA's vehicle reserve. The cost of new acquisitions is taken out of this reserve which replenishes itself by collecting internal recoveries from programs that use vehicles. The internal recovery rates have been set to sufficiently maintain the reserve.

**Legal Considerations****Adherence to RVCA Policy**

These purchases adhered to RVCA's purchasing policy which requires three quotes and Board of Director approval for purchases over \$25,000.

**Link to Strategic Plan****Attachment**

## 9.0 Partial Washroom Renovation at Baxter Conservation Area Report #: 02-230928

To: RVCA Board of Directors  
From: Dan Cooper  
Director Conservation Lands and Stewardship  
Date: September 20, 2023

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### Recommendation:

**THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority receive this report for information.**

### Purpose

To update the Board on renovations to the washrooms in the interpretive centre at Baxter Conservation Area.

### Background

Baxter Conservation Area is one of 11 [conservation areas](#) operated by the RVCA and is an 80-hectare parcel of land located along the north shore of the Rideau River just east of Highway 416. The site has over 5 kms of trails as well as picnic shelters, a beach, a nut grove, boardwalks, a lookout and an interpretive centre that provides outdoor education. Baxter welcomes 45,000 visitors a year including 9,000 students who participate in RVCA's outdoor education programs, forest school and summer camps as well as weekend rentals with community groups like the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts.

Staff have been working with the RVCF and [Nature For All](#) committee on raising awareness and funds to improve accessibility at Baxter Conservation Area. The Committee began by working with Marnie Peters & Co. Accessibility Consulting to create an outdoor spaces accessibility standard. The consultant also provided recommendations on how Baxter's indoor spaces could be improved, including the washrooms in the interpretive centre which was constructed in 1992.

It was determined that to make the washrooms fully accessible, gender inclusive and designed to meet the needs of all visitors and programs, the washrooms needed to be redesigned. In November 2021, staff issued a Request for Proposal seeking a consultant to redesign the washrooms. The firm of 25:8 Architecture and Urban Design was selected and worked with staff to create a new design which included:

- Standalone toilet stalls with a common sink area (four typical stalls, two accessible stalls and one universal washroom with an adult change table)
- The addition of accessibility features (touchless doors, sinks and hand driers)

Based on preliminary cost estimates it was expected that the project could be completed for under \$260,000 plus applicable taxes, so the Board of Directors approved the project and funding envelop at their March 23, 2023 meeting to ensure a grant secured by the RVCF for \$100,000 from the federal government's Enabling Accessibility Fund could be used to support the project.

### **Analysis**

To complete the project staff issued a Request for Quotes, but unfortunately only one contractor submitted a bid which was \$324,440. After speaking with the contractor, it was understood that the higher than previously estimated quote was due to an abundance of work and the tight timeline, not the cost to complete the project.

With the cost to fully redesign the washroom too expensive at this time, the \$100,000 grant was still available to do renovations that improved accessibility, so staff completed those elements of the renovation which included:

- Automated entrance doors to the interpretive centre and bathrooms
- Upgraded partitions in the bathrooms with larger latches and wider doors
- Installation of touchless sinks, soap dispensers and hand driers

Staff will continue to pursue funding to complete the redesign of the bathrooms to make them inclusive in addition to being accessible. This may include retendering the project in the future when a longer construction window can be provided and market conditions may be more favourable.

### **Input From Other Sources**

RVCA worked closely with the RVCF and Nature for All Committee to prioritize and fundraise for accessibility improvements at Baxter Conservation Area. Marnie Peters & Co. Accessibility Consulting provided an initial accessibility audit of the site and has provided valuable ongoing feedback.

### **Financial Considerations**

The RVCF secured a federal grant of \$100,000 which was used to complete the accessibility improvements.

### **Strategic Plan**

This project supports a number of Strategic Priorities including:

- Employ new strategies to attract more visitors to our conservation areas where people unwind and develop an appreciation for nature.
- Continue developing new partnerships and business models that increase capacity, reduce costs or generate new revenue.

