RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY Box 599, 3889 Rideau Valley Drive Manotick, Ontario, K4M 1A5 (613) 692-3571, 1-800-267-3504

Hybrid meeting held in-person and electronically

DRAFT MINUTES

Board of D	virectors 4	1/24	Thursday, April 25, 2024
Present:	Anne Barr		Sean Devine
	Brian Dowdall		Mel Foster
	Steve Fournier		Susan Irwin
	Trevor Johnson		Theresa Kavanagh
	Wilson Lo		Shawn Pankow
	Angela Pierman		Anne Robinson
	Kristin Strackerjan		Adam Turcotte
	Gary Waterfield		Adrian Wynands
Staff:	Sommer Casgrain-Rober	tson	Dan Cooper
	Kathy Dallaire		Diane Downey
	Marissa Grondin		Marika Livingston
	Glen McDonald		Terry Davidson
Regrets:	Jeff Banks		David Brown
	Barry Card		

Chair Strackerjan called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m.

1.0 Roll Call

General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer introduced new Board member, Councillor Trevor Johnson from Montague Township, and proceeded with a roll call.

2.0 <u>Land Acknowledgement Statement</u>

Chair Strackerjan gave the Land Acknowledgement statement.

3.0 Agenda Review

Chair Strackerjan reviewed the Agenda.

4.0 Adoption of Agenda

Resolution 1-240425 Moved by: Anne Robinson

Seconded by: Brian Dowdall

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority adopts the Agenda as circulated.

Resolution Carried

5.0 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6.0 Approval of Minutes of March 28, 2024

Resolution 2-240425 Moved by: Adrian

Seconded by: Gary

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves the Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting #03/24, March 28, 2024 as circulated.

Resolution Carried

7.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising.

8.0 2023 Audited Financial Statements and Report of the Auditor

Kathy Dallaire, Manager of Finance introduced Ian Murphy, Partner with MNP who then presented the 2023 Audited Financial statements, Report of the Auditor and Management Letter.

A member inquired about the statement of financial position on page 9 of the report, specifically regarding deferred revenue. Ms. Dallaire explained that deferred revenue balances fluctuate, and some projects can carry over from year to year. Balances are drawn down as the associated work or services are performed. The member sought further clarification on the breakdown of these funds and specifically among what types of projects. Ms. Dallaire provided some examples and committed to providing the member with a more detailed list following the meeting.

Resolution 3-240425 Moved by: Steve Fournier

Seconded by: Wilson Lo

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

approves the attached Draft 2023 Audited Financial Statements for the year ending December 31, 2023, and receive the Report of the Auditor and Management Letter.

Resolution Carried

9.0 Proposed Discontinuation of Private Drinking Water Testing Program

Marika Livingston, Source Water Protection Project Manager, highlighted an Auditor General of Ontario's report that referenced a Public Health Ontario (PHO) plan proposing to discontinue Ontario's free private drinking water testing program. The Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee (MRSPC) sent a letter to the Minister of Health in response on April 19, 2024, opposing any discontinuation of the program. Ms. Livingston further shared that on Tuesday April 23, 2024, the Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones stated in the legislature that the province will not be discontinuing the service. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson then read the following remarks made by Minister Jones:

"We will continue to test the well water in the province of Ontario. We've had it for decades. I grew up with it. It is a system that many of us understand the value and importance of in rural Ontario because we lived it every single day. We're going to continue that process."

A member suggested that the Board still endorse the letter sent by the Source Protection Committee and send an additional letter to the Minister framed in support of her recent comments to continue Ontario's testing program.

Another member indicated concern that the plan also proposed the closure of 6 water testing laboratories in Ontario and asked if staff knew if any of those labs served the Rideau watershed. Another member indicated that one of the labs proposed for closure was Kingston which serves Frontenac and the surrounding community.

When a member asked why the PHO plan proposed discontinuation of the testing program, Ms. Livingston responded that the reason indicated was to streamline the service and for cost-saving purposes.

Another member supported the idea of sending a letter of gratitude and informed RVCA staff and members that the municipality of Central Frontenac also sent a letter objecting to the discontinuation of the water testing program and lab closures.

In response to a member inquiry about the total number of samples that PHO analyzes annually through their water testing program, Ms. Livingston stated that she didn't know but could obtain the answer and provide the information to the member following the meeting.

Ms. Livingston confirmed a member's inquiry that Ottawa does have a water testing lab and that it is not threatened with closure like the Kingston lab.

A member proposed including a request to keep the Kingston lab operational in RVCA's letter to the Minister of Health. Another member requested that the letter be circulated to all member municipalities.

Additionally, a member who serves on the Ottawa Board of Health indicated that he would inquire about the potential closure of the Kingston lab and what impact that might have on Ottawa's lab if it had to service a larger area.

Multiple members expressed support for drafting a positive letter and distributing copies to all member municipalities of the RVCA.

Resolution 4-240425 Moved by: Brian Dowdall Seconded by: Gary Waterfield

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority endorses the attached letter to the Minister of Health calling on the province not to discontinue their private drinking water testing program;

THAT staff be directed to send a letter to the Minister of Health, the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Premier of Ontario and the Chair of ROMA indicating the RVCA's endorsement of this letter;

AND THAT staff be directed to circulate the letter to all member municipalities for their information and consideration.

Resolution Carried

10.0 2023 Annual Report

Diane Downey, Director of Outreach and Communications, delivered a presentation of the 2023 Annual Report, highlighting program achievements and staff accomplishments. Following the presentation, she responded to questions and comments.

A member commended the report, emphasizing the significant amount of work completed by staff in 2023. They praised staff efforts and congratulated staff for their achievements.

A member echoed the positive comments, expressing appreciation for the illustrations, user-friendly layout, and highlighted achievements of the Annual Report.

