

Acting Now for a
Healthy Future

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
Annual Report 2008

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*served January to June 2008

**served July to December 2008

Acting Now for a Healthy Future

Protecting our environment is no longer an option, but rather a necessity. Globally, everyone is taking a sober look at their actions and their impacts on our natural world. Locally, RVCA is also working towards a sustainable and healthy valley. Our programs and services are many. Our projects include shoreline restoration, tree planting, water sampling, data collection, updated mapping, community awareness and education programs, streamlined development review process, species at risk habitat enhancement and much more. Each program will have a lasting, positive effect on our watershed — and the hard work we invest today will pay off well into the future.

These projects are successful thanks to the direction and support of our many partners. Thank you to our board members, municipal politicians, government partners, community groups and staff. By working together, we are collectively enriching the human and natural communities in our region.

We are pleased to present our 2008 Annual Report and a small sampling of our many achievements. We also look forward to another challenging year full of successful projects throughout the watershed. The future health of our organization, our communities and our watershed depends on making more sustainable choices — now. We will not rest on our past achievements, but instead put to work the experience we've gained and the processes we've enhanced to ensure we make the most of new work and new opportunities.

Alan Arbuckle, Chair and Dell Hallett, General Manager



Photo: Simon Lunn

What We Do

The RVCA delivers quality environmental programs. It's our job, through partnerships with our municipalities, government and non-government groups, to make sure that the water is looked after today so that tomorrow's generations inherit a clean, healthy, functioning watershed.

Our work and resources are aimed towards:

- improved water quality
- sustained water supply
- reduced flood risk
- conserved watershed habitats
- managed conservation areas and programs

Clear and fresh, safe and clean: the quality of the land, air and water resources we've been blessed with is a very large part of the Rideau's appeal. Our challenge is to protect, maintain and improve our watershed health.

A Sample of Our Watershed Health Work in 2008

Watershed Science Services

- **448** water quality samples taken (56 sites over eight months) as part of the RVCA's Baseline Stream Water Quality Program
- **120** samples taken (10 sites over 12 months) as part of the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Program
- **108** samples taken (36 lakes with three samples each) through the RVCA's Watershed Watch Program
- **34** samples taken on stream and lake sites as part of our ongoing participation in the Ontario Benthic Biodiversity Network
- **1,092** volunteer hours spent learning, sampling and restoring urban and rural streams through the City Stream Watch Program. Streams sampled in 2008 were Sawmill Creek, Cardinal Creek, Black Rapids Creek and Mud Creek
- **15** wells monitored as part of the Provincial Ground Monitoring Network
- **4** sites sampled for pesticide residue in participation with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment
- **75** reviews completed on development-related hydro geologic assessment reports
- **16** members meet for the first Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee meeting. The Committee's Terms of Reference were completed prior to year end.
- **495** cubic metres per second recorded as the Rideau's spring peak at the Carleton University gauge on April 10. Spring conditions caused the Rideau and its tributaries to jump their banks in several known flood-vulnerable areas.
- **60** kilometres of new and updated flood risk maps for Kemptville Creek and Barnes Creek were presented at a November public open house
- **30** centimetres of fill added to parts of the Brewer Park Dyke (Ottawa) as part of its maintenance and to ensure it will withstand future floods
- **40** watershed residents attended the RVCA's Municipal Drain Information Day. Representatives from municipal, provincial and federal agencies participated to help property owners understand rules and regulations surrounding drains .
- **40+** lake groups supported by Lake Management Planning Program through information packages, training and workshops



Jock River
Photo: Simon Lunn

Planning and Regulation Services

- **244** applications processed under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (Ontario Regulation 174/06 – Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses) — 194 approved, five denied, five hearings, two appeals and 19 violations
- **122** reviews completed under Section 35 of the federal *Fisheries Act*
- **1,240** planning applications (minor variances, official plan amendments, zoning bylaw amendments, subdivision, etc.) reviewed and advice given to municipal approval authorities in 2008
- **636** property inquiries through the LandOwner Resource Centre by prospective purchasers seeking information on development constraints and environmental conditions of residential properties
- **722** applications at the Ottawa Septic System Office for new or replacement septic systems
- **332** file searches for septic system information
- **400** septic re-inspections completed by the Mississippi-Rideau Septic Office in Rideau Lakes Township (100), North Frontenac Township (100) and Tay Valley Township (200)
- **57** site visits, watershed-wide, in response to community concerns regarding private septic systems
- **77,500** copies of *Septic Smart — Homeowners's Guide to Septic Systems* printed and distributed throughout Ontario. Research, writing, design and illustrations done by RVCA staff.

