



Around the Rideau

Environmental Information For Municipalities In The Rideau Valley

January | February 2016

Flood Prep 101

Now is the time to plan ahead and get your “flood prep ducks in a row”! With the unpredictable weather this winter and a number of flood-vulnerable areas in the Rideau watershed, preparing ahead of time is just good sense.

Predicting floods is what RVCA does! We monitor local weather and flow conditions and then pass information onto local agencies and the public *in advance* so they can respond to potential flooding and flood emergencies.

The RVCA provides member municipalities and local residents advance notice and information about potential flooding.

The RVCA relies on fact-based and timely data to accurately forecast flooding. The tools outlined below are used in combination to make reliable flood forecasts:

- **Stream gauges** continuously record water levels
- **Snowpack surveys** indicate how much snow has fallen and how much water it holds — telling us what impacts it will have on spring runoff and water levels
- **Precipitation is measured** at six sites within the watershed
- **Floodplain mapping** shows the capacity of the river to hold water and where over bank flooding can be expected
- **Weather forecasts**
- **Computer modelling** using (MIKE11) will simulate flows and water levels to help predict flooding events

This is the time for municipalities to review their *emergency response plans* so they are ready to be implemented if needed. Property owners should also assess their plans for minimizing flood-related property damage. Should flooding



RVCA staff conducting a snowpack survey that will help determine how much water is stored in the snow which will in turn impact water levels and runoff during the spring freshet.

The RVCA's Flood Forecasting and Warning System operates 12 months a year (along with its involvement with the Low Water Response Team).

occur, the **first response is up to individual homeowners**. If the flood is beyond the capacity of the homeowner, municipalities may activate their *emergency response plan*.

The RVCA issues three different types of water conditions messages, they are:

- **Watershed Condition Statements** — water safety or flood outlooks. These statements contain information about the current conditions of the watershed that sets the stage for the possibility of flooding if the right weather patterns develop. Be informed and be aware!
- **Flood Watch** — these messages are issued when it is perceived that flooding could result from an approaching weather system that could bring heavy rain or warm air causing a rapid snow melt. Be prepared to activate your flood response plans if it becomes necessary.
- **Flood Warning** — these messages are issued when it is perceived that flooding conditions definitely will be experienced. Activate your flood response plan now!

What you can do to prepare:

- View regular streamflow condition updates at www.rvca.ca
- Visit our Flood Forecasting and Warning webpage at www.rvca.ca/flood — you'll find links to your municipality and advice on flood preparation
- Find out if you are in a flood vulnerable area, email our Resource Specialists at info@rvconline.com
- Get messages sent directly to you via email. Subscribe at www.rvca.ca/optin, select *RVCA Main Mailing List* and check off *Flood Forecasting and Warning*
- Follow us on Twitter (RideauValleyCA) or like us on Facebook — we post all our watershed condition statements.

PATRICK has more information at ext. 1210, patrick.larson@rvca.ca.

Milestone Met!

The Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program has reached a milestone with last year's approved grants! We have approved over \$1,000,000 in grants since 2002. When looking at this program combined with the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Grant Program over \$2,000,000 has been granted to rural residents watershed-wide. Contact DEREK for more information at ext. 1134 or derek.matheson@rvca.ca.

Woodlot Conference

Plan to attend one of the best woodlot owner conferences in Ontario! Register now for the 29th Annual Kemptville Woodlot Conference — February 24, 2016. For more details visit www.eomf.on.ca.

For the Birds!

Barn swallow aerobatics were once a regular sight in Ottawa area skies. But, their numbers are dwindling due to habitat loss. To improve local numbers, the RVCA has recently added a special barn swallow kiosk at the Chapman Mills Conservation Area. Visitors can spot the kiosk from the main trail. “We are always looking to increase wildlife habitat at our conservation areas,” says Kristy Giles, RVCA's Manager, Conservation Lands. KRISTY can tell you more at ext. 1178 or kristy.giles@rvca.ca.



