



2015 *Rideau Valley Conservation Authority* ANNUAL REPORT

RVCA

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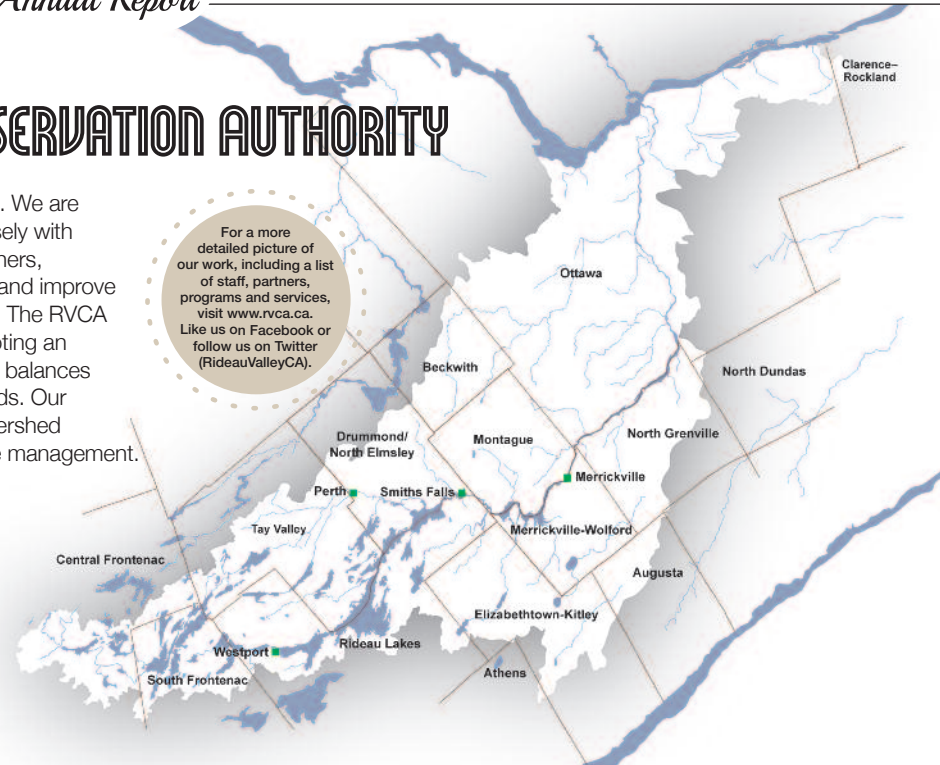
YOUR RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

RVCA is one of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities. We are an environmental protection agency that works closely with municipal, provincial and federal government partners, landowners and community groups to maintain and improve the natural resources in the Rideau watershed. The RVCA looks to build resilient communities by promoting an integrated watershed approach — one that balances human, environmental and economic needs. Our success is based on local initiatives, watershed jurisdiction and partnerships in resource management.

Our ongoing priorities are:

1. Improve water quality
2. Protect water supplies
3. Manage flood risk and erosion hazards
4. Restore watershed habitats
5. Increase conservation lands

For a more detailed picture of our work, including a list of staff, partners, programs and services, visit www.rvca.ca. Like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter (@RideauValleyCA).



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & GENERAL MANAGER

2015 was a year filled with many highlights and accomplishments. We started the year with a new Board of Directors and a new Chair; we said good-bye to some long time colleagues and friends and welcomed new staff members. We celebrated the delivery of many important projects essential to maintaining and improving the health of our watershed.

We concentrated on providing cost effective programs and services to our municipalities and residents. Our efforts were focused on keeping the municipal levy low, developing new partnerships and acquiring special funding. We worked with many federal, provincial and community organizations, the business community and our municipalities on projects that serve to protect our natural resources and our watershed. Monitoring our waterways and maintaining our rich ecosystems were balanced with meeting the social and economic needs of our communities.

We look forward to 2016, one where we will celebrate 50 years of conservation in the Rideau Valley watershed. The upcoming year will be a celebration about Conservation Authorities; how they are nimble, creative and reflect local values and interests in protecting the resources in our watershed. We are all very proud of our accomplishments and look forward to celebrating them in small, but meaningful ways throughout 2016.

"Thank you" to our staff who have been outstanding in their performance throughout the past year. Their passion, creativity and commitment continue to impress and keep us moving forward. The support received from our members, municipal councils and their staff, and our many government and non-government partners is greatly appreciated. Together we have successfully made 2015 a year highlighted by many notable accomplishments.

