

RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

2002 Annual Report



*RVCA is a partnership of municipalities delivering
watershed-based conservation programs*

Our Priorities

Understanding our Watershed

We are currently developing a central, accessible, store of technical information on how our watershed works. The Watershed Information Management System (WIMS) will eventually house the most complete database of environmental information ever available on the Rideau watershed. It will become a major tool for municipal, agency and lake association staff and a critical source of information for municipal environmental decision-making in the valley. It will be available for everyone to use through the power of the internet. Watch for WIMS's launch in 2003.

Healthy River Environments

The RVCA's goal is to protect and improve the natural functions of the Rideau Valley. Watershed planning and wise management, in cooperation with landowners and municipalities, is the method of choice for reaching that goal over the long term.

Municipal Environmental Service

The RVCA is active in assisting member municipalities through environmental services such as septic system approvals, flood forecasting and warning, reforestation, conservation information, plan review, fish and wildlife habitat protection, and conservation land management.



Messages

Chair's Message

Water is best managed on a watershed basis — and that's just what we do. The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority manages water resources locally while sharing the benefits and costs in a fair and equitable manner. The watershed concept is central to maintaining the health of the Rideau and all watersheds throughout Ontario. The province and municipalities are recognizing that Conservation Authorities and watershed planning are the key tools in groundwater protection. We see this as our future — knowing the Rideau watershed and offering sound natural environment advice to municipal decision-makers. Our activities in 2002 meet those needs and we will continue on the same course in 2003.

Special recognition is due to our General Manager and his hard-working team at the Authority. They approach challenges and projects with enthusiasm and knowledge, which ultimately results in success.

It is with great pride that I present our 2002 Annual Report. It has been an honour to be part of the conservation team. We celebrate our past success and we look forward to working collectively to ensure the long-term health of our watershed.

John H. Miller, Chair

General Manager's Message

2002 has been a challenging and rewarding year at the RVCA. Board members, staff and volunteers, have again demonstrated their capacity to meet challenges and create new opportunities. We continue to design programs, develop partnerships and secure resources for projects that will improve local water quality and overall environmental quality of life in the Rideau Valley.

We are committed to ensuring the protection of the Rideau's natural habitat with an eye on human interaction and municipal needs. We believe we provide great value for our member municipalities — providing services and programs that most municipalities would find impossible to deliver on their own. We are working hard at developing a complete and accessible watershed information system for all municipal needs. This is our job and we welcome it.

This year, on the provincial stage, Justice Dennis O'Connor completed the Walkerton Phase II Report. This report contains 22 recommendations regarding drinking water source protection. Justice O'Connor suggested that conservation authorities are well suited to undertake a significant portion of the source protection mandate. In November, the province established an Advisory Committee on watershed - based source protection planning with a mandate to provide an implementation framework for Justice O'Connor's recommendations. We at the Rideau Valley look forward to the upcoming challenge and will contribute to the success of future source protection planning.

Dell Hallett, P.Eng., General Manager

Board of Directors

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2002 Highlights

Watershed Planning, Monitoring and Reporting

Development of the Watershed Management Information System (WIMS) continues. This exciting electronic library of watershed data is an essential tool to the Authority and its agency and municipal partners as we attempt to better understand our river and its functions. Information on topics such as watershed planning, surface water quality, streamflow/precipitation, groundwater, and aquatic/terrestrial habitat features is being prepared. The system will be

Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities are mandated to ensure the conservation, restoration and responsible management of the province's water, land and natural habitats through programs that balance human, environmental and economic needs.

available for public and partner use in late 2003. RVCA is also working with the Rideau River Roundtable, Conservation Ontario and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority to develop a provincial "Guide to Watershed Reporting" as part of an MOE pilot project.

The RVCA continues with field research. In 2002, 15 Benthic Invertebrate sites were sampled along the Jock River, Tay River and Kemptville Creek. These samples monitor water quality from a biological perspective — assessing the number and types of aquatic bugs living at the sample locations. Staff also selected seven sites in the Jock River Watershed for the MNR Stream Assessment Protocol. This protocol collects and reports on land use, benthic invertebrates, fish communities, channel morphology, thermal stability and more. Reports are available on the findings and the results will also form part of WIMS.

Collection of reliable data to determine trends in cottage country lakes continues through the Watershed Watch Program. Eagle, Otty, Long

(east), Burrige, Westport Sand, Black and Pike lakes were sampled in 2002. Thank you to the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Farren Lake Property Owners Association, the Alliance of Rideau Lake Associations and volunteers who participated in the program. Lake reports are available on our website at www.rideauvalley.on.ca and will also be fed into WIMS.