Conservation Land Services

- **2,286** hectares of public land and nine developed Conservation Areas are operated, maintained and serviced
- **55,000** visitors to Rideau Valley Conservation Areas
- **5,840** students, including schools, Ducks Unlimited's "Project Webfoot" (540), Children's Water Festival (140) and Scouting/Guiding groups (275) experienced Baxter's Outdoor Education Program
- **146** children enjoyed Baxter's Summer Day Camp, including 31 Canoe Camp participants and 11 Conservation Camp participants
- **700** people (primarily Scouting/Guiding groups) spent the night at Baxter's interpretive centre or the River Cabin and group camping areas
- **3,500** children enjoyed Foley Mountain's year round education programs
- **1** new Children's Nature Discovery Centre at the Foley Mountain Interpretive Centre was officially opened in May 2008. Done in partnership with the Friends of Foley Mountain, the centre provides hands-on nature-based learning activities including a puppet theatre, live animals, tracking and tree identification activities, a bird viewing centre, computer learning station, and a nature library.
- **1,125** feet of shoreline and 2.8 hectares of land protected with Baxter land acquisition
- **1** new bridge at Meisel Conservation Area allows for access to three kilometres of new trail for a total of five kilometres of hiking
- **14** schools (over 2,500 children) enjoyed our first ever, free, in-school Spring Water Awareness Program
- **\$130,000** (through support from the Species at Risk Stewardship grant and local partnerships i.e., Rideau Valley Field Naturalists) invested into Perth Wildlife Reserve — new butterfly garden, lookout over Tay Marsh, turtle nesting platforms, flying squirrel nests, interpretive signs, trail brochure and more
- **275** children participated in Baxter's and Foley Mountain's Children's Water Festivals — all you want to know about H₂O!



