



RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY WATERSHED BRIEFS

March 2011

A newsletter for municipal councillors

2011 Board of Directors

Andy Jozefowicz *Athens*

Lee Armstrong *Augusta*

John Campbell *Beckwith*

Tom Dewey *Central Frontenac*

No appointment *Clarence-Rockland*

Ray Scissons *Drummond/North Elmsley*

Lyle Pederson *Elizabethtown-Kitley*

Jim Anderton *Merrickville-Wolford*

Vince Carroll *Montague*

Gerry Boyce *North Dundas*

Barclay Cormack *North Grenville*

David Crowley *Perth*

Rob Dunfield *Rideau Lakes*

Ken Graham, RVCA Vice-Chair

Smiths Falls

Gary Davison *South Frontenac*

John H. Miller *Tay Valley*

Bradley Wing *Westport*

City of Ottawa

Alan Arbuckle, RVCA Chair

David Chernushenko

Steve Desroches

Eld Hand

two vacant seats

Flood Forecasting and Warning

The RVCA monitors and forecasts flood conditions to provide member municipalities, public agencies and watershed residents with advance notice and information so they can respond to potential flooding and flood emergencies. The RVCA uses several tools to forecast spring flooding: flow and water level measurements, snowpack measurements, weather forecasts and computer modeling.

Individual property owners do what they can to protect their properties in a flood event. Municipalities provide support when general

flooding occurs with further support from the provincial government through the Ministry of Natural Resources in cases of extreme flooding. The major dams in the Rideau system belong to Parks Canada - Rideau Canal and the structures are operated in the spring to reduce the impact of high flows as much as possible. Flood Forecasting and Warning is part of the RVCA flood plain management program that is designed to promote appropriate land use in the flood plains and other hazard lands such as areas with unstable slopes.

Watershed Condition Bulletins — contain information about current conditions in the watershed that set the stage for the possibility of flooding (if the right weather patterns should develop). "Be informed and aware."

Flood Advisories — when it is perceived that flooding could result from an approaching weather system which is expected to bring heavy rain or warm air causing a rapid snowmelt. "Be prepared to activate your flood response plans, if it becomes necessary."

Flood Warnings — when it is perceived that flooding conditions definitely will be experienced. "Activate your flood response procedures now."

What are the Flood Vulnerable Riverside Communities in the Our Watershed?

There are several pre-existing, low-lying developed areas that are considered vulnerable to flooding:

- **Rideau River:** in the vicinity of Brewer, Windsor, Brantwood and Strathcona Parks and areas in the vicinity of Cummings Bridge; parts of the rural area of the City of Ottawa including Fairmile Subdivision, areas between the Baxter Conservation Area and the Village of Kars; in the vicinity of James Island, Lorne Bridge Road, parts of the Village of Kars and the Carleton Golf & Yacht Club, the Arcand, Little Chesterville and Mapleshores developments and the Hilly Lane, Rideau Glen and Becketts Landing communities in North Grenville Township
- **Jock River:** parts of the Village of Richmond including areas on the tributaries (Van Gaal Drain, Flowing Creek, Bypass Drain)
- **Steven Creek:** parts of the Village of North Gower and areas downstream
- **Kemptville Creek:** parts of the Township of North Grenville between Kemptville and the Rideau River (eg. Cedar Beach, Harris Road)
- **Tay River:** within the Town of Perth and areas upstream to Glen Tay

Popular Questions and Answers About Flooding in the Rideau System

Next Board of Director's Meeting

Thursday, April 28, 2011
RVCA Conservation Centre
in Manotick at 7:00 p.m.

Key Topic
Financials

Now Available:

1. Around the Rideau —
March/April Edition. Available online at www.rvca.ca under News, Publications and Events
2. World Water Day
Backgrounders: *The Importance of Water, How Much Water Do We Have, Who Protects Our Water and How Can you Help Protect Our Water.*
Available online at www.rvca.ca/world_water_day

Coming Soon:

- 2010 Jock River Subwatershed Report (April 2011)

Why doesn't the Conservation Authority control flooding by adjusting the water levels at dams?

The beautiful historic dams on the Rideau are mainly for controlling the waters for navigation and can only provide limited relief from flooding. Parks Canada (PC) is the owner and operator of the dams on the Rideau. In the fall every year, water levels are lowered throughout the system. This gives some storage space for the expected spring runoff but not much. Enough water from melting snow and rain in the spring will cause flooding despite the best efforts in operating the dams. Contact the Rideau Canal Office of Parks Canada (613-283-5170) for full details of the operation.

Why are the locks not used to let the water get away?

Briefly, the locks on the Rideau Canal were not built to have uncontrolled through-flow and could easily be damaged. For more details, please contact Parks Canada.

Why can't something be built to control the high water rather than control development near the river?

The flood plain is a natural part of the river and building flood control measures disrupts the natural processes that occur there and can obscure the view that people seek along a watercourse. It is easier, cheaper and better for the river system to direct development away from these areas and into zones where the dangers and costs are much less.

Whose responsibility is it to protect property in a flood event?

The individual property owner is responsible for the protection of their property. Each person should make their house and other structures as flood-proof as possible. Should the flood event exceed the capability of the owner to deal with, then the municipality can step in to assist. If flooding exceeds the resources of the municipality, then a request can be made by the head of the municipal council to the provincial government for assistance through the Ministry of Natural Resources.

How do I know if my property is in the floodplain?

Flood plain maps of the Tay River below Christie Lake to Lower Rideau Lake, Kemptville Creek from North Augusta to the Rideau River and the Jock River from Richmond to the Rideau River and the Rideau River from Smiths Falls to the Ottawa River are available for viewing in the RVCA office or by contacting Kellie (ext. 1128) or Megan (ext. 1132).

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Planning Shoreline Plantings for 2012

Five tributaries are on the radar for planting in spring of 2012 as part of the Making Shorelines Natural project. Property owners along **Stevens Creek, Sawmill Creek, Bilberry Creek, Becketts Creek and Nepean Creek** are being encouraged to contact the RVCA to set up site visits scheduled to begin in June of 2011. Property owners receive a site-specific planting plan as well as 100 percent cost coverage for all plant material, equipment and labour needed to carry out the plan on eligible projects.

Landowner uptake for this project has been highly successful to date with over three kilometres of shoreline on 16 properties scheduled for planting on the 2011 target tributaries of Mud Creek, Stillwater Creek and Black Rapids Creek.

Many thanks to the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation and Environment Canada for their support of this project. For more information, contact Andrea at ext. 1173 or andrea.klymko@rvca.ca.

