

AROUND the Rideau



July | August 2019



New Chapman Mills dock more accessible

Staff installed a new, accessible dock at Chapman Mills Conservation Area this July, which will greatly improve how residents access the Rideau River to fish, paddle or just dip their toes.

The new dock is in a better location, directly off the main path beyond the picnic shelter. It's wider than the previous dock and features a gentle, wheelchair-friendly slope from the shore. Wheel-stop ledges have been installed along the sides of the dock and at the front to help wheelchair users feel more secure, as well. The dock was generously funded by Cabela's Canada Outdoor Fund, and designed by local company Fendock.

Many residents commented how pleased they were to see the new and improved structure. One local paddler said she loves Chapman Mills for providing "cottage life, five minutes from home." For more information contact MEGAN at ext. 1179 or megan.dunster@rvca.ca.

Wetlands thriving at Stillwater Creek

A newly restored wetland complex near Moodie Drive and Highway 417 already has a number of new residents, including killdeer, spotted sandpipers, frogs and several types of fish. Last fall, staff at the RVCA and the National Capital Commission created 10,000 square metres of new wetland habitat in the Stillwater Creek catchment area, just south of the new DND headquarters off Moodie Drive and Highway 417.

Thanks to observations from the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre, staff at the NCC and RVCA discovered the wetland had been suffering annually from extreme low water conditions. Most of the year the wetland was dry, dominated by long, reedy grasses that don't encourage much biodiversity.

Now, the restored wetland areas have been deepened and feature three large, permanent ponds of varying depths, with logs and branches for fish and wildlife habitat and a range of native wetland plants.

This fall, staff and volunteers will harvest cuttings from nearby dogwood and willow shrubs to plant them around the wetland. Once grown, they will shade the wetland features and provide important shoreline habitat. Contact JENNIFER for more information at ext. 1108 or jennifer.lamoureux@rvca.ca.



Happy Campers

Young, intrepid explorers spent their summers at Baxter and Foley Mountain day camps learning about nature, going on adventures and paddling the Rideau River. But if you're sad to see the summer exploring come to an end, don't despair — we've got several PA Day camps and Forest School programs planned for this fall! Visit rvca.ca/outdoor-education for more information.





New shoreline app saves time and hassle

Custom-built smartphone apps are changing the way RVCA staff get their work done — and saving time, money and headaches in the process.

This spring, we launched an app for classifying shorelines — something no other conservation group is doing digitally.

With the tap of an app staff can quickly analyze a shoreline, take a photo and input all the relevant data into a digital database, all from the palm of their hand — and from the middle of a river.

"It's amazing," said Adrienne Lewis, an aquatic resource technician with RVCA for the past 11 years. "It's fast and easy. We've eliminated 40 to 60 pieces of paper each day." In-house GIS/database specialist Chris Czerwinski turned the previous paper field form into a custom-made digital data chart using the platform Survey123.

The data is uploaded to the cloud, offering real-time results from the field and eliminating the need for manual data entry — and reducing the opportunity for human errors by half. The data is then easily formatted to inform RVCA programs and decisions. It's a huge time savings.

"This survey project was supposed to take two years and they're going to finish it in one season," Chris said. "That speaks to the efficiency of the new process." Contact CHRIS for more information at ext. 1172 or chris.czerwinski@rvca.ca.

Thanks to Friends of Foley Mountain

We get by with a little help from our friends — and the Friends of Foley Mountain are especially helpful! Generous grants from this dedicated group have helped Foley Mountain staff welcome dozens of families to four free Forest School programs this summer. Families spent their mornings exploring the great outdoors together, doing experiments and learning about the natural world.

The volunteer group will also sponsor two paid spots in the weekly Forest School drop-off program this fall, for families who otherwise can't afford the tuition. The program is open to kids ages 3 to 6, who will spend their time exploring, learning and discovering in nature.

Friends of Foley Mountain have also donated \$3,000 in bus subsidies so that local schools can attend Foley Mountain programming this school year. A big, heartfelt thank you to this dedicated volunteer group for their continuing support! Contact REBECCA for more info at 613-273-3255, or rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca.

Mud Creek Hazard Mapping Study open house

The RVCA will host an open house September 24 to discuss a new hazard mapping study for Mud Creek in Manotick. The new maps (traditionally known as "floodplain mapping" or "regulation mapping") show areas prone to natural hazards such as flooding and erosion. The mapping is part of a new agreement between the City of Ottawa and RVCA to map Mud Creek, Stevens Creek in North Gower, Mosquito Creek in Riverside South and Monahan Drain in Kanata.

The City of Ottawa will use the completed mapping to update their Official Plan and Zoning Schedules, and to review development applications under the *Planning Act*. RVCA will use the mapping to review development applications under the *Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation*.

Members of the public can attend the open house and/or provide comments on the draft mapping. Staff welcome historical records of past flood events, slope failure, erosion, news clippings, photographs and even anecdotal stories to help confirm the reasonableness of calculations. For those unable to attend, comments can be sent to FERDOUS at ext. 1170 or at ferdous.ahmed@rvca.ca.

Low-income students to access outdoor ed

Twelve classes of low-income students will experience the natural world first-hand this school year thanks to a generous grant from the Ottawa Community Foundation.

The grant of \$9,420 will cover tuition and transportation costs for 12 schools from the City of Ottawa. The Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation is campaigning to help 50 disadvantaged classes access its outdoor education programs during the 2019/2020 school year.

The curriculum-based sessions taught by certified teachers give students hands-on experiences in nature while they learn about natural science, our role in the natural world and how we can protect it. Learn more from DAN at ext. 1124 or dan.cooper@rvca.ca.

AROUND the Rideau is made possible thanks to our generous sponsors

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