In response to a member's inquiry about the population number indicated for the watershed seeming low, Ms. Downey explained that the number would only include Ottawa residents living in the Rideau watershed, not Mississippi and South Nation.

Dan Cooper, Director of Conservation Lands and Stewardship provided an explanation of what "crown release" means regarding the butternut recovery program which entails removing some competing vegetation around butternut trees so the crown of the tree is exposed to more sunlight.

Mr. Cooper also provided additional information about the Hemlock woolly Adelgid and how invasive species are monitored and tracked through the Forest Health Network. He noted that there have been no reports yet of the invasive insect in the RVCA watershed.

Chair Strackerjan praised the Annual Report as a great communication tool and thanked staff for their hard work.

In response to a member's inquiry about distributing the Annual Report to libraries, Ms. Downey mentioned that she could explore this option. However, she noted that most libraries have specific rules for accepting distribution materials, which may limit the viability of distributing the small number of printed reports.

Resolution 5-240425 Moved by: Adrian Wynands Seconded by: Anne Barr

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves RVCA's 2023 Annual Report as amended for distribution.

Resolution Carried

Marika Livingston left the meeting 7:44 p.m.

11.0 Conservation Ontario 2023 Annual Report

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, General Manager presented Conservation Ontario's 2023 Annual Report. She highlighted a section that provided permit timeline results for all 36 conservation authorities which responds to a question raised by members in March when RVCA present its results.

A member inquired if Conservation Ontario's land acquisition strategy looks at all conservation authority lands across the province in an effort to be provincially strategic when prioritizing land. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson explained that Conservation Ontario's focus is on securing land acquisition funding for conservation authorities to acquire land locally.

Resolution 6-240425 Moved by: Susan Irwin
Seconded by: Steve Fournier

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority receives Conservation Ontario's 2023 Annual Report.

Resolution Carried

12.0 JHSC 2023 Annual Report

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson presented the Joint Health and Safety Committee's 2023 Annual Report.

In response to a member, Ms. Casgrain-Robertson explained that the RVCA has a standalone tick policy that covers clothing when working in the field, tick check protocols, reporting processes and more.

A member suggested that future reports provide an indication of the severity of the incident reports summarized in the report. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson agreed and indicated that future reports could indicate if medical attention was sought and if there were any lost workdays.

Resolution 7-240425 Moved by: Brian Dowdall Seconded by: Adrian Wynands

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority receives the RVCA's Joint Health and Safety Committee 2023 Annual Report.

Resolution Carried

13.0 MFIPPA 2023 Annual Report

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson presented the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act 2023 Annual Report.

Resolution 8-240425 Moved by: Anne Robinson Seconded by: Gary Waterfield

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority receives the RVCA's *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* 2023 Annual Report.

Resolution Carried

14.0 Final Programs and Services Inventory

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson provided background context on the multi-year transition to implement new provincial legislation and presented the final

programs and services inventory.

In response to a member inquiry, Ms. Casgrain-Roberton explained which programs are classified as Category 2.

Resolution 9-240425 Moved by: Adrian Wynands

Seconded by: Anne Barr

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approve the attached Programs and Services Inventory (Final Version dated April 25, 2024) and direct staff to provide a copy to all member municipalities and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry by April 30, 2024 to complete the Transition Period outlined in Ontario Regulation 687/21.

Resolution Carried

15.0 Meetings

- a) Source Protection Committee Meeting April 4, 2024
- b) Audit Committee Meeting April 8, 2024
- c) Conservation Ontario AGM and Council Meeting April 15, 2024
- d) Meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry April 15, 2024
 - Ms. Casgrain-Robertson outlined the purpose of the meeting and summarized the feedback, concerns and questions that the conservation authorities had discussed with the Minister. Chair Strackerjan emphasized that the overall message conveyed was positive and that the conservation authorities clearly communicated their desire to have future opportunities to meet with the Minister.
- e) Friends of the Tay Watershed AGM (presentation) April 19, 2024
 - Ms. Casgrain-Robertson reported that she delivered a presentation on the Watershed Conditions Report that was well received and resulted in lots of great questions.

Upcoming

- f) Summer Student Orientation April 29, 2024
- g) Climate Network Lanark Natural Heritage Systems Workshop May 8, 2024
- h) Eastern Ontario Regional Housing Summit May 28, 2024
- i) RVCF AGM and Board Meeting June 12, 2024
- i) RVCA Watershed Tour June 21, 2024
- k) CO Council Meeting June 24, 2024
- I) Provincial GMs Meeting June 25-26, 2024

Anne Barr left the meeting 8:15 p.m.

16.0 Member Inquiries

Adrian Wynands inquired about RVCA involvement with asset management for natural heritage. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson explained that RVCA is in the process of working with municipalities to better understand upcoming guidance or requirements for municipalities to include natural infrastructure in asset management plans and determine how RVCA may be able to support or assist.

17.0 New Business

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson informed members of a new Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) posting that provides details regarding new Minister's Permit and Review powers under the Conservation Authorities Act. It specifies that these powers would be limited to development activity that pertains to or supports a development of specified provincial interest such as housing (community, affordable and market-based), community services (health, long-term care, education, recreation socio-cultural, security and safety, environment), transportation infrastructure, buildings that facilitate economic development or employment and mixed use developments. The posting also stated that when making a permitting decision, the Minister would be required to satisfy the same criteria concerning natural hazards and public safety that are considered by conservation authorities.

Chair Strackerjan highlighted the upcoming Watershed Tour in June and encouraged members to promote attendance among municipal staff. She also informed members about the upcoming North Grenville Sustainability Fair on May 5 where RVCA will have an educational table.