Lyle Pederson, Chair
Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, General Manager

CONSERVATION LAND MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The RVCA manages close to 2,800 hectares of conservation lands for the strategic protection of vulnerable habitats and valuable natural resources. This includes 10 developed conservation areas which are available for public use and enjoyment — providing local communities with affordable recreation, education and tourism opportunities.

LAND MANAGEMENT

- **2** new land acquisitions of **130** hectares (**322** acres)
- **\$231,000** in donations raised in partnership with RVCF to offset land acquisition, conservation area development and stewardship activities
- **36** natural areas totalling **2,800** hectares of conservation land
- **900** trees planted in two conservation areas
- **6** species at risk monitoring or habitat features completed at five conservation areas (bobolink, butternut, barn swallow, least bittern, Blanding's turtles)
- **32** wildlife features monitored at six conservation areas
- **6** maintenance agreements with municipalities or organizations to support park/land management
- **7** partnership agreements to provide unique opportunities at six conservation areas

- Completed Eco-Sensitivity Report for Beckwith Township to assist them with land acquisition in Goodwood Marsh
- Completed trail assessment for Elizabethtown-Kitley Township

CONSERVATION AREAS

- **10** developed conservation areas
- **62,000** visitors annually
- **14** new (maintenance free) entrance signs
- **5,000** people enjoyed rental facilities at Foley Mountain and Baxter Conservation Areas (interpretive centres, Baxter river cabin and group camping areas)
- **42** kilometres of trails maintained for public access

- **8** kilometres of trail upgrades
- **7** new visitor benches
- **500+** hazardous trees removed in public areas

EDUCATION

- **9,000** students enjoyed outdoor education programs at Baxter and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas

CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services supports the authority, allowing it to perform its functions in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The department is responsible for strategic planning, budgeting, business improvement, human resources, communications, member services, foundation support and administration.

- **\$10** million budget
- **65+** staff
- **22** board members representing **17** of our **18** member municipalities
- Multiple communications tools — media releases, newsletters, interpretive signs, displays, information sheets, webpage and social media postings
- Coordinated and submitted Environmental Bill of Rights comments on the *Conservation Authorities Act Review Discussion Paper* and the *Wetland Conservation in Ontario Discussion Paper*



Mill Pond Conservation Area



Chapman Mills Conservation Area



Meisel Woods Conservation Area

PLANNING ADVISORY & REGULATORY SERVICES

The RVCA believes that sound planning is a critical part of protecting our land and water. Our staff bring watershed science, provincial policies and individual municipal needs together to meaningfully assist municipal decision-makers in building and sustaining local communities. The RVCA also acts as an approval authority for development on hazard lands affected by flood, steep slopes or unstable soil and sensitive areas such as in and around wetlands and along shorelines and waterways. Staff also approve the construction, enlargement or alteration of septic systems throughout the City of Ottawa and Tay Valley Township. Septic re-inspection services are also performed in several municipalities.

SECTION 28 CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT

- **237** permits issued, **28** pending, **2** denied
- **22** violations
- **117** complaints/occurrences
- **134** clearance letters
- **825** property inquiries

PLANNING ADVISORY REVIEWS

- **1,015** Planning Act applications
 - **1** Official Plan review
 - **12** Official Plan amendments
 - **110** zoning by-law amendments
 - **10** subdivision applications
 - **25** condominium applications
 - **380** severances
 - **358** minor variances
- **108** site plan controls
- **8** Environmental Assessment Act reviews
- **3** aggregate reviews

SEPTIC SYSTEM APPROVALS AND INSPECTIONS

- **577** applications for new or replacement septic systems, **522** in Ottawa, **55** in Tay Valley
- **50** Part 10 renovation applications in Ottawa, **20** in Tay Valley
- **324** septic re-inspections completed in Drummond/North Elmsley (**6**), Central Frontenac (**24**), North Frontenac (**37**), Rideau Lakes (**77**) and Tay Valley (**180**)
- **42** Part 11 Occurrence Reports in Ottawa and **3** in Tay Valley
- **236** file search requests in Ottawa

Rideau River

Photo: Simon Lunn

STEWARDSHIP SERVICES

Programs such as reforestation, landowner incentive programs, shoreline restoration, wetland enhancement and species at risk support help the RVCA protect and enhance the watershed's natural resources. We are grateful to work with private landowners, lake associations, NGOs, businesses, government agencies and the general public to make direct improvements to the health of the watershed. Working with others, we divide the task and double the success!

