

AROUND the Rideau

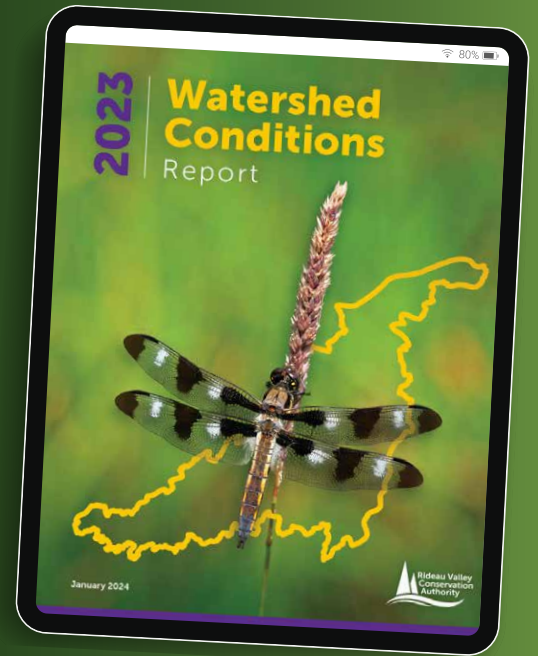


January / February 2024

Groundbreaking report highlights watershed trends and concerns

The RVCA has released a detailed conditions report assessing trends in the watershed's surface and ground water quality, aquatic ecosystem health, hydrological function, natural hazard risks and the loss of critical green infrastructure such as wetlands, forests and natural shorelines.

The 193-page *Watershed Conditions Report* compiles recent and historical monitoring data to confirm several concerning trends, including a steep decline in large woodland patches, increasing chloride levels in our urban streams, and large shifts in surface water flow patterns linked to increased development and loss of wetlands. The report also identifies knowledge gaps for natural hazard risks such as flooding, erosion and landslide risks, and gaps in robust groundwater quality monitoring in rural communities. Understanding current conditions will inform the creation of a new watershed management strategy to address issues in the Rideau Valley, which will be developed and presented for public consultation later in 2024. Read the full conditions report online at www.rvca.ca/conditions-report.



Be Prepared for Spring Flooding!

High water season is just around the corner. If you live along a waterway, make sure you're prepared. Consider:

- Inspecting your sump pump and installing a battery backup
- Bookmarking our real-time stream flow and water level charts for easy reference (www.rvca.ca/watershed-conditions)
- Signing up for RVCA Flood Forecasting alerts by visiting Get RVCA News at www.rvca.ca
- Researching your municipality's emergency plan in case of flood
- Posting local emergency numbers in an accessible area of your home.

RVCA staff are monitoring the snowpack as well as weather patterns, forecasts and water levels to determine spring runoff potential. RVCA will host two meetings for municipal planners and other watershed officials ahead of the spring freshet to give updates on 2024 conditions. Contact BRIAN at brian.stratton@rvca.ca for more information.

Please leave your skates at home

Pond skating is a beloved Canadian pastime, but unfortunately not one you can enjoy at RVCA's conservation areas. RVCA does not monitor or test ice thickness on any waterbodies on our properties, and we cannot ensure they are safe for skating or other activities. Please keep off all conservation area waterbodies for the safety of you and others.

Don't forget your leash!

We welcome dogs at most of our conservation areas, but please keep them on leash and on the trail at all times. Winter is a particularly vulnerable time for wildlife, and roaming Rovers can add to their stress! Domestic animals can also spread disease through their poop, so keeping them on leash allows you to pick up their waste for disposal at home. Leashing also protects other visitors from unwanted puppy kisses. Thank you for respecting our conservation areas! Contact CHELSEY at chelsey.ellis@rvca.ca for more information.





Want to get the kids outside? Try Forest School!

The Canadian Paediatric Society recently recommended more outdoor playtime to improve anxiety, behaviour, sleep patterns and focus in children. Forest School is the perfect place to start! Our Forest Schoolers spend one day a week learning in nature with guidance from qualified outdoor educators. Baxter and Foley Mountain conservation areas are now accepting registrations for their spring sessions, which run from March to June. Learn more and register today at www.rvca.ca/outdoor-education. Contact ANDREA at baxter.supervisor@rvca.ca for questions about Baxter Forest School or REBECCA at rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca for questions about Foley Mountain Forest School.

Kudos to Carbon Neutral Partner Capital Pyrotechnics!

Capital Pyrotechnics has gone carbon neutral through the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation (RVCF) for another year. The locally-owned fireworks company has planted 136 local, native tree seedlings across the watershed to offset its 2023 carbon emissions. The Foundation welcomes any business or individual to do the same! The program is entirely customizable and can cover your total emissions, one segment of your business or even a single event. Contact DIANE at diane.downey@rvcf.ca to get started.

Foundation Re-Accredited with Imagine Canada

The RVCF is pleased to announce its re-accreditation under Imagine Canada's standards for non-profit organizations. Imagine Canada's Standard requires organizations to meet 73 rigorous standards in five crucial areas: board governance, financial accountability and transparency, fundraising, human resources, and volunteer involvement. To learn more about the Foundation and its accomplishments visit www.rvcf.ca or contact DIANE at diane.downey@rvcf.ca.



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