



ANNUAL REPORT 2003

RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

rvca MESSAGES

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The RVCA is playing a vital role in our valley. From Newboro and the Bob's Lake area west of Perth downstream right through to the nation's capital, we improve and encourage environmental protection throughout the watershed. What a tremendous success!

The RVCA pursues a broad range of projects all focused on one major goal: clean, healthy rivers. We use the "watershed" approach — where we aren't bound by man-made borders, but look at an entire ecosystem and how it functions. Together, we share the benefits and the costs and build healthy communities that contain clean water, rich ecosystems and support the economic and social needs of our watershed residents, business and municipalities.

2003 was a year of growth for the RVCA as we implemented year one of our three year work plan. We have set our long term sights on a rich, healthy and diverse environment. It is our job to make sure that the water is looked after by everyone in today's society so that tomorrow's generations inherit a clean, functioning watershed. We now face the challenge . . . with pleasure.

Sincere thanks to our members, municipal politicians and their staff and our many government and non-government partners for their continued support in making 2003 a great year in conservation!

John H. Miller, Chair

GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Conservation Authorities continue to thrive province-wide. We are one of 36 Conservation Authorities working as natural champions — effectively planning, monitoring and managing our watershed resources. We welcome the opportunity to coordinate source protection planning on a watershed scale in Ontario and we are prepared to embrace this new challenge.

The road to success is knowledge — compiling and analyzing information on water quality and quantity, water levels and flow, shorelines, flora and fauna. Watershed information, when combined with excellent staff to analyze and interpret the data, will support municipal decision-making on a watershed, science-based approach.

We continue to gather information with new sampling and modeling programs designed to increase our understanding of how the watershed works.

And, we continue to develop, support and update watershed management plans throughout the watershed.

We believe that water and management on a watershed basis is the most logical, cost-effective and widely-accepted approach in river management worldwide. We are excited to be part of this movement and are confident that we can make progress towards our goal of lasting improvements to the quality of life in the Rideau Valley.

Thank you to everyone for their effort in 2003. We look forward to your continued enthusiasm and support in 2004.

Dell Hallett, P.Eng., General Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John H. Miller, *Chair*
Janet Stavinga, *Vice-Chair*
Alan Arbuckle
Dwight Bennett
Stephen Bird
Jan Harder

Charles Long
Allan McCallum
Michael McEwen
Bill Stevenson
Wendy Stewart
Cathy Willoughby

rvca PRIORITIES

UNDERSTANDING OUR WATERSHED

In 2003 we developed our Watershed Information System — a gateway to the most complete and current collection of technical information on the creeks, streams and rivers in the Rideau watershed. We anticipate that this system will be a major tool for municipalities, agencies and lake associations in gathering technical data for environmental decision-making. Watch for it's launch early in 2004.

MAKING IT HAPPEN — RVCA'S THREE YEAR WORK PLAN AND STRATEGY

The RVCA's goal is to protect and improve the natural functions of the Rideau Valley watershed. A three year work plan supporting this goal was developed for the 2003 – 2005 period. It stresses our priorities for an enhanced watershed information system, implementation of sampling and modeling programs to increase our understanding of watershed functions, and our focus on continued watershed planning and management. It will become our roadmap to continued cost-effective, inter-municipal environmental protection. This will ultimately result in a better quality of life in the watershed, representing the interests of its member municipalities and residents.

MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND SOURCE PROTECTION

The RVCA continues to support member municipalities with delivery of environmental services aimed at source protection. Septic system approvals, flood forecasting and warning, reforestation, conservation information, plan review, fish and wildlife habitat protection, conservation land management and incentive programs are all available by phone, e-mail or in person.

Conservation Authorities are tested, publicly respected and accepted organizations who already work in partnership with municipalities and other stakeholders to undertake natural resource protection programs.

Justice Dennis O'Connor, Walkerton Inquiry Part II, May 2002.



A healthy watershed is the greatest legacy to our children and the key to our continued economic growth and future prosperity.

