

# AROUND the Rideau



March / April 2021

## New data tools offer flood of new info for waterfront residents

The RVCA has released a flood of new data and forecasting tools, including:

- Real-time water level and streamflow tools, including new gauges in Cumberland, North Gower, Richmond and Brantwood Park;
- Neighbourhood flood mapping for 20 vulnerable Ottawa communities;
- Periodic water level data for some lakes in the Rideau Valley;
- Historic Rideau Valley snowpack measurements going back 40 years;
- Historic Rideau River water level and streamflow data from as far back as 1933.

The data and maps can be customized, downloaded and shared to help residents avoid flood damage in the future.

The newly published historic data is also an important resource, not just for flood forecasting but also for spotting weather trends, monitoring local climate change impacts and informing future hazard mapping, municipal planning and zoning decisions.



Curious how we measure water in the snowpack? Want to learn how our gauges work? Need some help navigating our data tools? Check out our flood forecasting videos on our YouTube channel, @RideauValleyCA.

Visit [www.rvca.ca/watershed-conditions](http://www.rvca.ca/watershed-conditions) to find current and historical water level, streamflow and other data for your region.

### Spring freshet goes easy on Rideau Valley watershed

Mother Nature gave Rideau Valley residents a break this spring with even snowmelts and fairly limited precipitation, leading to an ideal spring freshet. While water levels did rise in the wake of several large rain events in March, flooding was extremely limited and affected only a few very localized spots.

The Ottawa River's freshet is ongoing but looks optimistic as well, with water levels rising in late March but already receding back to normal levels.

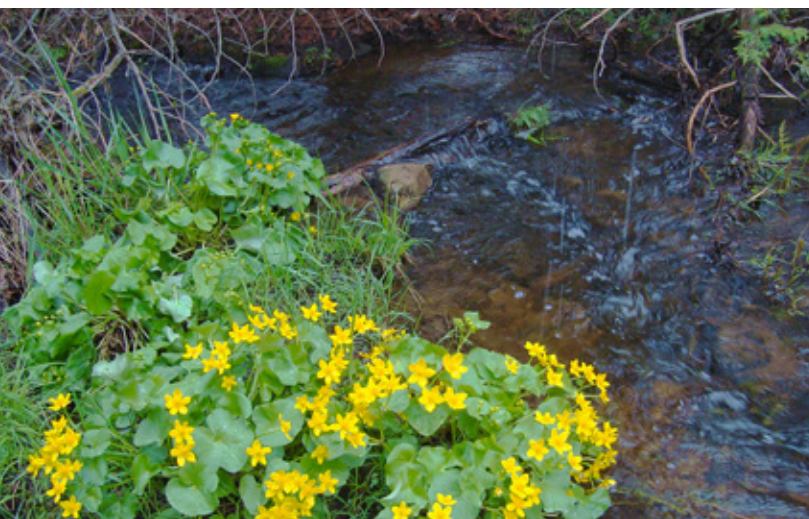
However, residents on both river systems should remain vigilant for flooding throughout the spring as large rain events can increase water levels to flood levels very quickly. Residents can monitor local water levels at [rvca.ca/watershed-conditions](http://rvca.ca/watershed-conditions). For more information contact BRIAN at [brian.stratton@rvca.ca](mailto:brian.stratton@rvca.ca).

### Yes, even good dogs need to be leashed at RVCA conservation areas

Even the goodest of pups can accidentally harass or kill wildlife while off exploring, which is why we're reminding visitors to keep their dogs on-leash and on conservation area trails at all times.

Spring is a particularly sensitive time, as some birds and animals build their nests on or very close to the ground. These nests can easily be trampled, eaten or otherwise destroyed by curious canines. The meadowlark, bobolink and whip-poor-will are all considered species at risk in Ontario, and all of them build their nests on the ground, making them vulnerable to roaming pups. Game animals like grouse, ducks and turkeys are also vulnerable. Mammals like mice, voles, chipmunks and even skunks can also be found cuddled up with their young in burrows, under logs, in leaf litter or in cavities at the base of trees.

Allowing pups to poop in the woods where it's not easily cleaned up is a problem, too, as dog poop can contaminate nearby waterways and introduce disease and parasites to local wildlife. For more information contact CHELSEY at [chelsey.ellis@rvca.ca](mailto:chelsey.ellis@rvca.ca).





