



Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

# Annual Report **2016**





## Your Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

**R**VCA is one of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities. For the past 50 years, we have worked closely with municipal, provincial and federal government partners, landowners and community groups to maintain and improve 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 Vision:

A thriving watershed with clean abundant water, natural shorelines, rich forests and wetlands, diverse habitat and sustainable land use that is valued and protected by all.

### Our Mission:

To understand, manage, protect, restore and enhance the Rideau watershed through science, stewardship, education, policy and leadership.

## 2016 RVCA Board of Directors

Athens	Andy Jozefowicz
Augusta	Dale McLenaghan
Beckwith	Sharon Mousseau
Central Frontenac	Victor Heese
Clarence-Rockland	No member
Drummond/North Elmsley	Ray Scissons
Elizabethtown-Kitley	Lyle Pederson (Chair)
Merrickville-Wolford	Anne Barr
Montague	Vince Carroll
North Dundas	Gerry Boyce
North Grenville	Barclay Cormack
Ottawa	Erin Greco
	Ed Hand (Vice-Chair)
	Pieter Leenhouts
	Scott Moffatt
	Ralph Pentland
	Tom Scott
Perth	Judy Brown
Rideau Lakes	Jeff Banks
Smiths Falls	Joe Gallipeau
South Frontenac	Pat Barr
Tay Valley	Brian Campbell
Westport	Gerald Schwinghamer



## Message from the Chair & General Manager

2016 marked a special celebration for the RVCA family — 50 years of conservation and service in the watershed. This occasion was an opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the 41 municipal representatives who met in Smith Falls over dinner in 1966 to craft an agreement to create the RVCA. It was a time to reflect on their resolve and the founding principles of the conservation movement: local response to local issues, cost sharing and managing on a watershed basis. These three principles adopted by our municipal representatives in 1966, continue to be the very foundation of our many programs and services today. These principles have provided direction and have led to tangible on-the-ground improvements.

Congratulations to everyone who has played a role in our work over the last 50 years. This is a shared success story. We can't do this alone. It is our partnerships with our 18 watershed municipalities, the many different agencies, residents, businesses and special interest groups that we work with that make this all possible. Thanks to your commitment and support, we have worked steadily towards our goal for a thriving watershed — one with clean, abundant water, natural shorelines, rich forests and wetlands, diverse habitat and sustainable land use that is valued and protected by all.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and RVCA staff, we are pleased to present this

summary of our 2016 accomplishments. We are proud of the work we do and we trust it reflects local values and interests.

A sincere thank you to our members, municipal councils and their staff and our many government and non-government partners for your continued support. Thank you to our enthusiastic and creative staff for keeping us moving forward.

Looking ahead, we will approach the next 50 years with the same motivation, determination and enthusiasm. With 50 years experience and with your support, we can continue on our mission to understand, manage, protect, and restore the Rideau watershed.