2016 A Special Year for RVCA

RVCA will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary — that's 50 years of conservation in the Rideau Valley! Anniversary events will begin to roll out in March — stay tuned for more! DIANE has more information at ext. 1126, diane.downey@rvca.ca.



Learn Nature Through Technology

One of our objectives at Baxter Conservation Area is to provide hands-on, curriculum-based educational experiences for students of all ages to connect with the natural world around them. At Baxter we strive to find new ways to integrate both nature and technology, creating new opportunities for students to be engaged and learn about the natural environment.



Through a TD Friends of the Environment Fund grant, Baxter now has a set of GPS units which allow us to offer an innovative GPS and Geocaching program and expand our existing environmental programs. We'd like to thank TD Friends of the Environment Fund for their continued generosity and support of

environmental education programs at both Baxter and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas. Contact ANDREA for more information at 613-489-3592 or andrea.wood@rvca.ca.

Baxter Rental Facility Improvements

We are pleased to announce the installation of a new wood stove in the river cabin at Baxter's group campsite. The group campsite is used throughout the spring, summer and fall by community groups and for our own on-site education programs. With the installation of the new wood stove, we can now offer a heated shelter which allows groups to camp and experience Baxter during the winter months. We already have groups booked for 2016! A special thank you to the Stove Store in Spencerville, (www.thestovestore.net) for all their help with installation. If you would like to make a booking, please contact ANDREA at 613-489-3592 or andrea.wood@rvca.ca.



Snow's Going Nowhere ...

Why fight it? You might as well get out there and enjoy winter with a visit to the beautiful Perth Wildlife Reserve Conservation Area. It has great trails for snowshoeing! So, put on that coat, grab your woolies and strap on those snowshoes — Perth Wildlife Reserve Conservation Area is waiting for you. Visit 100 Wildlife Road in Perth. Trails can be loaded on your phone by using the QR code below.

To use QR codes you'll need a smartphone with a camera and a QR code reader/scanner app. Visit your phone's app store and download a QR code reader/scanner app. Open the app and center the code on the screen. QR codes can be found on signs at conservation areas and link you to trail maps and site maps. Contact KRISTY at ext. 1178 for more information or kristy.giles@rvca.ca.



Help Get Kids Outside!

Over the past few years transportation costs have prevented students from getting to Foley Mountain and Baxter Conservation Areas for outdoor programming. Starting with a grant from the North Face Explore Fund in the 2013/2014 school year, the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation has provided \$150 subsidies to help schools cover travel costs. Thanks to TD Friends of the Environment Fund, subsidies were available in 2015 and extended into 2016. TD Friends of the Environment Fund has been a generous supporter of high-quality outdoor education programs offered at our sites. They've provided funds for the integration of technology such as apps for species identification and citizen science — all enhance the students' learning experience. Here's to getting more students out to our innovative, environmental education programs! For more information call REBECCA at 613-273-3255 or rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca.

In Memoriam

Barry McQuay



Barry McQuay, retired RVCA Foley Mountain Supervisor, recently passed away at Kingston General Hospital after a recent diagnosis of cancer. Barry

was the Foley Mountain supervisor for 31 years, raising his family at Foley with his wife Peri. He cared for the conservation area, developed and built the high quality education programs that still exist today and fostered a strong connection with the local community. Barry was a very special person who had a magical presence and an amazing way of passing along his passion for the natural world to both children and adults. He was an important part of the RVCA team and will be missed. Our hearts go out to his family in this difficult time.

Cathy Willoughby

With sadness we announce the passing of Cathy Willoughby. Cathy represented the Village of Merrickville-Wolford on the RVCA Board from 2000 to 2009. Cathy was active on the Middle Rideau Advisory Board, serving as Vice Chair from 2001 to 2003 and as Chair from 2004 until 2009. She was a member of RVCA's Executive Committee from 2005 until 2009. Cathy represented RVCA on the Rideau River Roundtable (was a member of the Steering Committee). She was active in the Rural Clean Water Program and the Beaver Management Pilot Program. Cathy was always known for her keen interest in all things relating to agriculture, gardening and the Rideau River. She will be missed and we extend our sincere condolences to her family.



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