The RVCA continues to monitor surface water quality and quantity at ten sites through the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network. An additional 15 well sites are monitored for groundwater quality and quantity through the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network. In summer 2002, we began another important monitoring program: the Rideau River Shoreline Classification Survey. Shoreline from Kars Bridge to Mooney's Bay was "mapped" identifying natural and man-made features of shore and classifying into categories based on its environmental health. This valuable information will be used by staff at the RVCA and Parks Canada when dealing with planning and regulations issues. We anticipate the survey continuing up the river to Smiths Falls in 2003 and being repeated on a regular basis in the future to detect trends in shoreline use, erosion, modification and re-naturalization.

The Jock River Watershed Plan and the Kemptville Creek Watershed Plan move into their next phases of implementation. Recommendations from the planning process are being undertaken by the many partners and supporters of the watershed plans.

The huge Renfrew County-Mississippi-Rideau Groundwater Study evaluated groundwater systems and mapped their susceptibility to contamination. In 2003, the study will provide a framework for groundwater management and suggest protective measures for individual and municipal wells. The results will, of course, form an important part of WIMS.

Revised flood mapping of the Rideau between Kars Bridge and Burritts Rapids is complete. This newly-calibrated model is an essential tool in land use planning and development in the Municipality of North Grenville and the City of Ottawa.

Stewardship

The RVCA continues with its long-standing commitments with ice management each spring in cooperation with the City of Ottawa and Ministry of Natural Resources. We also continue to monitor and maintain several small dams and other water control structures on tributaries of the Rideau.

Planning and Regulations

Ensuring safe and sustainable development on and near flood plains through Plan Review Services to municipalities is a critical part of the RVCA's mandate. The RVCA Planning and Regulations team reviewed 529 applications in 2002. We also enforced flood plain regulations overseeing 170 applications, 46 investigations and 117 inspections. Fish habitat reviews continue in 2003 in a Level 2 agreement with DFO for Section 35 of the *Fisheries Act*. The Authority monitors projects during construction, in and around water, that may impact fish habitat.

RVCA, in partnership with Mississippi Conservation and South Nation, continues to provide septic system inspections and approval permits for the City of Ottawa through the Ottawa Septic System Office. In 2002, staffing required to provide quick approvals in the growing City of Ottawa, grew to five. A total of 989 approvals for septic systems were processed.

Ontario Rural Wastewater Centre (a partnership with Collège d'Alfred, University of Guelph and

RVCA) continues to offer a wide variety of wastewater courses using demonstration technologies to provide hands-on learning experiences. The Centre researchers bring decades of applied research experience to bear on problems related to rural and unsewered wastewater situations.

Tributary streams are critical to the health of the Rideau. The shoreline of the Rideau River between Smiths Falls and Ottawa is only about 4% of the total length of shoreline of all rivers, lakes and streams in the watershed!

Stewardship Services

This was the second year of Ontario's Living By Water Project with RVCA as the lead partner. Living By Water Project continues to provide useful tools (workshop-in-a-box, home visits, etc.) for Ontario's waterfront residents. The highly-anticipated *Ontario Waterfront Living Handbook* will be available in spring 2003.

The Rideau Valley Clean Water Program was launched in spring 2000. This new incentive program helps valley residents reduce farm nutrients and chemicals from making their way into nearby streams, ditches and rivers. Grants of up to \$5,000 are available with funds courtesy of



Conservation Lands

Agriculture Adaptation Council's Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Initiative, the Healthy Futures for Ontario Agriculture (through Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food) and the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition. In its fledgling year, 20 projects were undertaken amounting to landowner projects with the value of over \$120,000. Great work by farmers and rural landowners in cow and cottage country. Over 130,000 trees were planted on private property throughout the watershed this spring through the Authority and partners tree planting programs. This brings the total number of native tree seedlings planted over the past 20 years to two million! Special thanks to the City of Ottawa, Eastern Ontario Model Forest, and Ontario Power Generation, Wetland Habitat Fund and the McGarry Family for their continued support in greening our valleys.

The LandOwner Resource Centre continued to provide one-stop information on the environment and property management. The centre also acts as call-centre for numerous incentive programs available throughout our watershed including Ottawa's Rural Clean Water Program, Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program, Ottawa's Green Acres Tree Planting Program, Wetland Habitat Fund and more.