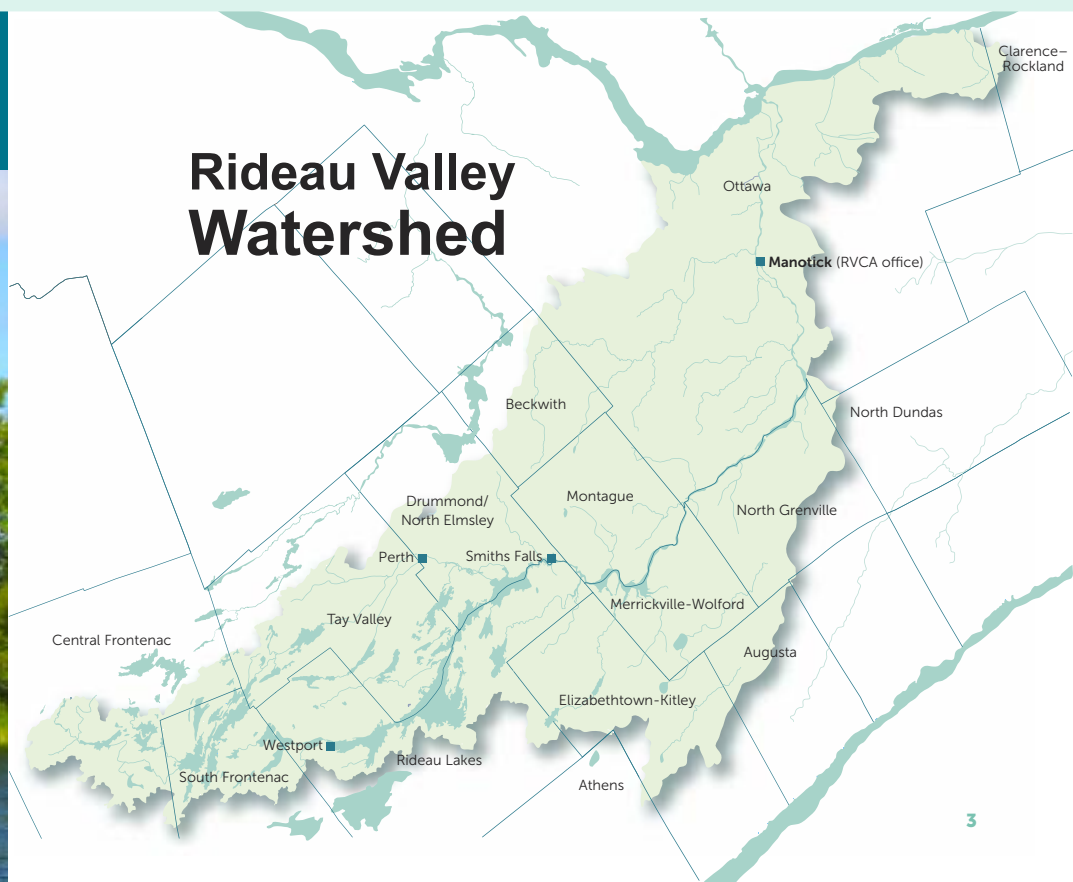
**Lyle Pederson** Chair

**Sommer Casgrain-Robertson** General Manager

Curious about our last fifty years?  
Check out our "Conservation Timeline" and  
our "Anniversary Infographic" at  
[www.rvca.ca](http://www.rvca.ca)



*Baxter Conservation Area*





## 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 **18** member municipalities
- Development of a new Strategic Plan
- Celebrations for **50** years of conservation
- Multiple communication tools
- Environmental Bill of Rights comments on the *Conservation Authorities Act* review and *Wetland Conservation Strategy*



**Left:** RVCA General Manager Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, RVCA Chair Lyle Pederson, Mayor of Ottawa Jim Watson, RVCF Chair Jason Kelly and RVCF Executive Director Dan Cooper celebrate RVCA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**Below:** Sampling of 2016 RVCA documents

**Bottom:** Staff celebrate RVCA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on March 31, 2016





## Conservation Land Management Services

**T**he RVCA manages approximately 3,000 hectares of conservation land for the strategic protection of vulnerable habitats and valuable natural resources. This land includes 11 developed conservation areas that are available for public use and enjoyment. Conservation areas provide affordable recreation, education and tourism opportunities to watershed communities.

### Land Management

- **2** new land acquisitions of 115 hectares (285 acres)
- **\$75,000** in funding raised in partnership with RVCF to offset land acquisition, conservation area development and stewardship activities
- **39** natural areas totaling **3,000** hectares of conservation land
- **1,500** trees planted in three conservation areas
- **6** species at risk monitoring or habitat features completed at five conservation areas (bobolink, butternut, barn swallow)
- **7** partnership agreements to provide unique opportunities at six conservation areas
- **52** nest boxes monitored at nine conservation areas
- Completed trail assessment for Merrickville-Wolford Township

### Conservation Areas

- **11** developed conservation areas
- **62,000** visitors annually
- **1** new conservation area officially opened— Motts Mills Conservation Area
- **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
- **3.5** kilometres of trail upgrades

### Education

- **5,000+** students enjoyed outdoor education programs at Baxter and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas



**Top:** W.A. Taylor Conservation Area

**Right:** Chapman Mills Conservation Area trail improvements

**Bottom:** Motts Mills Conservation Area official opening, June 23, 2016





## Planning Advisory & Regulatory Services

**T**he 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. 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.

### Planning Advisory Reviews

- **1,332** *Planning Act* applications
  - **424** severances
  - **395** minor variances
  - **148** site plan controls
  - **110** zoning by-law amendments
  - **19** Official Plan amendments
  - **15** condominium applications
  - **14** subdivision reviews
- **5** *Environmental Assessment Act* reviews
- **1** Permit to Take Water review
- **94** pre-consultation meetings

### Section 28 *Conservation Authorities Act*

- **287** *Conservation Authority Act* applications
- **962** property inquiries
- **133** clearance letters
- **107** complaints/occurrences

### Septic System Approvals and Inspections

- **634** applications for new or replacement septic systems (**569** in the City of Ottawa and **65** in Tay Valley Township)
- **91** septic renovation and alteration applications in Ottawa and **12** in Tay Valley
- **218** septic re-inspections completed in Central Frontenac (**21**), North Frontenac (**67**), Rideau Lakes (**48**) and Tay Valley Township (**82**)
- **263** file search requests in the City of Ottawa