*Making it Happen,
RVCA Three Year Strategy and Work Plan*

Cover Photo: Gray Treefrog, *Hyla versicolor*
Location: West of Burritts Rapids
Credit: Brian Bezaire



rvca 2003 HIGHLIGHTS

WATERSHED PLANNING, MONITORING AND REPORTING

- ▶ Development of the Watershed Management Information System: this extensive electronic database (with everything from water quality and quantity information to terrestrial habitat to shoreline surveys) will be available for use in early 2004.
- ▶ Fieldwork for the shoreline classification project (done in cooperation with Parks Canada): a complete survey of both shorelines was completed from Kars bridge downstream to Hogs Back Dam. Data collected includes property reference information, photos, presence and type of shoreline structures, active erosion sites, land use description and condition of riparian zone vegetation. The aim is to map and classify all man-made features of the shoreline and indicate areas of erosion or degradation to improve shoreline management.
- ▶ Volunteer sampling through Ottawa's City Stream Watch and the lake area's Watershed Watch Program: by collecting water quality and environmental data, over the years we will be able to identify trends and build a comprehensive water quality archive.
- ▶ The Renfrew County-Mississippi-Rideau Groundwater Study: this work provides a framework for groundwater management and suggested protective measure of individual and

municipal wells. For report summaries, visit www.mvc.on.ca/rmrgroundwaterstudy/index.html

- ▶ Ice management in the lower Rideau River to help reduce annual spring flood damages: in cooperation with the City of Ottawa and the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- ▶ Fish habitat protection through inspections and advice to landowners and developers on behalf of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.
- ▶ Regular monitoring of water quantity: data on flows impact the Flood Forecasting and Warning system as well as provide data for the Low Water Response Plan.
- ▶ Monitoring and maintenance of dams and other water control structures on tributaries of the Rideau.
- ▶ Lower Rideau Watershed Strategy: a new strategic planning study to coordinate the regulatory and operational activities of the numerous organizations managing the Lower Rideau. This project will provide a blueprint for taking care of the long-term health of the Lower Rideau Watershed.

PLANNING AND REGULATIONS

- ▶ Ottawa Septic System Office provides septic system inspections and approvals in Ottawa on behalf of the Rideau, Mississippi and South Nation Conservation Authorities. Over 850 permits were processed including a special third inspection and education package that goes straight into the hands of the homeowner. Quick turnaround time for permits and homeowner education provides an extra level of service provided to Ottawa residents.
- ▶ The Rideau Valley, Mississippi and South Nation Conservation Authorities developed an agreement with the City of Ottawa to provide site specific environmental advice to city staff on all planning and development applications. Each planning application will now get a consistent, independent and "ecosystem-based" review based on the watershed principle.
- ▶ The City of Ottawa, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the RVCA's Ottawa Septic System Office introduced the Ottawa Well Inspection Pilot Project. This pilot program will

Getting to know our watershed better and better through volunteer and summer student sampling.





inspect newly constructed wells. Homeowners in rural Ottawa can participate in this free program which includes a water quality analysis and well inspection report.

- ▶ A wide variety of wastewater courses and demonstration technologies are being delivered through the Ontario Rural Wastewater Center. Located at Baxter Conservation Area, this training centre (in partnership with Collège d'Alfred, University of Guelph and RVCA) provides hands-on learning experiences and transfers years of applied research on wastewater management.

STEWARDSHIP SERVICES

- ▶ The Rural Clean Water Program continued into its second year of delivering grants helping farmers and rural landowners undertake projects and practices that protect water quality. Seventy-five applications were received with 61 projects completed and financed to the tune of over \$109,000. This translates into over \$280,000 dollars invested into groundwater and surface water protection in the Rideau's middle and upper watersheds.
- ▶ The Green Acres tree planting program (run jointly by the City of Ottawa, South Nation, Mississippi Valley and RVCA) helps maintain city forest cover at 28 – 30 per cent as targeted in the Official Plan.
- ▶ Together with its many conservation partners, the RVCA planted approximately 132,000 tree seedlings. Half were planted by partner groups such as Scouts Canada and "Friends of" groups. The other half were planted by rural landowners. This year's seedlings bring the total number of trees planted through RVCA programs to 2.1 million over the past 20 years.

- ▶ The RVCA started the Beaver Management Pilot Project. Local conditions (fish habitat, bank erosion, vegetation) were assessed at 47 dams along Kemptville Creek and its tributaries. It is anticipated that DFO will authorize removal of several dams in 2004.
- ▶ The LandOwner Resource Centre turned 10 years old. The RVCA storefront proudly continues to serve up current and objective environmental information and advice on forestry, river/lake issues, shorelines, docks, floodplains and permits, wildlife, stewardship services, septic systems and wells. The LRC is an excellent tool for municipalities and residents, acting as the call centre for a number of special programs including Ottawa's Well Inspection Pilot Program, Ottawa's Rural Clean Water Program, Ottawa's Green Acres tree planting program, RVCA's Clean Water Program, Wetland Habitat Fund and more.