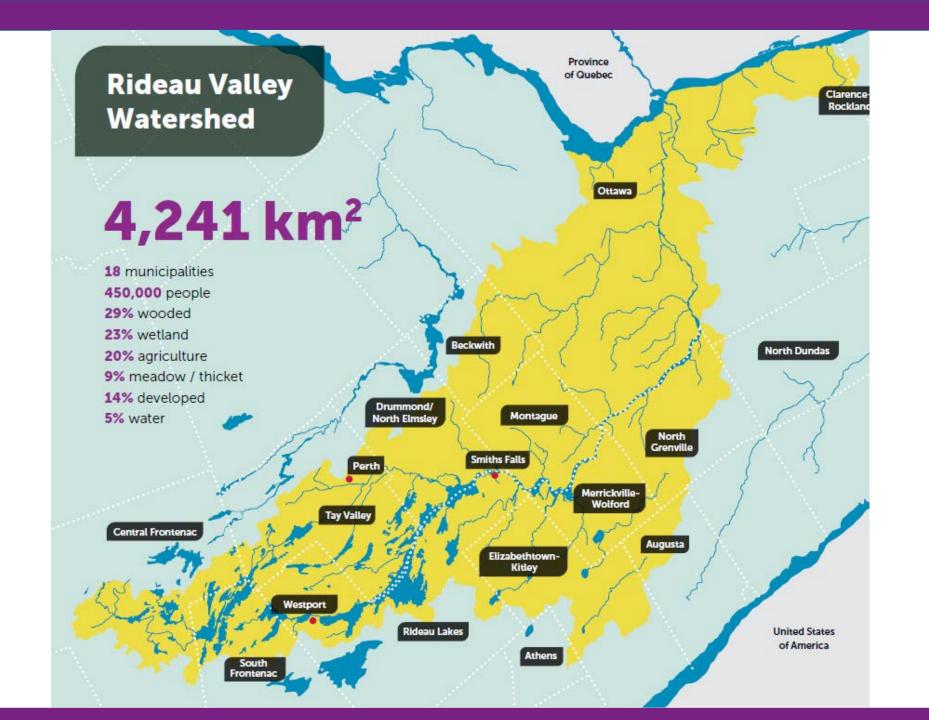
18.0 Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:22 p.m. on a resolution by Wilson Lo which was seconded by Theresa Kavanagh.

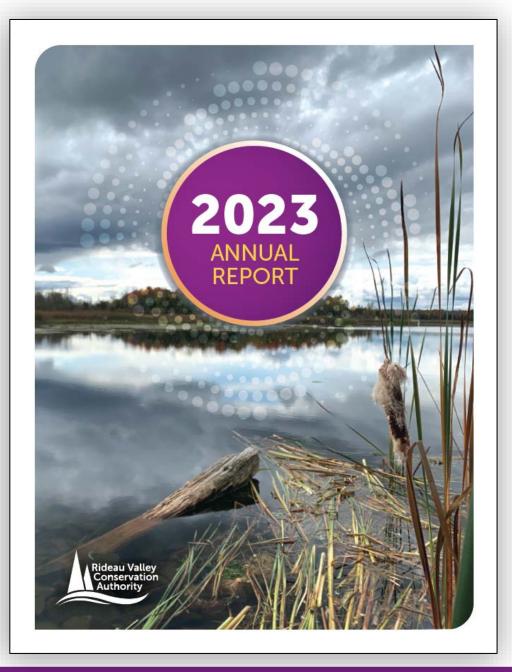
Kristin Strackerjan Chair	Marissa Grondin Recording Secretary
Sommer Casgrain-Robertson General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer	





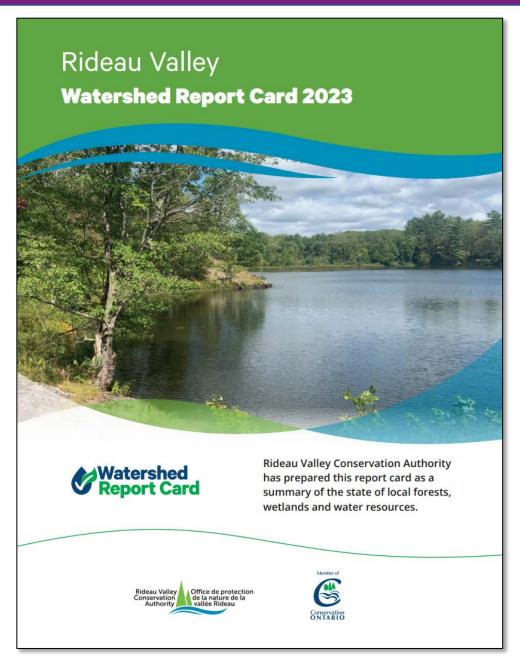


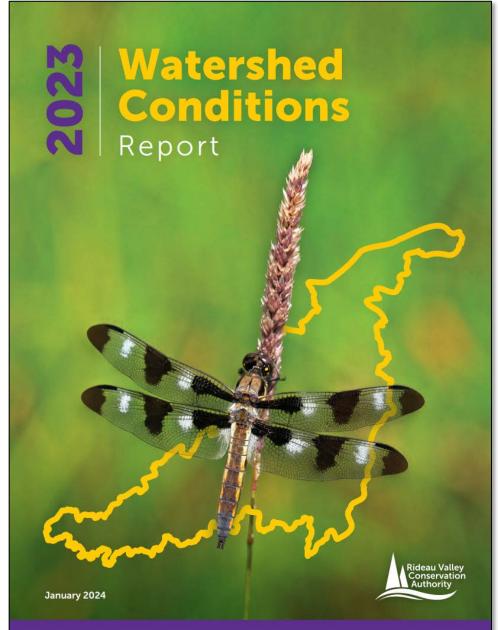




- Corporate Services
- Planning and Regulations
- Conservation Lands
- Stewardship
- Science & Engineering
- Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation











\$11.8M

budget for 2023

68staff plus 19
summer students

19
Board Members











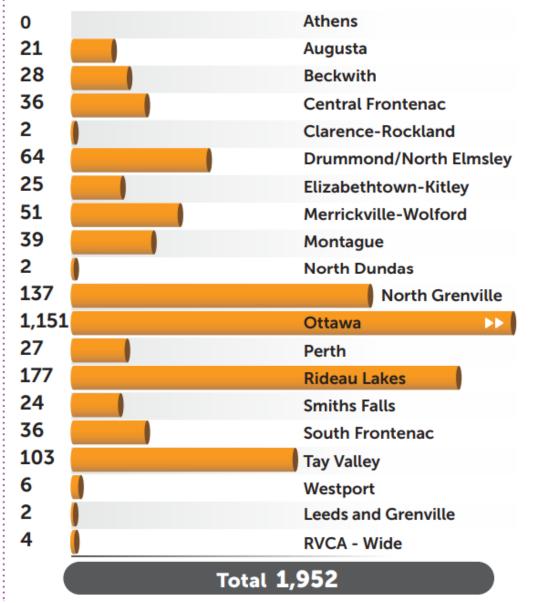
- Planning Reviews
- Section 28 Services
- Septic System Services



1,952 planning reviews



Planning Activities by Municipality, 2023





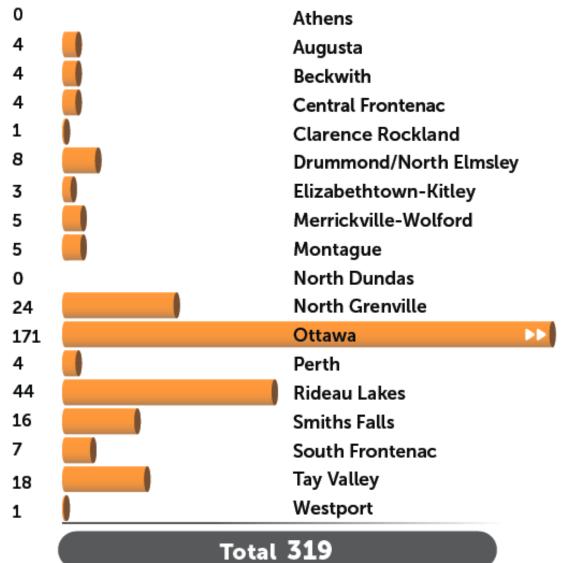
319
permit applications

93% of applications approved

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

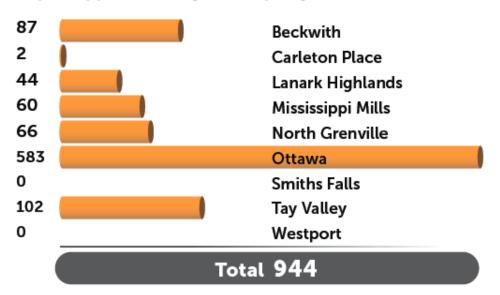
Permits Issued Within Provincial Timelines Major Permits Minor Permits (30 days) 29 267

Section 28 Applications by Municipality, 2023





Septic Applications by Municipality, 2023



944

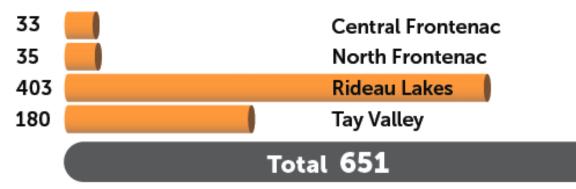
permit applications

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



Septic Re-Inspections by Municipality, 2023



651

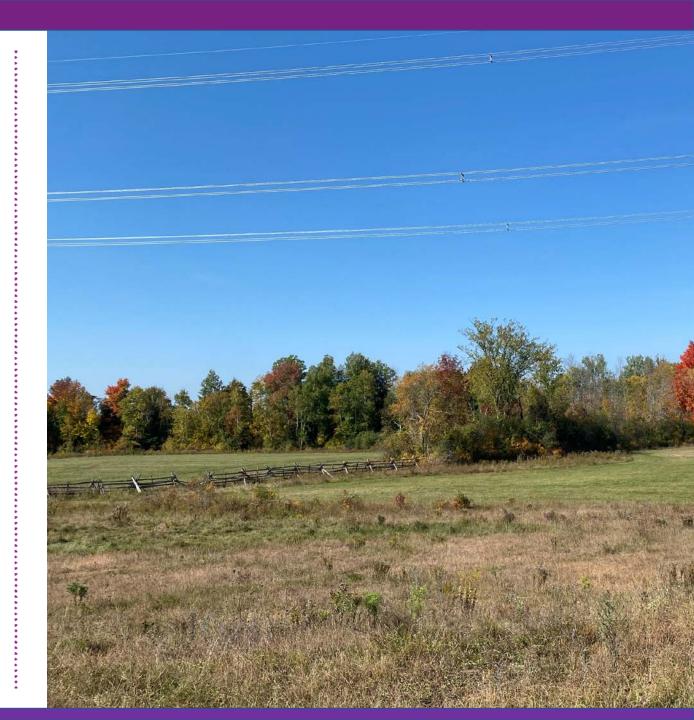
re-inspections completed





Land Management

- 2,355 hectares of conservation land owned across the watershed
- 1,209 additional hectares managed by RVCA (Foundation and partner properties)
- 3 new land donations totalling 199 hectares (1 RVCA property and 2 RVCF properties)
 - 146 hectares near Motts Mills
 - o 26 hectares on Big Rideau Lake
 - o 27 hectares on the Tay River
- 55 Species at Risk projects maintained at six conservation areas in support of bobolink, butternut and barn swallows, in partnership with the RVCF
- 2 Managed Forest Tax Incentive Plans completed for recently acquired properties
- 2 Conservation Land Tax Incentive Plans approved following species at risk monitoring (property taxes now waived for those properties)