Chapman Mills
Conservation Area
Photo: Simon Lunn

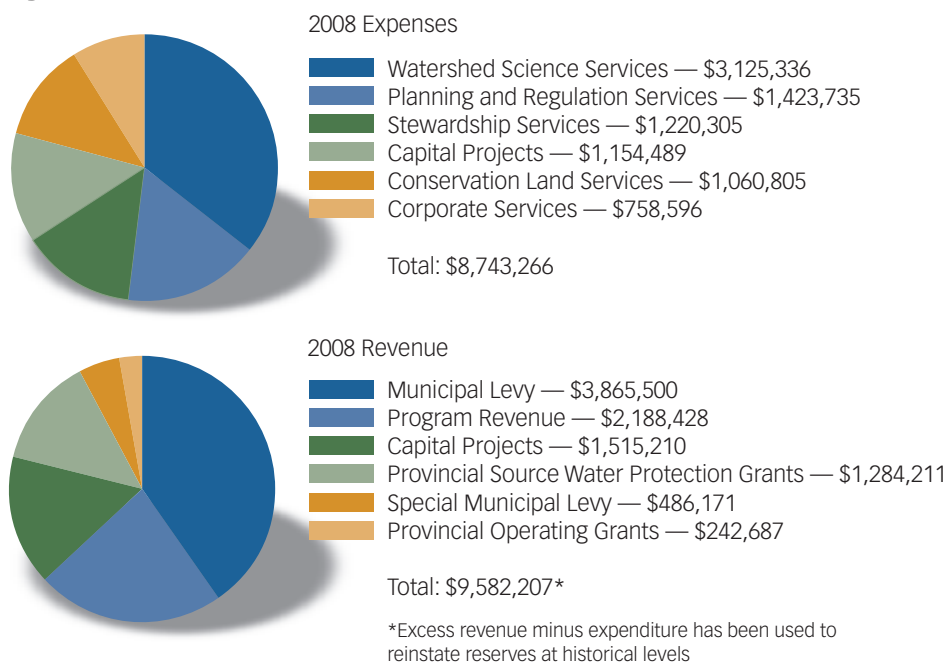
Stewardship Services

- **\$76,164** of grant money distributed to landowners for 55 projects (e.g. well, septic, shoreline stabilization and education) through the Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program. This money, when combined with the landowners' contributions amounts to \$325,509 invested towards improved water quality.
- **\$96,864** of grant money distributed to landowners for 62 projects through the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program. This money, when combined with the landowners' contribution amounts to \$2,088,510 towards water quality protection.
- **\$61,700** of grant money used to plant 79,750 trees in 2008 through the RVCA's Trees for Tomorrow Program
- **\$73,465** of grant money used to plant 73,130 trees in 2008 through the RVCA delivered City of Ottawa Green Acres Program
- **11** site visits done for five potential shoreline naturalization projects to be done in 2009
- **2,600** butternut seedlings were planted on over 208 sites through the Eastern Ontario Butternut Recovery Program for a total of 6,600 seedlings planted on 461 sites since the program started in 2006
- **200** butternut seedlings from eight possibly-resistant parent trees were planted on 14 sites and will be monitored for canker infection each fall. This trial will help us determine if apparent resistance can be passed on to the seedling.
- **2** hectares at the Ferguson Forest Centre secured for the Ontario Butternut Archive site; includes funding through the Ontario Species at Risk Stewardship Fund
- **31** information kits distributed to landowners about nuisance beaver management
- **15** years of excellent customer service through the LandOwner Resource Centre and its Resource Specialists

Corporate Services

- **3** eastern Ontario conservation authorities and foundations, representing 30 municipalities in Eastern Ontario, team-up to host the Tri-Valley Conservation Awards Gala to celebrate the achievements of environmental leaders in the Mississippi, Rideau and South Nation watersheds. Thirteen awards were distributed at this evening event.
- **200+** guests celebrate the official opening of the new Rideau Valley Conservation Centre on February 28, 2008. The new Monterey Boardroom was unveiled in honour of the Monterey Inn Resort's large and continuing investment in the local environment.
- **6** bi-monthly Around the Rideau's and monthly *Watershed Briefs* produced and distributed to member municipalities and their residents
- RVCA Headquarters finally takes **LEED gold** in November 2008

Financing Conservation



Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation

Healthy Rivers...Healthy Communities

The Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation (RVCF) is a registered environmental charity that helps make important conservation projects happen by raising additional funds and by accepting gifts of conservation lands. In the past 15 years, the RVCF has raised over \$1.75 million in cash and in-kind services for the education programs, boardwalks and trails, biodiversity monitoring and the acquisition of key environmental properties in the valley. All of this is possible because of the many generous and committed conservation-minded individuals, families and businesses in and outside our watershed who believe in our programs and agree that we can make a difference.

In 2008, the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation raised over \$200,000 for conservation programs in the valley.

Highlights for 2008

- Meisel Woods upgraded with the installation of a bridge to cross Beaver Creek through generous gifts from the Community Foundation of Greater Kingston and The Davies Charitable Foundation
- the legendary McGarry Family's "Memorial Tree Planting Program" plants a tree in the valley on behalf of each person whose funeral is in their care
- a group of community-minded businesses led by Pratt & Whitney Canada help plant another 150,000 new trees in the watershed
- a new public floating dock is now in place at the popular Rideau Ferry Conservation Area courtesy of Fendor Glass and Aluminum
- Monarch Homes makes a major gift to the RVCF Environmental Land Fund
- the Canadian Wildlife Federation supports children and schools to visit and enjoy outdoor education programs at Baxter Conservation Area
- ongoing support of the Ottawa Children's Water Festival from Harold Crabtree Foundation, City of Ottawa and Source Water Protection
- Adobe Systems Inc. makes major donation to support visitor services at our Conservation Areas
- the first-ever Tri-Valley Conservation Awards Gala celebrates the achievements of environmental leaders in the Mississippi, Rideau and South Nation watersheds
- a coalition of seven public and private partners, lead by TransCanada PipeLines, TD Friends of the Environment, the EJLB Foundation of Montreal and the Helen McRae Peacock Foundation at the Toronto Community Foundation, raises the funds necessary to purchase an important piece of environmental land adjacent to the Baxter Conservation Area on the Rideau River within the City of Ottawa.

To learn more about the RVCF, visit www.rvca.ca/foundation

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Big Rideau Lake
Photo: Simon Lunn

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