CONSERVATION LANDS PROGRAM

- ▶ Meisel Woods Conservation Area and Sandi Slater Memorial Walk were officially opened October 4, 2003. This 130 acre gift from John Meisel is an investment in long-term environmental protection and creates a new public natural attraction in Central Frontenac and the upper Rideau watershed. The Sandi Slater Memorial Fund was dedicated in her

2.1 million trees have been planted throughout the Rideau Valley in the last 20 years. Thank you to all the landowners for participating and having such a green impact!



name on the day of her funeral. The fund was set up to build a trail loop around the lake in memory of a thoughtful, vibrant woman who loved this wilderness area. Phase 1 of the memorial walk was completed in 2003 with plans for additional expansion in years to come.

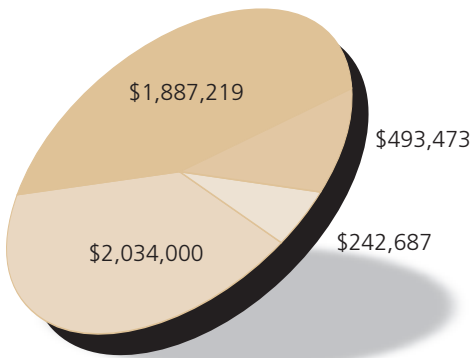
- ▶ The RVCA manages and protects ten developed conservation areas and over 5,000 acres of conservation land.
- ▶ Children continue to participate in and enjoy our outdoor education programs. Over 7,000 students visited Baxter and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas in 2003. The RVCA's programs are self-funded through user fees, sponsorship and in-kind donations. Exciting new features continue to draw interest and support including summer day camps, weekend camping, Scouting "camporees" and special learning events such as Eastern Ontario Children's Water Festival.



Outdoor education programs reach over 7,000 students.

- ▶ Baxter Conservation Area, in participation with Ducks Unlimited Canada, launched its new program "Wonders of Wetlands". Sponsored by RBC Financial Group Foundation, the program funds school visits and focuses on the benefits of wetland habitats.

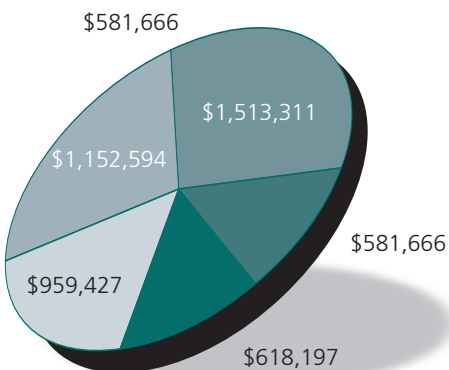
FINANCING CONSERVATION



2003 Revenues

Municipal Levy	\$2,034,000
Program Revenue	\$1,887,219
Special Levies	\$493,473
Government Grants	\$242,687

TOTAL\$4,657,379



2003 Expenditures

Watershed Planning, Monitoring & Reporting	\$1,513,311
Planning, Advisory & Regulatory Services	\$1,152,594
Stewardship Services	\$959,427
Conservation Land Management Services	\$618,197
Corporate Services	\$581,666

TOTAL\$4,825,195

rideau valley CONSERVATION FOUNDATION



Special thanks go to the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation and its hard working volunteer board of directors. This registered environmental charity works hard to help conserve the lands and water of the Rideau watershed. In 2003, the Foundation contributed over \$127,000 to RVCA projects.

The Conservation Foundation builds partnerships and seeks new individuals, corporations and groups wanting to get involved in the vital work of taking care of our own natural environment.

Working to raise funds for enhanced RVCA functions since 1970, the Foundation continues to play a crucial role in making conservation projects happen for Rideau Valley residents, now and into the future.

We are especially delighted and honoured to be selected as one of the charities sponsored by the Nortel Networks 2004 Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival.

The Foundation raises funds and in-kind gifts for three major areas of conservation work — land, water, and conservation education. To learn more, visit the RVCF website at www.rideauvalley.on.ca/foundation

CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mary A. Bryden, *Chair*
Stephen Simmering, *Vice Chair*
Mark Andrews
Bryan Baker
Lesley I. Cameron
Donrey Anne Hamilton
Dorothy Hearty
Lynn Kaplansky
Pat MacGregor
Ralph Raina
Toivo Roht (*to November 2003*)
Mary Surtees

Charles Billington, *Executive Director*



rvca WATERSHED



HOW TO REACH US

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
1128 Mill Street, Box 599
Manotick, Ontario, Canada K4M 1A5
(613) 692-3571
1-800-267-3504 (within 613 area)
(613) 692-0831 (fax)
e-mail: postmaster@rideauvalley.on.ca
website: www.rideauvalley.on.ca