**10.0 Category 3 Cost-Apportioning Agreements Status**  
**Report #: 03-230928**

To: RVCA Board of Directors  
 From: Sommer Casgrain-Robertson  
 General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer  
 Date: September 21, 2023

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**Recommendation:**

**THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority receive this report for information and direct staff to submit a request to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry for an extension to February 29, 2024 to complete cost-apportioning agreements with municipalities.**

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**Purpose**

To update the Board on the status of Category 3 cost apportioning agreements and seek approval to request an extension from the province to complete these agreements.

**Background**

Changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* now requires conservation authorities to have written agreements with municipalities by January 1, 2024 to continue the delivery of category 3 programs and services supported by municipal levy.

At their May 25, 2023, the Board approved a business case for the continuation of RVCA's category 3 programs. This was circulated to member municipalities along with a draft cost-apportioning agreement as required by legislation.

The business case explained the new requirement for cost-apportioning agreements, the purpose and value of RVCA's category 3 programs and the estimated portion of RVCA's current municipal levy that supports these programs. The two category 3 programs and services currently delivered by RVCA with levy support are:

- Surface Water Monitoring and Reporting: Monitoring water quality indicators and stream conditions, producing data and reports showing changes and trends, completing stream and habitat restoration projects.
- Private Land Stewardship: Planting trees, naturalizing shorelines, funding best management practices that improve water quality.

Currently, 82% of RVCA's municipal levy supports Category 1 (mandatory programs) while 18% supports Category 3 programs. The draft agreement requests:

- That municipalities allow RVCA to continue using a maximum of 20% of its municipal levy to support Category 3 programs.
- That the agreement be 5 years in duration with a renewal clause following a mandatory review at 5 years.
- That the agreement have a 6 month early termination clause.
- That the municipal levy for Category 3 programs be apportioned to municipalities based on the regular modified current value assessment approach

### **Analysis**

Staff worked with municipal staff over the summer to review the materials and schedule Council dates when agreements could be brought forth for consideration. Staff have been attending or presenting at municipal council meetings throughout August and September and dates are booked throughout October and into November. The current status of agreements is:

#### Approved Cost Apportioning Agreements:

• Elizabethtown-Kitley	August 14	Attended
• Rideau Lakes	August 28	Attended
• Athens	September 11	Presented
• Augusta	September 11	SNC Attended
• Tay Valley Township	September 12	Presented
• North Grenville	September 13	Presented
• Beckwith Township	September 19	Presented

#### Upcoming Council Dates:

• Central Frontenac	September 26	Presenting
• Drummond / North Elmsley	September 26	MVCA Presenting
• Montague	October 3	Presenting
• Ottawa	October 5	Attending
• Merrickville-Wolford	October 10	Presenting
• Clarence-Rockland	October 11	Presenting
• North Dundas	October 17	Presenting
• South Frontenac	October 17	CRCA Presenting
• Perth	November 7	Attending

#### Awaiting Confirmation of Council Dates:

- Smiths Falls
- Westport

Under the legislation, if more time is required beyond January 1, 2024 to complete cost apportioning agreements with municipalities, conservation authorities can submit a request to the Ministry for an extension. The request must be received by October 1, 2023, and demonstrate that additional time is required to conclude Category 3 cost



apportioning agreements between the conservation authority and one or more participating municipalities. The Ministry also encourages that requests include an estimated length of time that will be required to complete the agreements.

Based on the current status of approved agreements, staff are confident that all agreements will have been considered by Councils by end of year. However, staff recommend that an extension request be submitted as a precaution as some council meeting dates have been rescheduled and are now slipping into November with two yet to be scheduled. A two month extension to February 29, 2024 is recommended.