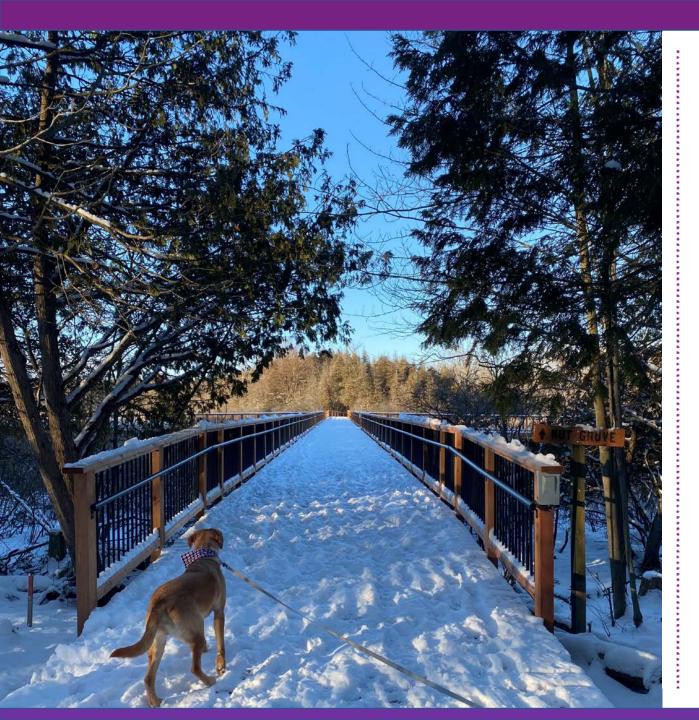






307,500 conservation area visitors





Conservation Areas

- 11 public conservation areas maintained for public enjoyment
- 307,500 visitors in 2023 (up from 200,000 annually pre-pandemic)
- 42 kilometres of trails, 3 beaches, 4 boat launches and 6 picnic shelters maintained
- Shoreline stabilized at Chapman Mills Conservation Area around the water access point
- Installed permanent Storybook Trail at Foley Mountain Conservation Area
- Completed construction on two replacement pedestrian bridges:
 - Prefabricated accessible bridge at Chapman Mills Conservation Area
 - Accessible pedestrian boardwalk with learning platforms over the marsh at Baxter Conservation Area
- Started construction on accessible bathrooms and facility upgrades at Baxter's interpretive centre



8,125

students participated in outdoor education programs



Outdoor Education

Baxter Conservation Area:

- 4,432 students from 66 schools across five school boards (plus two private schools and one university) and numerous community groups participated in Baxter's in-person outdoor education programs
- 168 students attended weekly in-person Forest School in winter, spring and fall
- 144 children participated in Summer Day Camp
- Expanded Forest School's age range to include a day for kids aged 10 to 13

Foley Mountain Conservation Area:

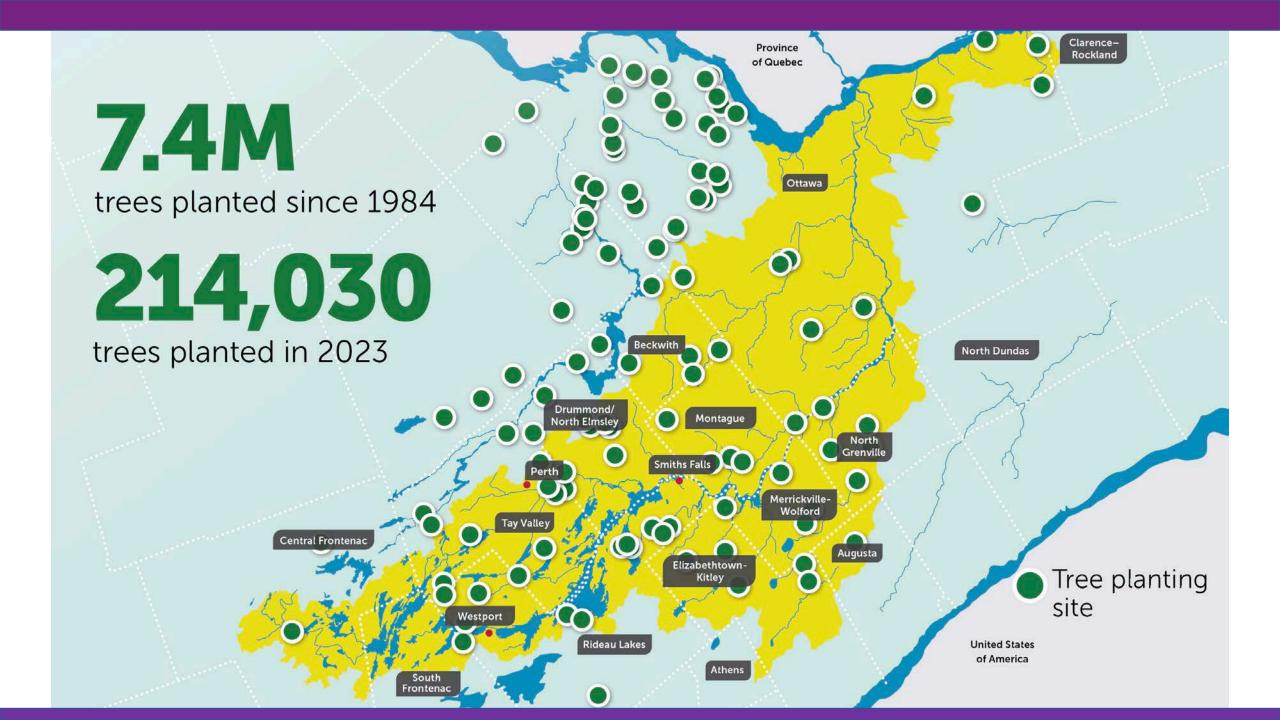
- 3,457 students participated in in-person outdoor education programs, including Forest School sessions in winter, spring and fall. This is an increase of about 20% over 2019 and about 29% over 2022.
- 41 schools from across three school boards came for field trips
- 92 children participated in Summer Day Camps, a 37% increase over 2019 numbers
- Added a new Family Forest School category for kic ages 2 to 5 and their caregivers