Kemptville Creek



## Watershed Stewardship Services

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

### Tree Planting

- **5.68** million trees planted since 1984
- **225,865** trees planted in 2016 with a total project value of **\$473,209**
- **\$302,210** fundraised to offset planting costs for landowners
- **103** hectares (**254** acres) of new forest created

### Butternut Stewardship

- **20,000+** butternut seedlings have been planted since 2006 (RVCA searches for healthy Butternut trees, collects seed, grows seedlings and distributes them to landowners and other clients in Eastern Ontario)

### Shoreline Naturalization

- **17,622** trees and shrubs planted in 2016 along **5.1** kilometres of shoreline resulting in **53** projects
- Special projects on municipal and federal properties included:
  - **450** metres of Black Rapids Creek naturalized in partnership with the Great Lakes Guardian Fund and National Capital Commission
  - **1,800** metres of Mud Creek (East) naturalized in partnership with RVCF
  - A stretch of Mud Creek (west) naturalized in partnership with the City of Ottawa
- Total project value for 2016 was **\$197,282**

- **\$150,000** fundraised for projects
- **60** volunteers contributed **210** volunteer hours in 2016
- **318** projects and **62,000** trees, shrubs and wildflowers planted along shorelines since 2008

### Habitat Enhancement

- **3,500** square metres of wetland habitat enlarged to **7,000** square metres along Black Rapids Creek in partnership with the National Capital Commission and Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund; **1,225** square metres of invasive buckthorn removed; **589** native shrubs and trees planted; **19** volunteers for a total of **76** volunteer hours



Tree planting in action





Otty Lake Fish Habitat Improvement Project

## Clean Water Projects

- **68** projects were approved through the Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$128,049** in grants; **47** of these projects were completed and the remaining are expected to be completed in early 2017. These grants will support a total project value of **\$456,530**
- **38** projects were approved through the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$101,211** in grants; **23** of these projects were completed and the remaining are expected to be completed in early 2017. These grants will support a total project value of **\$291,309**

- In addition to the normal delivery of the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program within RVCA, we also began delivering within the Mississippi watershed in partnership with Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority

## Beaver Management

- Continued partnership with landowners and municipalities to manage beavers and dams on North Branch of Kemptville Creek and Otter Creek
- Beaver Management at Motts Mills Dam to protect the water control structure; Jebbs Creek at Perth Wildlife Reserve to prevent

obstructions in out flow of Otty Lake; as well as Mica Mines, Foley Mountain, Otter Lake and Meisel Woods to protect forests, roads and trails

- **9** beaver dam surveys completed Jebbs Creek, Rudsdale Creek, Blueberry Creek, Grants Creek, Uens Creek, Fish Creek, Eagle Creek, Stubb Creek and Davern Creek
- **27** landowner inquiries for information on best management practices relating to nuisance beavers



## Watershed Science & Engineering Services

**R**VCA collects, monitors and analyses watershed information. Understanding our watershed helps us 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. These services avoid duplication and allow for effective, efficient and expert products for municipalities.

### Source Water Protection

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

### Mapping

- RVCA, in cooperation with the City of Ottawa, updated old mapping and created new hazard mapping
  - **15** kilometres of Rideau River hazard mapping (Hogs Back to Rideau Falls)
  - **36.5** kilometres of new hazard mapping on Otter and Hutton Creek

### Water Control Infrastructure

- Work is nearing completion on the Britannia Village Flood Control Project

### Flood Forecasting and Warning

- **10** flood messages and **13** drought messages were issued in 2016 to warn municipalities and residents of changing watershed conditions
- **16** sites monitored for water levels
- **6** sites monitored for precipitation
- **6** sites monitored for snow pack



Motts Mills Conservation Area  
water control structure

## Stream Characterization Monitoring

- **1,154** hours of volunteer work by **295** volunteers for the City Stream Watch Program (CSW)
- **265** stream surveys were completed on Brassils Creek, Graham Creek, Greens Creek and McEwan Creek as part of the CSW
- **258** stream surveys completed on Rudsdale Creek, Jebbs Creek, Blueberry Creek, Uens Creek, Stag Creek, Stubb Creek, Eagle Creek, Fish Creek and Grants Creek
- **53** headwater drainage feature assessments on CSW streams and **171** headwater sampling sites in the Tay River watershed. A total of **77** hours from CSW volunteers during HDF monitoring (**14** hours on CSW sites, and **63** hours on Tay Sites)
- **44** fish sampling sites and **23** water temperature probes installed in the Tay River watershed
- **42** fish sampling sessions on Brassils Creek, Graham Creek, Greens Creek and McEwan Creek as part of the City Stream Watch Program
- **14** garbage cleanups completed on Brassils Creek, Graham Creek, Greens Creek, McEwan Creek and Sawmill Creek. **10** invasive species removals completed on Graham Creek, McEwan Creek, Sawmill Creek, Remic Rapids wetland, Mud Creek, Black Rapids Creek, Jock River, Brewer Park Pond and the Rideau River as part of the City Stream Watch Stewardship projects in 2016