### **Input from Other Sources**

Staff worked very closely with neighbouring conservation authorities to develop similar business cases and agreement templates. Staff are now presenting jointly to shared municipalities.

### **Financial Considerations**

No impact to the 2023 budget. The outcome of cost apportioning agreements will be reflected in RVCA's 2024 budget.

### **Legal Considerations**

Municipal agreements need to comply with Ontario Regulation 687/21 in addition to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and Ontario Regulation 402/22.

**11.0 Activity Report: August to September 2023**  
**Report #: 04-230928**

To: RVCA Board of Directors  
 From: All Staff  
 Date: September 20, 2023

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**Purpose**

To provide the Board with an update on program delivery, operations, events and news items including links to key items.

**Program Highlights**

**Science and Engineering**

Rideau Valley Low Water Response Team: Staff have engaged with municipalities and provincial and federal agencies to assist the RVCA with low water messaging. The RVCA monitors stream flow information and precipitation and issues low water condition statements in response to local conditions. RVCA issued low-water messages in July and early August but then quickly pivoted back to water safety messages in response to large rain events. Staff continue to respond to changing conditions across the watershed and issue statements as required.

Provincial Water Quality Monitoring: Routine sampling continues on behalf of the province. The 10 sites assigned to RVCA are on major waterways and will be sampled monthly until November. Turbidity and conductivity loggers were recently launched with two mid-season data downloads complete.

Baseline Water Quality Monitoring: Sample collection and monitoring continues at 104 sites mostly located on smaller streams and tributaries. Sites in the City of Ottawa (45) will be visited monthly until December and sites in the remainder of the watershed (59) will be visited one more time before December.

Lake Water Quality Monitoring (Watershed Watch Program): All 39 monitored lakes have been visited three times. One more sample will be collected at each lake prior to year-end.

Headwater Drainage Feature Monitoring:

In July, staff returned to the 107 headwater drainage feature sites for summer assessments. Headwater sampling requires both spring and summer visits. We have now completed headwater sampling for Mud Creek (Manotick), Mosquito Creek,

Bilberry Creek, and Stillwater Creek for 2023. This data will be available in our upcoming City Stream Watch catchment reports.

#### City Stream Watch:

With the help of volunteers, staff completed stream surveys and fish sampling for Mud Creek, Mosquito Creek, Bilberry Creek, and Stillwater Creek. Data cleanup and analysis are now underway to prepare the data for our Catchment Reports which will be released in early 2024. Thermal data will continue to be collected in these systems until early November.

#### Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network:

Staff have been working through their spring samples to identify thousands of macroinvertebrates as they are indicators of water quality and aquatic habitat. Staff are also gearing up for their next round of sampling which will take place in the first three weeks of October. They have also finished the identification of all 2022 samples and will start working to produce the 2022 OBBN reports.

#### Wetland Restoration Projects:

Staff continue to monitor two wetland restoration projects: Stillwater Wetland and Jebbs Wetland Embayment. Along with routine monthly monitoring, staff have also incorporated vegetation surveys and fish sampling of both projects. After monitoring is complete, staff will work to produce yearly reports for these projects.



*Hearts Desire Rocky Ramp, Ottawa*

Hearts Desire Rocky Ramp: Repairs to the rocky ramp are complete. Aggregate and large stones were placed around the decommissioned dam's flashboards to provide structural integrity as it maintains water levels upstream as agreed to with the Hearts Desire Community. RVCA will monitor the site to ensure the rocky ramp operates as designed.

#### Drinking Water Source Protection:

Mississippi-Rideau Risk Management staff have been helping the City of Ottawa administer its Fuel Tank Replacement Rebate Program. Homeowners within specific Wellhead Protection Areas in Ottawa are eligible to apply for a rebate to remove their oil tank and switch to an alternative heat source. This initiative eliminates the drinking water threat and protects municipal drinking water systems. Eligible residents can get up to \$10,000 to remove their oil tank and connect to an

alternative heat source. Residents who are interested in upgrading to a green energy

source, such as an air source heat pump, can get up to \$15,000. Staff are on the ground speaking with eligible homeowners and helping them apply for the rebate and are pleased with program uptake so far.