- Tree Planting
- Rural Clean Water
- Shoreline Naturalization





Tree Planting

- 214,030 trees planted in the Rideau and Mississippi watersheds
 - Almost 100 hectares of new forest
 - o **132** landowner participants
 - o **50,410** trees planted in Ottawa through the City's Green Acres program
 - Largest project was 14,680 trees planted in Rideau Lakes
 - 16,000 trees planted by landowners through over-the-counter sales





7.4M

trees planted since 1984

214,030

trees planted in 2023

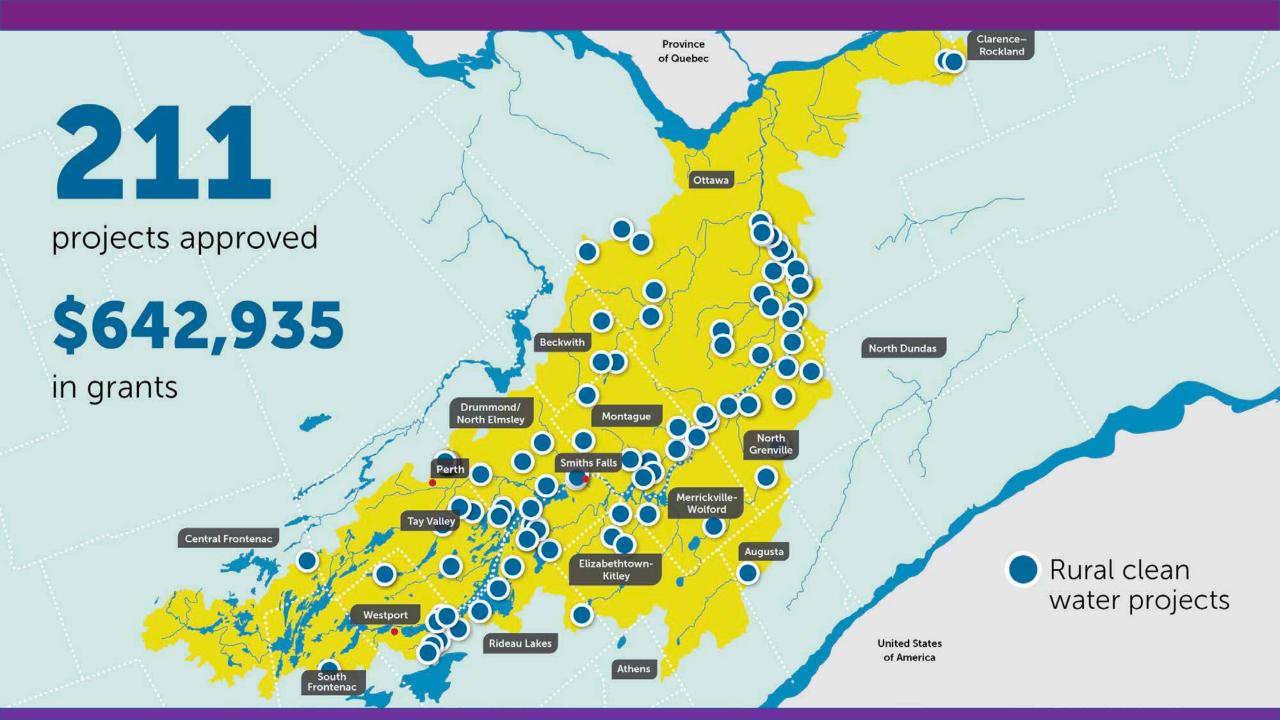
Partnership Highlights:

- More than \$484,000 in external funding secured to subsidize tree planting costs
- Provided Lanark County with 12,000 trees for their annual free tree give-away
- Partnered with the Invasive Species Centre to start monitoring Hemlock Wooly Adelgid on our conservation lands

Rural Clean Water

- 136 projects approved through the Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program, allocating \$287,062 in grants with landowner contributions totaling \$1,148,055
- 57 projects approved through the Ottawa Rural
 Clean Water Program, allocating \$268,355 in grants
 with landowner contributions totaling \$578,777
- 18 projects completed through ALUS Lanark
 - o Distributing \$87,518 in grants towards projects valued at \$98,185
 - 39.86 acres of new environmental services through wetlands, tree planting, buffers and delayed haying





Shoreline Naturalization

- 9,394 trees and shrubs planted on 67 properties
- 1,719 metres of shoreline naturalized
- 377 native pollinator-friendly perennials distributed to landowners through over-the-counter sales

Partnership Highlights:

- 2,135 trees and shrubs distributed to lake residents through over-the-counter plant sales through Upper Rideau Lake Association and Otty Lake Association
- 1,070 native trees, shrubs and wildflowers planted with community volunteers along a 350-metre stretch of Tay River shoreline in Last Duel Park in partnership with the Town of Perth, which secured funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund

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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 benefits of a healthy watershed.