TREE PLANTING

- **5** million trees planted since 1984
- **241,375** trees planted in 2015 with a total project value of **\$540,855**
- **\$363,730** fundraised to offset planting costs for landowners
- **105** hectares (260 acres) of new forest created

BUTTERNUT STEWARDSHIP

- **17,540+** butternut seedlings planted since 2006 (RVCA searches for healthy butternut trees, collects seeds, grows seedlings and distributes them to landowners and other clients in Eastern Ontario)

SHORELINE NATURALIZATION

- **71** shoreline naturalization projects completed, including **2** bioengineering (shoreline restoration) projects on private and municipal lands with a total project value of **\$130,689**
- **\$66,000** fundraised for projects
- **7,390** native trees, shrubs and wildflowers planted
- **1.89** kilometres of shoreline naturalized and restored
- **184** volunteer hours provided by **88** volunteers

CLEAN WATER PROJECTS

- **61** projects approved through the Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$109,304**; **20** of these projects were completed and the remaining are expected to be completed in early 2016 (**\$27,928** delivered to projects valued at **\$251,511**)
- **44** projects completed through the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program, total grants of **\$68,292** delivered to projects valued at **\$356,401**
- **33** projects approved through the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program in the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Region from 2012 to 2015, allocating **\$142,000**; **29** of these projects were completed (**\$74,000** delivered to projects valued at **\$206,500**)

Rural Clean Water project biofilter and settling pond used to treat wastewater at SunTech Greenhouses Ltd.

HABITAT

- Jock River Fish Habitat Embayment Creation Project won the Conservation Project of the Year Award at the Toronto Sportsman Show. Post effectiveness monitoring begins to evaluate the success of the **1,000** square metres of new spawning, nursery, rearing, and feeding habitat.
- Otty Lake Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Project installed **49** spawning beds for smallmouth bass, **9** brush piles to provide shelter and feeding habitat, **75** cornerstone at various nests to provide cover for guarding males and **40** wood duck and swallow boxes; includes **240** volunteer hours
- **1,500** square metres of new, ephemeral wetland constructed adjacent to Remic Rapids on the Ottawa River in partnership with the National Capital Commission including **1,690** square metres of buckthorn removal, **1,800** square metres of riparian planting, **385** native shrubs and trees planted around the wetland feature, **140** volunteer hours
- **1,600** shrubs and trees planted by **120** volunteers at the Brewer Park Pond Restoration Project. Partners gathered to celebrate the reconnection of the landlocked Brewer Pond to the Rideau River and the creation of **16,000** square metres of new functioning wetland and fish habitat.

BEAVER MANAGEMENT

- Continued partnership with landowners and municipalities to manage beavers and dams on North Branch of Kemptville Creek and Otter Creek
- Beaver and dam removal at Motts Mills to protect the water control structure; Jebbs Creek at Perth Wildlife Reserve to help maintain flow out of Otty Lake; as well as removals at Mica Mines, Foley Mountain, Otter Lake and Meisel Woods to protect forests, roads and trails
- **9** beaver dam surveys completed on **9** watercourses: North and South Branch of Kemptville Creek, Otter, Jebbs, Rideau, Marlborough, Kings and Nichols creeks and Jock River
- **32** landowner inquiries about best management practices relating to nuisance beavers



Tree planting in the Rideau Valley



Butternut Recovery Program



Aquatic plants



Brewer Park Pond Restoration Project



Rural Clean Water Program sediment and erosion control field course

WATERSHED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING SERVICES

RVCA collects, monitors and analyses watershed information. Understanding our watershed helps us to better manage and protect our resources. Failure to adequately recognize and incorporate the value of our natural services into decisions about the use and management of watershed resources will reduce the net benefits that societies receive from watersheds. RVCA provides these services watershed-wide for its member municipalities at a shared cost. It avoids duplication and allows for effective, efficient and expert products for municipalities.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

- *Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Plan* came into effect on January 1, 2015. Staff provide policy interpretation, implementation tools and other support to municipal staff to ensure policies are understood and undertaken to meet compliance deadlines.

