



# Around the Rideau

Environmental Information For Municipalities In The Rideau Valley

**FIFTY YEARS OF CONSERVATION IN THE RIDEAU VALLEY**

January/February 2017

## Yep, It's Time For **Flood Prep!**

**J**anuary and February is the time to think about flood preparation. Municipalities should review their emergency response plans so they are ready for implementation if needed. Property owners should assess their plans for minimizing flood-related damage should flooding occur. First response is up to the individual homeowner. If flooding is beyond the capacity of the homeowner, the municipality may activate their emergency response plan.

### What to do!

If you live in a flood-prone area keep informed! To learn more about flood-vulnerable areas visit [www.rvca.ca](http://www.rvca.ca), where you can find:

- Floodplain mapping that shows the capacity of the river to hold water and where over bank flooding can be expected
- Streamflow condition updates
- Flood Forecasting and Warning information
- An "Opt in" to receive email messages sent directly to you
- You can also see flood messages at [www.rvca.ca](http://www.rvca.ca), on Twitter (RideauValleyCA) and on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/RideauValleyConservationAuthority](http://www.facebook.com/RideauValleyConservationAuthority))

RVCA provides advance notice and information of possible flooding. To do this we rely on fact-based, timely data. Tools RVCA uses are stream gauges, snowpack surveys, precipitation measurement, floodplain mapping, weather forecasts and computer monitoring. Together all provide information to make a reliable flood forecast.

### Flood messages are issued in three different types:

1. Watershed Conditions Statement: these statements provide information on current conditions in the watershed that may set the stage for the possibility of flooding if the right weather conditions develop. This is the "heads up."
2. Flood Watch: these messages are issued when it is perceived that flooding could result from approaching weather systems or warm air causing rapid snowmelt. Be prepared to activate your flood response plan if necessary.
3. Flood Warning: these messages are issued when it is perceived that flood conditions will definitely be experienced. Activate your flood response plan now!

For more information contact PATRICK at ext. 1210 or [patrick.larson@rvca.ca](mailto:patrick.larson@rvca.ca).

### Since you've asked . . .

**Q.** Why are the Rideau Canal locks not used to let the water get away?

**A.** The locks on the Rideau Canal would be ice-bound in the spring and it would take too many people and too much equipment to open all of the locks and also operate the dams. But, more importantly, the locks were not designed to accommodate through flows and would be at risk of collapsing.

**Q.** Why doesn't RVCA control flooding by adjusting the water levels at dams?

**A.** Parks Canada is the owner and operator of all of the structures on the Rideau except for the last one at Rideau Falls, which is owned and operated by Public Works and Government Services. The operation of all of the structures in the spring is done to get the water through the system as quickly as possible

to minimize flooding as much as possible. Actually, flood control operations start in the fall at the end of the navigation season when the water levels throughout the system are lowered from the reservoir lakes in the upper part of the watershed to the Rideau River in downtown Ottawa. Those low levels are maintained through the winter which gives some extra room for the spring runoff. However, even with the drawdown there is not that much room and, if there is enough water in the spring, flooding will occur.

**Q.** Why don't they take more logs out at Rideau Falls and just zoom it all into the Ottawa River?

**A.** There is often strategic operation of some dams in attempts to reduce the impact at some locations but by the time the peak flow occurs, the dams throughout the system are usually all wide open.

## Party Like it's **1966** (to 2016)!

On November 30, special guests and dignitaries gathered to celebrate 50 years of conservation at RVCA's Conservation Centre. Surrounded by municipal representatives, politicians, past and present staff along with friends and partners, the RVCA Board of Directors took the opportunity to remember and acknowledge the many people, projects and partnerships spanning from 1966 to 2016. It was a wonderful night to reminisce and reflect on shared accomplishments and look ahead to the next 50 years of clean abundant water, natural shorelines, rich forests and productive wetlands, diverse habitat and sustainable land use. Contact SOMMER for more at ext. 1214 or [sommer.casgrain-robertson@rvca.ca](mailto:sommer.casgrain-robertson@rvca.ca).



*RVCA General Manager Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, RVCA Chair Lyle Pederson, Mayor of Ottawa Jim Watson, RVCF Chair Jason Kelly and RVCF Executive Director Dan Cooper celebrate RVCA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.*

## Barry Remembered

It's been a year since we lost our much loved, retired RVCA Foley Mountain Supervisor Barry McQuay. Barry was a fixture at Foley Mountain and RVCA for 31 years. His love and strong connection to Foley Mountain and his magical way of passing on his passion for the natural world still resonates at Foley Mountain. The Friends of Foley Mountain honoured Barry and the Conservation Area with a framed photo of Barry surrounded by the kids he loved teaching. Contact LEAH for more 613-273-3255 or leah.roberts@rvca.ca.



*Cait Maloney, Vice Chair of the Friends of Foley Mountain, Rebecca Whitman, Foley Mountain Supervisor and Peri McQuay pose next to the framed photo of Barry.*

## Checkin' Out Chapman

Ottawa Councillor Michael Qaqish joined Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation Chair Jason Kelly and Authority staff to check out the trail improvements at Chapman Mills Conservation Area on a very misty, rainy January 12. This hardy gang did not let the rain and mist deter them from enjoying this natural gem within the City. You can enjoy it too — winter, spring, summer or fall! Contact MEGAN for more at ext. 1179 or megan.dunster@rvca.ca.



*Gloucester-South Nepean Ward Councillor Michael Qaqish joined Rideau Valley Conservation Authority General Manager, Sommer Cagrain-Robertson, RVCA Staffer Megan Dunster and Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation Chair Jason Kelly at Chapman Mills Conservation Area's newest section of trail that was improved for increased accessibility.*

## Forest Management Plan

RVCA forestry staff is hard at work completing a Forest Management Plan for new conservation lands near Merrickville in the Middle Rideau Subwatershed. With the completion of the *Middle Rideau Subwatershed Report 2015*, experts say that a minimum of 30 percent forest cover is needed to sustain biodiversity. The Middle Rideau is at 33.76 percent with coverage ranging from almost 50 percent in some areas to a low of around 20 percent in others. Slight decreases are due to man-made conversion of woodland into settlement and agriculture. Although forest cover is generally above the 30 percent, increasing the amount of forest in the Middle Rideau and maintaining and improving current tree stands is important — and the Forest Management Plan will help map out how to do this. For more information call SCOTT at Ext. 1175, scott.danford@rvca.ca.



*April Stevenson, RVCA Forest Technician hard at work on the Forest Management Plan.*

## Minor Drought — Still in it!

Despite snow, rain and thaws we're still in a minor drought. River and streams in the Rideau watershed are fluctuating around the average but for two exceptions. Kemptville Creek has around three times the average flow for this time of the year and the Tay River continues to have below average flows despite the weather. It's unknown how much groundwater is recharging in the watershed and all together it results in the watershed remaining at "minor" drought status. RVCA continues to monitor conditions and the status will be re-evaluated after the spring freshet. For more, ask PATRICK at ext. 1210, patrick.larson@rvca.ca.

## 30 Years of Winter Woodlot Conferences

Woodlot conference attendees get to celebrate 30 years of the Winter Woodlot Conference in Kemptville. Being held on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at the North Grenville Municipal Complex, it will be a journey through time exploring how forest and management have changed over the last 30 years and how things will evolve in the future. To register or learn more, visit [www.eomf.on.ca](http://www.eomf.on.ca).



# Around the Rideau

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[www.ramadaottawa.com](http://www.ramadaottawa.com), ~Previously *The Monterey Hotel*~  
Offers 87 fully renovated rooms with balconies overlooking the Rideau River. Pet friendly.