## 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

## Surface Water Quality Monitoring

- **360** hours donated by **25+** lake steward volunteers to help monitor and sample Watershed Watch lakes
- **62** stream sites and **2** lakes sampled in the spring and **31** in the fall (as a result of the drought) 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
- **56** 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
- **2** new sites established on the Rideau River near Smiths Falls to better understand water quality condition in that catchment

## Watershed Reporting

- *Middle Rideau Subwatershed Report* completed
- **10** Middle Rideau catchment reports completed

## Partnerships/Outreach

- Participated in Tay Watershed Discovery Day and Lake Links
- **8** lake/property owner associations annual general meetings attended
- Initiated a pilot project with Ericsson's Connect Water Project to field test newly developed sensors
- Assisted students at Carleton University in developing a storm water sampling strategy for a class project
- Completed a water quality study of Barnes Creek in partnership with the TD Environmental Leaders Program and the University of Ottawa

*Largemouth bass guarding nest on Otty Lake*





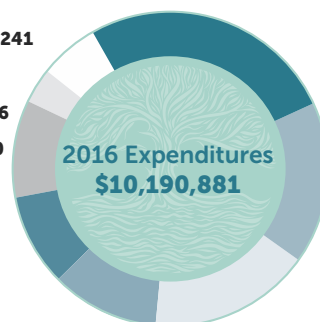
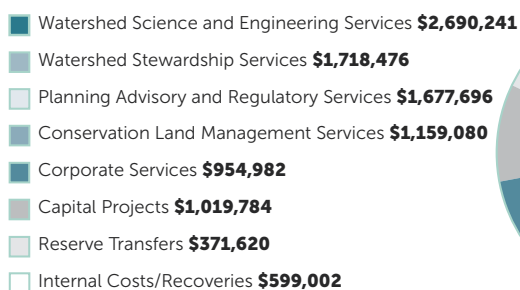
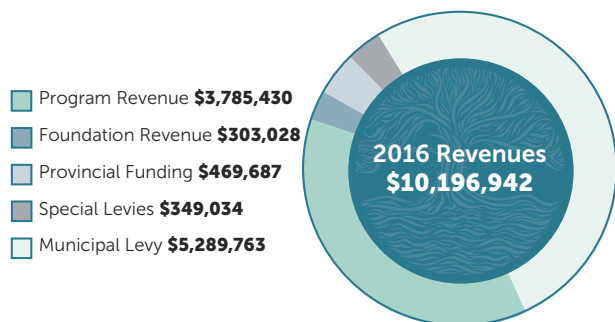


Rideau River



Left: Electrofishing, Middle-left: Secchi disk, Middle-right: Brassils Creek, Right: Monitoring

## Financing Conservation (Unaudited)



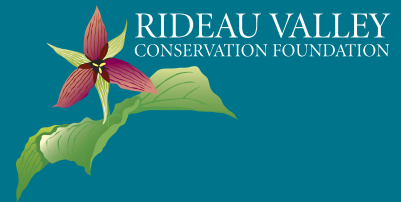
# Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation

**W**e 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 2016. 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 2016. Thanks to your help, the Foundation surpassed its fundraising goal in 2016! We sincerely appreciate your continuing confidence in our conservation programs.

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

## Highlights for 2016:

- We were delighted to work with a local business to achieve their LEED certification by preserving a natural area to offset the footprint of their building
- It was our pleasure to partner with Movati Athletics who supported many improvements at Chapman Mills Conservation Area
- It was our equal pleasure to work with Canon Canada who provided a financial donation and a donation of staff volunteer hours to complete some improvements at Baxter Conservation Area
- We were very pleased to join our partners Leeds-Grenville Stewardship Council, RVCA, South Kanata Development Corporation, Wildlife Habitat Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada in completing the Motts Mills Dam Construction Project.
- We were pleased to welcome Comfort Hub as our newest corporate citizen that has made parts of their local operation "carbon neutral" in 2016 through tree planting
- Thank you to the many staff and their families who continued to 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, barn swallow habitat or bobolink habitat during their business activities. We are currently managing 32 projects
- We were fortunate to have the continuing support of over 25 local businesses all of which are recognized on our famous "Partners in Conservation" wall in our Manotick office
- We were 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
- Foundation endowment funds continue to grow providing some very welcome revenue streams for land and water conservation work throughout the valley. Thank you to our endowment fund supporters



## RVCF Board of Directors

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

Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation  
Box 988 Manotick, ON K4M 1A8  
613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504  
ext. 1124

*We would be delighted 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.*



Foundation members

## How to Reach Us

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



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