### **Conservation Lands and Stewardship**

Tree Planting: Staff currently have agreements with 71 landowners to plant a total of 174,900 trees next spring. The two largest projects will see 8,000 trees planted in Sarsfield and Merrickville. Site visits continue throughout September. Staff and an independent contractor are starting site preparation, including mowing, scribing and band spraying, for next year's planting.

Butternut Recovery Program: Staff have visited ten sites to inspect the survival of butternut plantations on private lands. Staff provide landowner advice to help improve survival and offer refills as needed for next spring. Butternut seed collection will take place this fall and will be stored at a local nursery.

Shoreline Naturalization Program: Staff have completed 32 site visits in preparation for spring planting and are still actively scheduling visits. Survival assessments from 2023's planting season are showing good results, with multiple properties showing interest in participating in the program for a second time.

Rural Clean Water Program: Thirty-six new projects were approved over July and August. A total of \$66,000 in funding has been allocated to projects valued at over \$305,000. This brings the total for 2023 to 110 projects, with over \$245,000 supporting projects valued at over \$685,000. These projects will be implemented on farms and rural properties throughout the watershed, helping to protect and improve local water quality.

Outdoor Education Programs: Fall outdoor education programming returned to both Baxter and Foley Mountain. Thanks to the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation fundraising efforts, bus and program subsidies are available for local schools looking to participate in these experiential curriculum-connected outdoor education programs.

Both Baxter and Foley are once again offering Fall Forest School sessions for hands-on, nature-based play, learning, and adventure. These programs are available to both kindergarten and school-age children. Baxter is introducing a new Forest School program for 10 to 13 year-old students and Foley Mountain is launching a new program called Family Forest School for children aged 2 to 5 accompanied by a caregiver.

Conservation Areas: The summer season closed out with a cool August at the conservation areas. Beaches are slowly closing throughout September. Foley Mountain staff are gearing up for a busy season for park visitation as the leaves start to change. From the end of September through to mid-late October, staff will be on-site on weekends to assist the large number of visitors navigating the site while also keeping the facilities stocked and welcoming.

Conservation Lands Monitoring: Staff continue to monitor RVCA and RVCF lands for Species at Risk and the general species list for Conservation Areas and Natural Areas which can assist in lowering property taxes. Staff have started annual inspections of Natural Areas focusing on islands and properties accessible by boat in September.

## **Planning and Regulations**

Property Inquiries: Staff responded to 492 property inquiries and provided 64 legal clearance letters.

Plan Review: Staff reviewed 615 planning applications and provided comments to municipalities: 610 with no objections (with or without conditions), 5 with objections, 94 under review, and 6 on hold.

Section 28 Regulation: Staff approved 174 Section 28 permit applications, 34 under review, and 14 on hold.

Septic System Inspections: Staff reviewed 339 septic permit applications: 243 permits issued and 32 Certificates of Completion issued.

Septic System Re-inspections: Re-inspections continue for Rideau Lakes, Tay Valley, Central Frontenac and North Frontenac with 598 complete and approximately 650 scheduled for 2023.

## **Corporate Services**

Finance: RVCA's new online payment portal now allows clients to pay for septic courses, outdoor education programs and conservation area rentals online. Staff are also in the final testing phase to enable clients to pay for septic permits online. Staff also set up direct deposit for cheques which enables staff to scan and deposit cheques from the office instead of having to take them to the bank.

Human Resources: New agreement templates were finalized to document flexible work arrangements including compressed work weeks, flexible work hours and work from home arrangements. These updated agreements were reviewed by legal counsel to ensure they complied with current health and safety and employment law requirements.

