



In 2014 the RVCA completed a detailed assessment of all conservation areas where the public is welcome to use the park for recreational activities. We wanted to identify the barriers that prevented some people with disabilities from fully enjoying the features of our conservation areas.

Once we had identified the barriers, we developed an action plan to immediately eliminate or diminish those barriers. Where not economically feasible we identified a strategy that would allow us to deal with those barriers, where possible, over the next five years. At all times during this planning stage, we considered the safety of all park visitors and our staff as a number one priority.

Due to the "nature" of nature (e.g. mountains, beaches, trees), not all barriers can be eliminated or modified. We invite people with disabilities who encounter challenges related to mobility or accessibility at our conservation areas to contact us. We will make extra effort to accommodate visitors to help ensure they have an enjoyable and barrier-free outing.

Executive Summary

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) became law in 2005. The purpose of this Act is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities by identifying, preventing and removing barriers that may otherwise limit their abilities to fully participate in society.

Accessibility simply means giving all people opportunities to participate fully in everyday life.

This plan was prepared to help the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) meet the obligations set out in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards for Design of Public Spaces*.

The plan describes our policies and procedures for making our conservation areas more accessible to people with disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence, and ensures they receive the same high standard of service excellence that we endeavor to provide to all our clients.

Statement of Commitment

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner.

We will do so by preventing and removing

barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

We commit to reviewing and updating this plan at least every five years.

Trails

We are proud to announce that we have already built *Mobility Trails* at two conservation areas. Baxter Conservation Area has a boardwalk loop that is wheelchair accessible and travels through fern and trillium environments. Foley Mountain Conservation

Area has a stone dust mobility trail made with rest stops and interpretive signs designed specifically for wheelchair accessibility. The trail is a 300 metre loop with beautiful views of Upper Rideau Lake.

Over the next five years, guided by universal design principles, we hope to redesign some trails to make them more accessible by paying attention to slope, terrain and materials.

Parking Lots

At both Foley Mountain Conservation Area and at Baxter Conservation Area, the main parking lots at the interpretive centers have designated

accessible parking spots. At present there is ample parking at other park locations, with easy access options throughout the park. If parking locations for accessibility

become a concern, designated spots will be established at these locations.

Feedback

The RVCA welcomes all feedback, including feedback and suggestions on how to make our conservation areas more accessible. We will investigate and respond to all comments and complaints in a timely, thorough and objective manner. All clients can submit feedback by completing and submitting a form or by calling 613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504.

[RVCA Feedback Form](#)

Documents

All documents related to AODA, including policies, procedures, and practices, are available upon request, subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*

When requested, a document (or the contents of that document), in a suitable alternate format, can be provided at no charge.

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Signage, Maps and Brochures

All signs posted in parks now display pertinent universal symbols that relay information regarding site rules, safety information and identify the location of restrooms and trails.

In the next two years, as trail maps and brochures are reprinted and signs replaced, they will be updated to show the location of accessible trails and restrooms. Our website will also be

updated to provide information on accessibility features at each conservation area.

As funding becomes available, our goal is to provide tactile signs and maps for visitors with vision impairment.

Restrooms

Thanks to the Government of Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund, the RVCA was able to enhance the existing restrooms at the Foley Mountain interpretive centre by building two accessible washroom stalls adjacent to the old washrooms. The washrooms are barrier-free and are accessible from the inside and outside of the interpretive centre.

A second accessible washroom facility was added at the outdoor education area, accessible directly from outside, with four accessible stalls.

The restrooms at the Baxter Conservation Area interpretive centre will soon be retrofitted with an accessible counter, lower soap dispensers and paper towel holders. The entrance and access to these washrooms are already accessible.

The outdoor outhouse-style washroom has been relocated and retrofitted to provide an accessible facility at all times of the day and year, even when the interpretive centre is closed.

As funding becomes available, our plan is to construct accessible outdoor comfort stations at all conservation areas with outdoor washroom facilities.

Beaches

Service animals that accompany people with disabilities are permitted

at all natural swimming areas and beaches. They must remain on leash, and

it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to remain in control of the animal at all times.

Access Paths

Paths and access to kiosks, pay boxes, restrooms, building entrances, boat launches

and beaches will be stabilized as much as possible, with as minimal a slope as possible, using stone dust or other

suitable material. We are already making paths wider and smoother.

Other Park Features

We are now working towards providing wheelchair accessible picnic tables at all established picnic areas, with stable grade access to the table. We also want

to install accessible benches and public barbeques where the public need them most. And we'll be looking at the value of making boat

launches more accessible by making them more stable and equipping them with support bars.