**Team of super sleuths help RVCA investigate Adrains Creek quality**

Holmes and Watson would surely approve of the watershed’s latest investigative team: the Township of Rideau Lakes, Upper Rideau Lake Association (URLA) and the RVCA.

The three organizations are collaborating to examine why water quality in Adrains Creek is consistently rated “poor” in RVCA reports – and whether the creek is contributing to the same poor rating in Upper Rideau Lake. The township and URLA both contributed funding for additional sampling on top of baseline monitoring last year, and two URLA volunteers spearheaded sampling efforts last summer. Despite their efforts, no definitive cause for the poor quality was unearthed, so the volunteers will continue their efforts this spring and summer.

RVCA’s surface water quality co-ordinator Sarah MacLeod-Neilson, who organized the program, said this kind of partnership is new for RVCA – and could be hugely beneficial for the watershed going forward. “We’re excited for more collaborations like this,” MacLeod-Neilson said. “We want to work with our municipalities, lake associations and other local partners to identify and address specific problem areas.”

For more information contact SARAH at [sarah.macleod-neilson@rvca.ca](mailto:sarah.macleod-neilson@rvca.ca).

**Pollinator meadow to transform Hydro Ottawa project**

This spring, RVCA stewardship staff will help Hydro Ottawa transform a 15-acre site into the largest pollinator meadow in Eastern Ontario. The utility is building a new transformer in Ottawa’s south end, but a huge swath of unused property has been earmarked for bees and butterflies. RVCA’s Shoreline Stewardship Co-ordinator Meaghan McDonald is working with experts at Canadian Wildlife Federation to select native seed and oversee the planting in collaboration with Ontario NativeScapes planting company. The RVCA will monitor and maintain the site into the future, along with the 2,750 trees the RVCA planted on another four acres of the property last spring. “Hydro Ottawa wants the same thing we do: to create a thriving, vibrant pollinator meadow that supports native plant and animal species in pursuit of a healthier environment,” McDonald said. For more information contact MEAGHAN at [meaghan.mcdonald@rvca.ca](mailto:meaghan.mcdonald@rvca.ca).

**Outdoor adventure kits a huge success!**

Our winter Outdoor Adventure kits were so successful, Foley Mountain is teaming up with several local libraries and community partners to offer double the spring kits! Families can get one of 200 kits from any Rideau Lakes or Westport library branch, as well as the Lyndhurst and Seeley’s Bay branches of the Leeds and Thousand Islands Public Library beginning May 1.



The spring kits include materials and instructions to help families of all ages get outside and explore. Families can expect seed packets for starting a pollinator garden, a magnifying glass and nature journal for backyard exploration and sensory exploration activities. The kit will also include some outdoor art challenges including how to customize a walking stick for your next hike, and a mini version of the Robert Munsch classic, *Mud Puddle*.

A huge thank you to the Township of Rideau Lakes, the Township of Leeds and Thousand Islands, the three public libraries, Friends of Foley Mountain, the Rideau Lakes Horticultural Society, North Leeds Youth Co-ordinating Committee and the United Way of Leeds and Grenville for helping us get these awesome kits into the hands of local families. For more information contact REBECCA at [rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca](mailto:rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca).

**Apply today for your Rural Clean Water grant**

Are you making changes this season that could improve nearby water quality? Whether you’re decommissioning a well, upgrading your septic or fencing your livestock out of the local creek, you could be eligible for up to 90% of the cost in grants from the RVCA. Farmers with a completed *Environmental Farm Plan* can access grants for tile drainage, manure or chemicals storage, land retirement and other related projects. Non-farming landowners can access grants for erosion controls, windbreaks, well and septic upgrades and other projects that protect local water quality. Visit [rvca.ca/stewardship-grants](http://rvca.ca/stewardship-grants) to see if your project is eligible. For more information contact DEREK at [derek.matheson@rvca.ca](mailto:derek.matheson@rvca.ca).

AROUND the Rideau is made possible thanks to our generous sponsors

**Rideau Valley Conservation Authority**  
Box 599, 3889 Rideau Valley Drive  
Manotick, ON K4M 1A5  
613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504  
[www.rvca.ca](http://www.rvca.ca)

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Offers 87 fully renovated rooms with balconies overlooking the Rideau River, banquet facilities, full service restaurant and outdoor pool. Pet friendly.