Budget and Work Planning: Departmental meetings are underway across the organization to identify potential short and long-term priorities for 2024 / 25. These priorities will form the basis of a draft workplan that will be presented to the Board in October for review and input.

Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation: A Special Meeting of the Foundation's Members was held on September 13 where RVCF Members approved the updated bylaws and Articles of Amendment. A regularly scheduled meeting of the RVCF Board of Directors followed to deal with regular Foundation business.

## Staffing Updates

### Gavin Robertson, Aquatic Resource Technician

Gavin is a recent graduate of the University of Ottawa. Gavin worked with the RVCA's Workshop Crew as a summer student in 2021 and 2022. In the summer of 2023, he joined the Water Sciences team. Gavin will now support the City Stream Watch program, the Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network program, and our wetland restoration projects.

## Events

### **RVCA Hosted**

- The City Stream Watch Invasive Species Workshop returned after a four-year hiatus due to COVID-19. The workshop was a success once again with over 30 participants in attendance. Participants had the opportunity to learn about what invasive species are, how to identify them, and how to manage them.
  - Invasive Species Identification Workshop (July 28)
- City Stream Watch also continued to hold garbage cleanups and invasive species removals within the City of Ottawa, this includes private events with local businesses looking to give back to the community as well as invasive species removals with partners. Notably, staff continue to work with Parks Canada on the removal of Water Chestnut. RVCA has been actively removing Water Chestnut on the Rideau since 2015 and now that the plant has moved into the Tay River, staff added that as a new removal site in 2023.
  - Rideau and Tay River European Water Chestnut Removal (with Parks Canada, August 2)
  - Sawmill Creek Invasive Japanese Knotweed Removal (with volunteers, August 12)
  - Sawmill Creek Garbage Cleanup (Canon workplace event, August 23)
  - Barrhaven Creek Garbage Cleanup (with volunteers, August 26)
  - Stillwater Creek Shopping Cart Cleanup (staff, August 31)

### **RVCA Participation**

- Staff completed one large community shoreline planting event (Last Duel Park) and are scheduled to assist with two additional events in the coming weeks.

## Staff Presentations

- Three staff members attended the Ontario Flood Forecasting and Warning Workshop held in Toronto on September 18 and 19, 2023. The workshop was hosted by Conservation Ontario and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. This workshop strives to generate dialogue and promote learning and development

for professionals responsible for flood forecasting and warning, emergency management, flow measurement and data collection in Ontario. Justin Robert, RVCA's Environmental Data Specialist, gave a presentation entitled "*Enhancing the Daily Planning Cycle: How to use KIWIS/APIs in the Daily Planning Cycle*"

## Information Booths

- 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Tay Watershed Discovery Day (August 12)
  - The Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Program continues to be a popular feature at outreach events and staff attended the Tay Watershed Discovery Day to showcase the program.
- Ontario East Municipal Conference (September 6-8)
  - Conservation Ontario sponsored a booth for the eastern Ontario conservation authorities. It had materials from all the eastern conservation authorities and was staffed by RVCA and SNC. Big thanks to SNC who designed and set up the booth!

## News

### Newsletters:

- [RVCA Around the Rideau](#) (July/August 2023)

### Media Releases:

- [Reforest your rural Ottawa property for only pennies a tree](#), September 8, 2023
- [Commemorative Foley Mountain puzzle to support park programs](#), September 1, 2023
- [Invasive species the target of upcoming community workshop](#), July 18, 2023

### Media Coverage:

- [Baxter Conservation Area launches Forest School sessions for preteens](#), September 13, 2023
- [Fall in love with Foley Mountain in Westport – New puzzle commemorates view from Spy Rock](#), September 5, 2023
- [Foley Mountain launches new Family Forest School this fall](#), August 2023
- [Lake association and village work together to improve lake health](#), August 2023
- ['Exercise extreme caution': Conservation Authority warns of high water levels following heavy rains](#), August 11, 2023