Science & Engineering

- Surface water quality monitoring
- Groundwater monitoring
- Aquatic and terrestrial habitat monitoring
- Hydrometric monitoring and forecasting
- Flood, erosion and drought studies
- Flood forecasting and warning
- Low water response
- Water control structures
- Watershed planning
- Watershed report cards
- Ecological land classification
- Climate change
- Source water protection



Flood Forecasting & Warning

- 13 flood messages issued for the Rideau River
- 8 flood messages issued for the Ottawa River
- 2 low water messages issued
- 26 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

Partnership Highlights:

- Hosted annual flood forecasting and warning meeting in February for all municipalities and partner agencies
- Presented at the Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Workshop in September
- Completed Phase One of a new flood forecasting and warning model for the Rideau River with funding from the City of Ottawa





Natural Hazard Mapping

- 6-year workplan approved to complete natural hazard mapping on the following watercourses to fill gaps in existing mapping:
 - o Brassils Creek, Graham Creek, Greens Creek, Sawmill Creek, Stillwater Creek and Faulkner Drain in the City of Ottawa
 - o Bobs Lake, Otty Lake, Lower Rideau Lake and Big Rideau Lake in the upper watershed
- Continued work on hazard mapping for Middle Rideau River,
 Wolf/Sand Lake and Stevens Creek

Source Water Protection

- Welcomed two new Source Protection Committee members
- Advancement of major updates to the both the
 Technical Assessment Reports and Source Protection Plan



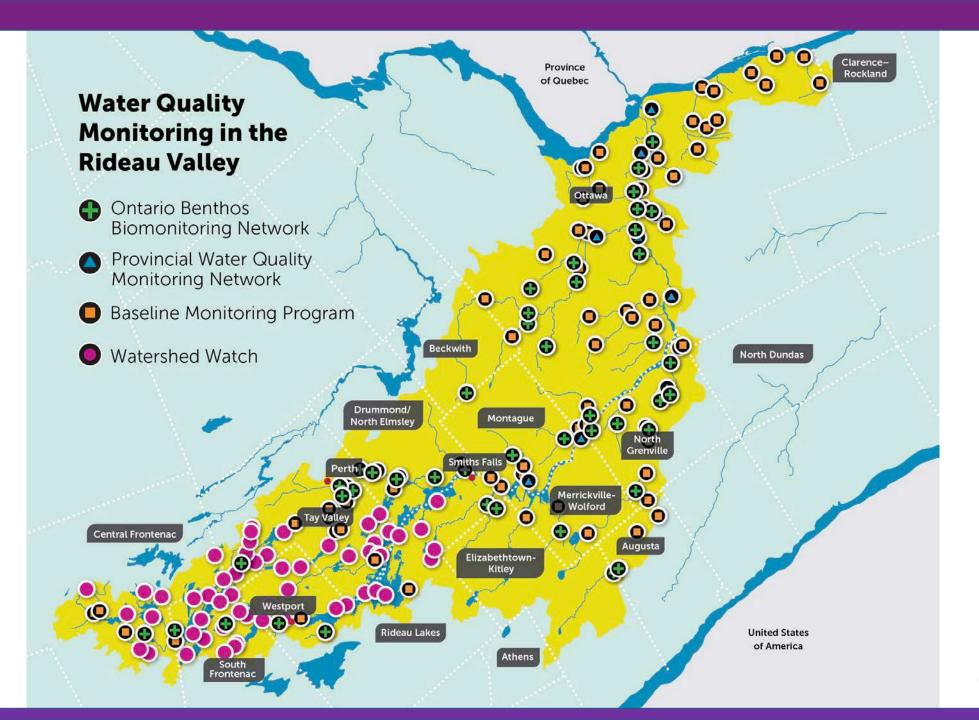
Surface Water Quality Monitoring

- 119 sites sampled for the Baseline monitoring and Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Program,
 which monitors the water chemistry of major rivers and tributaries
- 39 lakes sampled from May to October
- 51 water quality parameters monitored annually