2002 was the final year of the three-year provincial Ice Storm Assistance Program (ISAP).

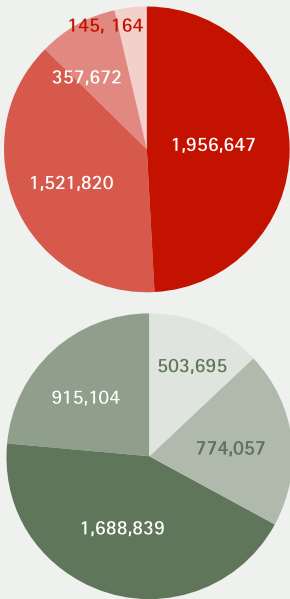
ISAP provided over \$325,000 to the RVCA allowing for the planting of over 300 caliper trees, 350 whips and more than 11,000 seedlings on conservation lands. With this funding, the Authority was also able to clean-up our parks, trail systems and forest properties.

The *MAPLE/RVCA Shoreland Classification Manual* is complete and ready for distribution through the LandOwner Resource Centre. This tool is bound to be quite popular with lake associations and cottage homeowners looking to assess and naturalize their shore.

For every municipal dollar received, RVCA raises (through user fees, government programs, donations, etc.) an additional \$1.50 to put towards conservation in local watershed communities.

Conservation Lands Program

The Chapman Mills Conservation Area in the City of Ottawa was officially opened on September 19th. This amazing 23-acre shoreline park was donated by the South Nepean Development Corporation, along with additional land ceded from Parks Canada. Minto Developments Inc. provided the development funds necessary to carry



Financing Conservation

2002 Revenues

Municipal Levy	\$1,521,820
Special Levies	\$145,164
Government Grants	\$357,672
Program Revenue	\$1,956,647

2002 Expenditures

Water Resource Services.....	\$1,688,839
Conservation Land Management Services	\$774,057
Stewardship Services	\$915,104
Corporate Services	\$503,695

Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation

out the improvements for public use of the area. The area offers a picnic shelter, interpretive panels, washrooms and most importantly walkways and boardwalks that lead pedestrians on a 1.5 km stroll through some of the Rideau's most beautiful and sensitive flood plain habitat. Chapman Mills is a living example of how public-private partnerships can benefit the environment, the local community and future generations. Hats off to all the partners.

Foley Mountain and Baxter Conservation Areas remain hot spots for outdoor environmental education. Over 8,500 school children visited these two areas in 2002. New features, such as Canoe Camp and overnight camping, were very popular and will continue in 2003.

A huge chunk of Precambrian Shield land overlooking and bordering on Upper Rideau Lake was donated to the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation in 2002. Over 600 feet of natural shoreline and 124 acres of ecologically sensitive property will remain in public hands, in a natural state, due to the generosity of the Weiss family of New York state. The Weiss donation, in cooperation with the Ecological Gifts program of Environment Canada and the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation, will protect a unique blend of forests, wetlands, shoreline, creeks and ponds for generations to come.

In partnership with Big Rideau Lakes Association, the Welcome Centre at Portland Bay Conservation Area was officially opened. The Welcome Centre is the gateway to tourist and environmental information in lake country. Two mining claims were placed on Authority property in 2001. Both claims were successfully resolved in 2002.

Our Vision of the Future

The RVCA's Three-Year Workplan and Budget, due for launch in 2003, will provide a proactive framework for effective source protection and watershed management planning. The emphasis is on science-based knowledge of the watershed followed by analysis and action. It will be our roadmap to continued cost-effective, inter-municipal environmental protection for surface water, groundwater and related resources in the Rideau Valley.

Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation

RVCF is a registered environmental charity working to help conserve the lands and waters of the Rideau watershed.

The Foundation is run by a 12-member volunteer Board of Directors made up of people from many walks of life within the valley. Their common goal is to provide a vehicle for people (individuals, companies and granting agencies) to get involved in important conservation projects here at home in our own valley.

The Foundation contributed over \$125,000 to RVCA projects in 2002 including outdoor education, tree planting, water sampling and land donation. RVCA is very proud of their achievements.

For more information, visit the website at www.rideauvalley.on.ca/foundation.

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The Rideau Valley



How to Reach Us

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

1128 Mill Street, Box 599

Manotick, Ontario, Canada K4M 1A5

(613) 692-3571

1-800-267-3504 (within 613 area)

(613) 692-0831 (fax)

e-mail: postmaster@rideauvalley.on.ca

website: www.rideauvalley.on.ca

