

AROUND the Rideau



May | June 2020

Dear friends,

We hope this newsletter finds you well during these unprecedented times. While it has been a challenging period for many, it has also been inspiring to see so many people, families, communities and levels of government work together to find new ways to support and connect with one another to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Our sincerest thanks to all those on the front lines.

At the RVCA, we have been able to continue our conservation work by implementing changes to protect staff, clients and the public. While buildings and amenities remain closed, conservation areas are open for walking. Most program delivery continues with modifications to field work and site visits, and consultation with clients and Board meetings are now being done electronically.

We look forward to a return to normal operations, but in the meantime, we wish to thank all our municipalities and

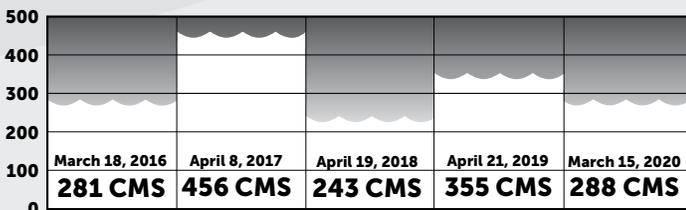
watershed residents for working with us to adapt to new delivery methods. Please follow us on Facebook or Twitter to get the most up-to-date information about changes to RVCA programs and services or visit www.rvca.ca/covid-19.

We are here, working remotely, so please don't hesitate to contact us (www.rvca.ca/directory).

Wishing you good health and hope to see you soon,
RVCA Board of Directors and Staff



Rideau River Peak Flows



The peak flow in the Rideau River for this spring was 288 cubic centimetres per second (CMS) which occurred on March 15. On average, this winter was warmer than

usual with near-average snowfall amounts. One large rain event in January caused water levels to rise and flows to increase throughout the watershed. A significant build-up of ice within the snowpack was the result. RVCA and Parks Canada's snow monitoring confirmed that there was above average water content within the snowpack. Luckily, the above-average March temperatures and precipitation resulted in a nice, slow, gradual melt. Only limited flooding was reported. Water levels and flows are currently a bit below average for this time of the year. Call BRIAN for more info at ext. 1141, brian.stratton@rvca.ca.

Stillwater Creek Wetland Restoration

One year in and the Stillwater Creek Wetland Restoration project is proving to be very positive for habitat and critters both. The three constructed wetland cells have proved that they provide water retention, thus mitigating downstream erosion — that's a win! The restoration project was completed in the fall of 2018 when plant diversity was low; however, by early summer in 2019 the wetland had greened up nicely with a major boost in plant diversity. As wetland vegetation continues to evolve and grow, the number and diversity of fish and wildlife will also improve. So far, 13 species of fish have decided to make the restoration project home. We're looking forward to seeing this natural gem metamorphose into an even more diverse habitat. For more info, contact JENNIFER at ext. 1108, jennifer.lamoureux@rvca.ca.



Ticks are NOT social distancing despite pandemic

May is Lyme disease Awareness Month. And it couldn't have come at a better time with tick season now underway. Pets and people need to take precautions before heading outside. You can learn more about the risks of this debilitating disease at the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation (canlyme.com). If you have been bitten by a tick, Emilie Norris-Roozmon, a master's student at Queen's University, would like to hear from you. She has launched an online survey that tracks the aftermath of being bitten: the onset of symptoms, the treatment from the health-care system, and the outcomes. (<http://bit.ly/Tick-Survey>).



Fresh Air Fun

Searching for some safe fun and learning for your little ones (or big ones) while practicing physical distancing? There's fun, discovery and learning available in your backyard or during a walk around the block. RVCA's Outdoor Educators Andrea Wood (Baxter Conservation Area) and Rebecca Whitman (Foley Mountain Conservation Area) have some great ideas and tips on how to maximize your child's outdoor experience. Read all about it on our blog and get all the resource materials at www.rvca.ca/fresh-air-fun. There's scavenger hunts and nature walks and so much more. Get outside with the kids and have some fresh air fun.



Rural Clean Water Program Accepting Applications

Grants and technical assistance are "at the ready" for on-farm and rural projects that protect water quality. If you have a project that meets the requirements, why not give us call.

- Clean Water Diversion
- Surface/Wastewater Treatment/Management
- Livestock Restriction from Water–Livestock Crossing, Alternate Watering, Fencing
- Pesticide/Chemical/Fertilizer/Fuel Storage and Handling Facility
- Nutrient Management Plans/Precision Farming
- Manure Storage/Treatment
- Controlled Tile Drainage
- Erosion Control — Field and Tile Outlet, shorelines
- Land Retirement
- Buffers, Windbreaks and cover crops
- Forest & Wetland Management Plans
- Private Sewage System Repair
- Well Upgrades, Decommissioning, Replacements
- Education Initiative and innovative Projects

For more information contact DEREK at ext. 1136 or derek.matheson@rvca.ca or visit www.rvca.ca/stewardship-grants.

Be Septic Smart

Having a well maintained, properly functioning septic system is very important to rural landowners and Rideau cottagers. Systems need regular care and maintenance and should be pumped every three to five years. Spring is a perfect time to get a licensed contractor in to inspect and pump your septic system. Here are some other good septic dos and don'ts to remember:

DO

- Familiarize yourself with the location of your system
- Keep a drawing of your system for reference
- Divert surface water away from your leaching bed
- Pump out your tank on a regular basis (three to five years)
- Repair leaky plumbing fixtures
- Conserve water to reduce the amount of wastewater being treated
- Replace old toilets with low-flush models
- Keep accurate records of septic system maintenance and service calls

DON'T

- Flush chemicals, cigarette butts or sanitary products
- Use a garbage disposal/garburator
- Plant trees or shrubs too close to the system or leaching bed
- Dig without knowing the location of your septic system
- Drive over your tank or leaching bed
- Enter a tank — gases and lack of oxygen can be fatal
- Connect rain gutters, storm drains or allow surface water to drain into a sewage system
- Leave interior faucets on to protect water lines during cold spells — instead, insulate your faucets and plumbing



Taking root in the Rideau Valley

Green things are happening this spring! 115 hectares of new forest and three kilometres of shoreline have been planted this spring through RVCA's Tree Planting and Shoreline Naturalization Programs. The staff has been careful to physically distance, but got the job done!

- 255,000 new trees planted
- 2,000 endangered butternut seedlings distributed
- 100,000 shoreline plants planted
- 500 pollinator-friendly native wildflowers sold
- 150+ landowners participated in planting projects

To learn more about our programs visit www.rvca.ca/stewardship-grants or contact MEAGHAN at meaghan.mcdonald@rvca.ca, 613-692-3571 ext. 1192.

AROUND the Rideau is made possible thanks to our generous sponsors

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