WATER CONTROL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Haggart Island Dam on the “Little Tay” replaced with rocky ramp structure in partnership with the Town of Perth
- Motts Mills Dam replaced with a new earthen berm in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada, Leeds Grenville Stewardship Council and local landowners
- Work began on the Britannia Village Flood Control Project on behalf of the City of Ottawa

MAPPING

- **15** kilometres of updated Rideau River hazard mapping (Hogs Back to Rideau Falls)

FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING

- **3** flood warnings were issued in spring 2015 to warn municipalities and residents about rising waters and where local flooding may occur
- **16** sites monitored for water levels
- **6** sites monitored for precipitation
- **6** sites monitored for snow pack

STREAM MONITORING

- **261** stream surveys completed on Barrhaven Creek, Bilberry Creek, Mosquito Creek and Stillwater Creek as part of the City Stream Watch Program; **941** hours of volunteer work by **315** volunteers
- **660** stream surveys completed on the Jock River, Kings Creek, Marborough Creek and Nichols Creek
- **35** headwater drainage feature assessments on City Stream Watch streams and **142** headwater sampling sites in the Jock River subwatershed
- **49** fish sampling sites and **15** water temperature probes installed in the Jock River subwatershed

- **61** fish sampling sessions on Barrhaven Creek, Bilberry Creek, Mosquito Creek and Stillwater Creek as part of the City Stream Watch Program
- **5** garbage cleanups completed on Barrhaven Creek, Bilberry Creek and Sawmill Creek; **9** invasive species removals completed on Bilberry Creek, Sawmill Creek, Pinecrest Creek, Nepean Creek, Black Rapids Creek and the Rideau River as part of the City Stream Watch stewardship projects

GROUND WATER MONITORING

- **16** provincial groundwater monitoring network (PGMN) wells maintained at **13** locations — groundwater levels and temperature are recorded hourly; manual groundwater levels are measured quarterly; approximately **50** groundwater quality parameters are analysed annually; **3** locations measure barometric pressure and air temperature hourly; **2** locations record rainfall hourly
- Baseflow sampling and analysis done in Jock River subwatershed



Haggart Island new rocky ramp

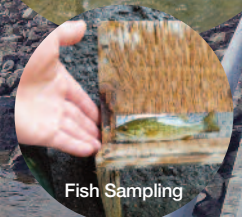


Britannia Village flood control

Motts Mills dam replacement



City Stream Watch



Fish Sampling

SURFACE WATER QUALITY MONITORING

- **360** hours donated by **25+** lake steward volunteers to help monitor and sample Watershed Watch lakes
- **45** stream sites (spring and fall) and **2** lake sites (spring) sampled for water quality conditions using the Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network methodology (biology)
- **39** lakes monitored **4** times each from May to November to sample nutrients, *E. coli* and key physical parameters through the Watershed Watch Program
- **55** sites sampled for the RVCA Baseline Monitoring Program and Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Program which monitors the water chemistry on major tributary streams each month from April to November
- **30** water quality parameters are analysed annually
- Additional sampling taken in response to algae blooms

WATERSHED REPORTING

- Rideau Lakes Subwatershed Report completed
- **8** Rideau Lakes catchment reports completed

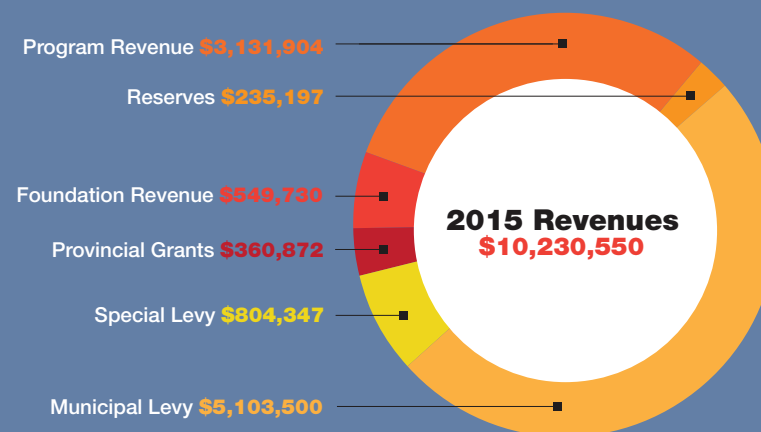
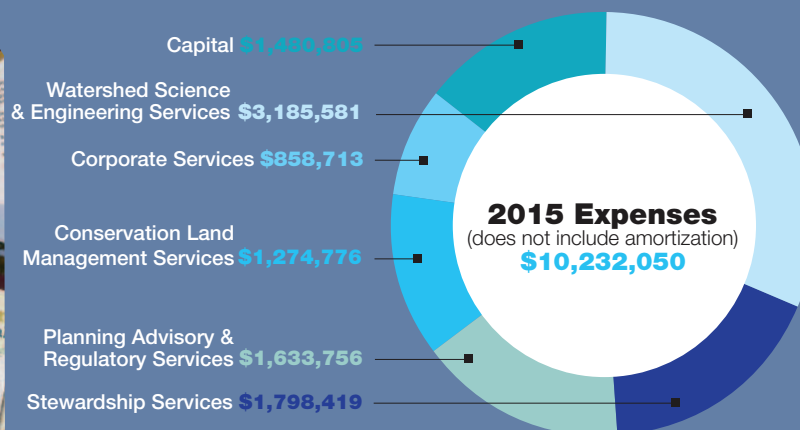
PARTNERSHIPS/OUTREACH