51water quality parameters monitored annually





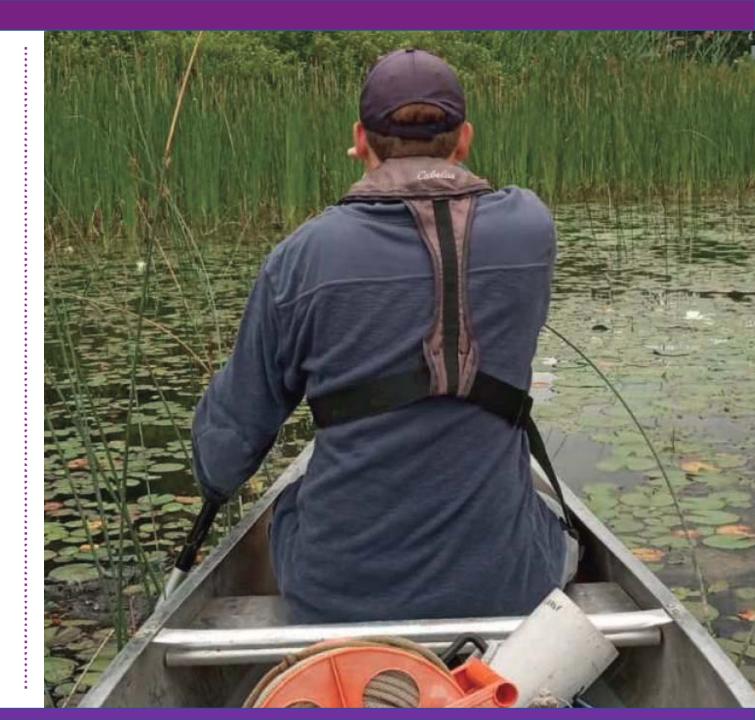


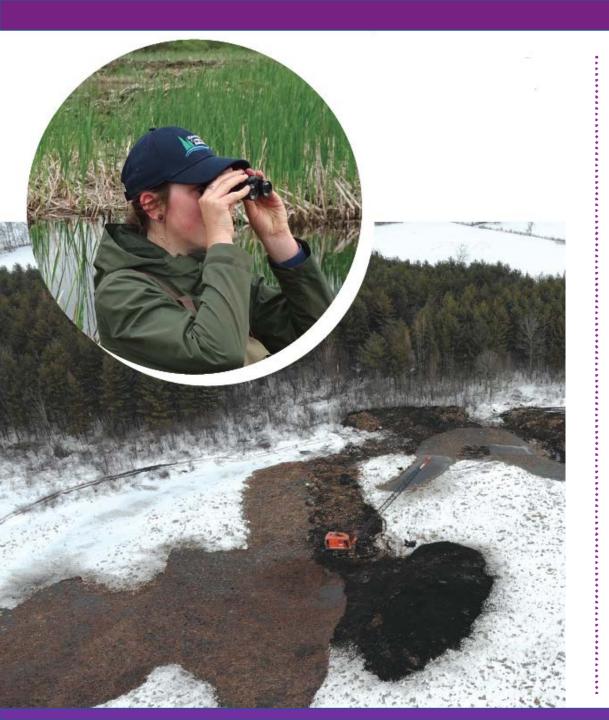
Aquatic Habitat Monitoring

- 44 sites sampled across the watershed in spring and fall for the Ontario Benthic Biomonitoring Network (OBBN)
- City Stream Watch Program monitored four creeks in the City of Ottawa: Bilberry Creek, Mosquito Creek, Mud Creek (Manotick) and Stillwater Creek
- 361 stream survey sections completed
- 16 temperature loggers installed
- 107 headwater drainage features surveyed
- 23 fish sampling sites monitored
- Catchment level watershed conditions were classified across the watershed by aquatic score, benthic community score, fish community score and thermal classification

Partnership Highlights:

 268 community volunteers contributed a total of 811 hours towards stream monitoring, 12 stream cleanups and 15 invasive species removals on the Jock River (in Richmond), Graham Creek, Sawmill Creek, Mud Creek, Bilberry Creek, Rideau River, Tay River, Barrhaven Creek and Stillwater Creek





Wetland Restoration

- Phase Two of the Motts Mills Wetland
 Restoration Project was completed,
 creating additional open water ponds with
 connecting channels to support increased
 biodiversity within the provincially
 significant wetland. This work was
 completed in partnership with the Mott's
 Mills Steering Committee
- Post-effectiveness monitoring was undertaken at the Stillwater Wetland Creation Project (Year 3) and Jebbs Creek Wetland Embayment (Year 5)



Financing Conservation

Science & Engineering Services \$2,911,493

Planning Advisory and Regulatory Services \$2,457,920

Corporate Services \$1,817,028

Stewardship Services \$1,661,038

Conservation Land Management Services \$1,565,852

Investment in Capital Assets \$1,677,113

Transfer to Reserves \$ 793,256

Repayment of Capital Lease \$202,704











Mission

The Rideau Valley
Conservation Foundation is a registered environmental charity working to help protect and conserve the lands and waters of the valley of the Rideau River in Eastern Ontario.



In 2023, the RVCF was generously supported by:



230 individuals and families



10 corporate partners



not-for-profits



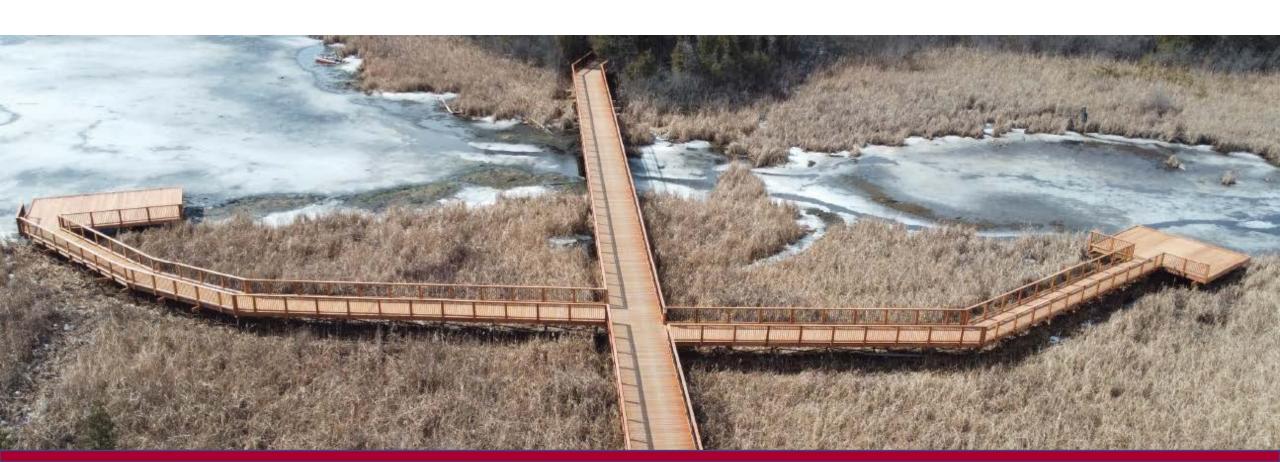
government partners



in-kind donors



10 volunteer directors



RVCF has raised \$8.3 for conservation since 1994.



Focus Areas

The Foundation raises funds and in-kind gifts for three major areas of conservation work:

Land Care — land protection and conservation, tree planting, erosion control, landowner information, trail building and maintenance, outdoor signage, picnic tables, benches, boardwalks.

River Care — water quality monitoring, biodiversity monitoring, wetland inventories, invasive species and garbage removal, clean water projects.

Conservation Education — outdoor learning and experiences, accessible programs and services, onsite landowner visits, research projects, public events.

- \$430,000 in grants from Canada's Community
 Revitalization Fund in support of two major projects:
 - Baxter Conservation Area Accessible Bridge Boardwalk Project
 - Chapman Mills Conservation Area Accessible Bridge