- In partnership with Friends of the Tay, the People, Aquatic Plants and Healthy Lakes Project participated in the Stewart Park Music Festival, Tay Watershed Discovery Day, Bobs Lake Flotilla and Lake Links
- **8** lake/property owner associations annual general meetings attended
- Assisted with sediment cores on approximately **30** lakes led by Dr. Vermaire at Carleton University, work was a joint effort between Watershed Watch and People, Aquatic Plants and Healthy Lakes collaborative group and Dr. Vermaire's students



Monitoring in action

FINANCING CONSERVATION (Unaudited)



RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

We are a local, accountable, registered environmental charity dedicated to supporting on-the-ground conservation projects right here in the Rideau River valley. For the comfort and confidence of our many donors, the Conservation Foundation is a proud and practicing member of Imagine Canada and the Ontario and Canada Land Trust Alliances. These respected philanthropic groups provide training, guidance and certification in fair accounting, fundraising and land acquisition practices.

The Foundation Board of Directors would like to thank the staff and Board of the Conservation Authority for all of their generous support and encouragement in 2015. We are honoured to recognize the RVCA as our biggest supporter and our major conservation partner. It is a pleasure to acknowledge and thank the many hundreds of generous and community-minded people who made a gift to conservation in 2015. Thanks to your help, the Foundation surpassed its fundraising goal in 2015! We sincerely appreciate your continuing confidence in our conservation programs.

Jason W.M. Kelly, Chair
Dan Cooper, Executive Director

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2015:

- We are very pleased to join our partners Leeds and County Stewardship Council, RVCA, South Kanata Development Corporation, Wildlife Habitat Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada in completing the Motts Mills Dam Construction Project.
- We are pleased to welcome Vélofix as our newest corporate citizen that has made parts of their local operation "carbon neutral" in 2015 through tree planting.
- We are grateful to the many staff and their families who contribute to our Carbon Neutral Program.
- We continue to enjoy the confidence of several land development companies who use the Foundation's Species at Risk Compensation Program services to compensate for the unavoidable loss of butternut or bobolink during their business activities. We are currently managing 32 projects.
- We are fortunate to have the continuing support of over 25 local businesses all of whom are recognized on our famous "Partners in Conservation" wall in our Manotick office.
- We are delighted that Mattamy Homes, who recently acquired Monarch Homes, is upholding Monarch's long and generous history with a major donation to the RVCF's Environmental Land Fund. This fund is used to help pay the costs associated with land donations including legal fees, appraisals and surveys. It is instrumental in securing environmental land for future conservation use by the people of the Rideau watershed in Eastern Ontario.
- We proudly congratulate our partners at RVCA for planting their 5 millionth tree this year
- We are equally proud to join our Shoreline Naturalization Program partners helping to plant over 7,200 trees and shrubs on 71 planting sites.
- Foundation endowment funds continue to grow providing some very welcome revenue streams for land and water conservation work throughout the valley.

2015 RVCF Board of Directors

- Bryan Baker
- Charles Billington
- Mary A. Bryden (Past Chair)
- Angela Deguire (Secretary Treasurer)
- Andrew Harkness (Vice Chair)
- Jason W.M. Kelly (Chair)
- Anne Simmering
- R.E. (Bob) Smith
- Katherine Thomas
- Leann Thompson
- Rich Wilson

Love this beautiful old valley like we do? We would be pleased to talk to you about a gift to conservation whether of property, funds or in kind services ... please call or write for confidential advice and opportunities. We can match your gift objectives with some very meaningful and long lasting conservation projects that all will enjoy ...

HOW TO REACH US

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