

2023

ANNUAL
REPORT



IN MANY WAYS, 2023 was the Year of the Bridge. Staff completed construction of two accessible pedestrian bridges at two of our most popular conservation areas – an achievement that will benefit the community for decades to come.

But we also built many figurative bridges. We worked closely with our municipal partners on new agreements to formalize our stewardship and monitoring programs across the watershed. Science staff also finalized our much-awaited, once-in-a-decade Watershed Conditions Report to bridge the gap between data collection and scientific analysis toward a better understanding of the health of our watershed. This will pave the way for a new Watershed Management Strategy in 2024.

So much of our work is ultimately about building bridges: connecting with our valued partners, expanding our knowledge of the watershed and ensuring our services remain relevant, valuable and accessible to everyone who calls the Rideau valley home. To this end, in 2023 engineering staff began data collection for new flood mapping on several upper watershed lakes and initiated the development of a new hydrologic model of the watershed; outdoor education staff expanded forest school to new age groups at Foley Mountain and Baxter conservation areas; and conservation lands staff worked with local landowners and our Foundation to complete three land donations that will protect 199 hectares of conservation land in perpetuity.

Stewardship staff bridged the gap between best management practices and private landowners, working with them to add and restore critical green infrastructure on their properties through tree planting, shoreline naturalization and clean water projects. The forestry team even celebrated the 7 millionth tree planted since 1984!

Our Planning and Regulations department continued to serve clients by reviewing planning files and processing Section 28 and septic applications to ensure development proceeds safely and sustainably across the watershed. They also did so efficiently, issuing 99% of permits within provincial timelines.

It is clear through these many accomplishments how dedicated RVCA staff remain to conservation, customer service and collaboration; whether building accessible spans over Baxter’s wetland or building bridges through relationships, research and restoration. We are also grateful to the many partners who make our work possible, whose funding, volunteer hours and support contribute to a sustainable future and a thriving Rideau watershed.

Kristin Strackerjan
RVCA Board Chair

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

THE RVCA is one of 36 conservation authorities in Ontario working to manage local watersheds to protect people and property from natural hazards and conserve critical natural resources.

Since 1966, the RVCA has worked closely with its member municipalities, provincial and federal governments, local landowners, farmers, businesses and community groups to protect communities from natural hazards, guide sustainable development, improve water quality and connect people with nature. The RVCA looks to build resilient communities in the face of climate change and population growth by promoting an integrated watershed approach – one that balances human, environmental and economic needs. Our success is based on partnerships that accomplish local initiatives at the watershed scale.

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.

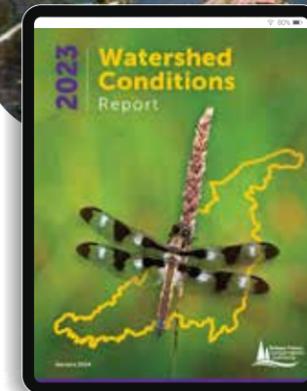
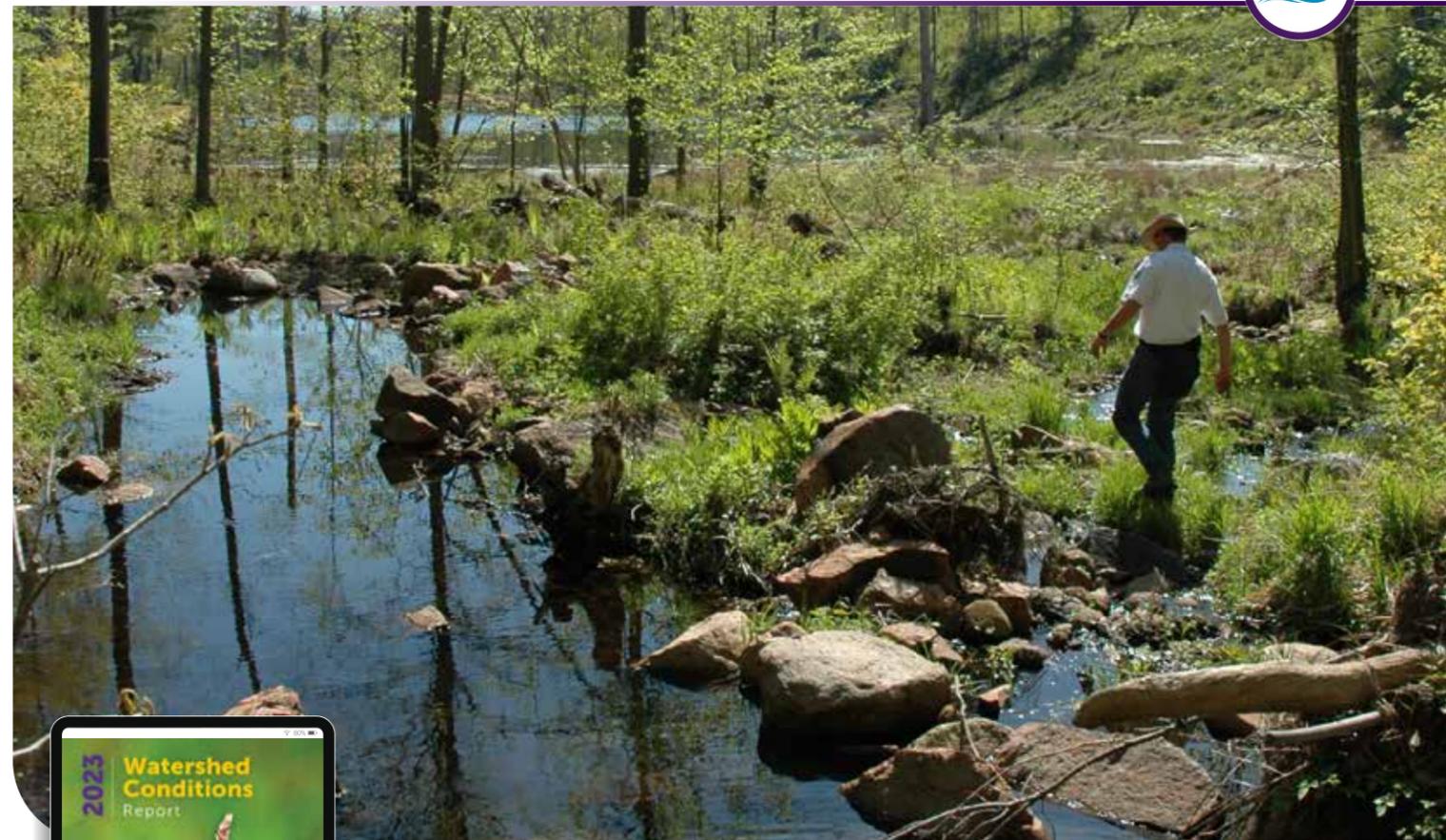
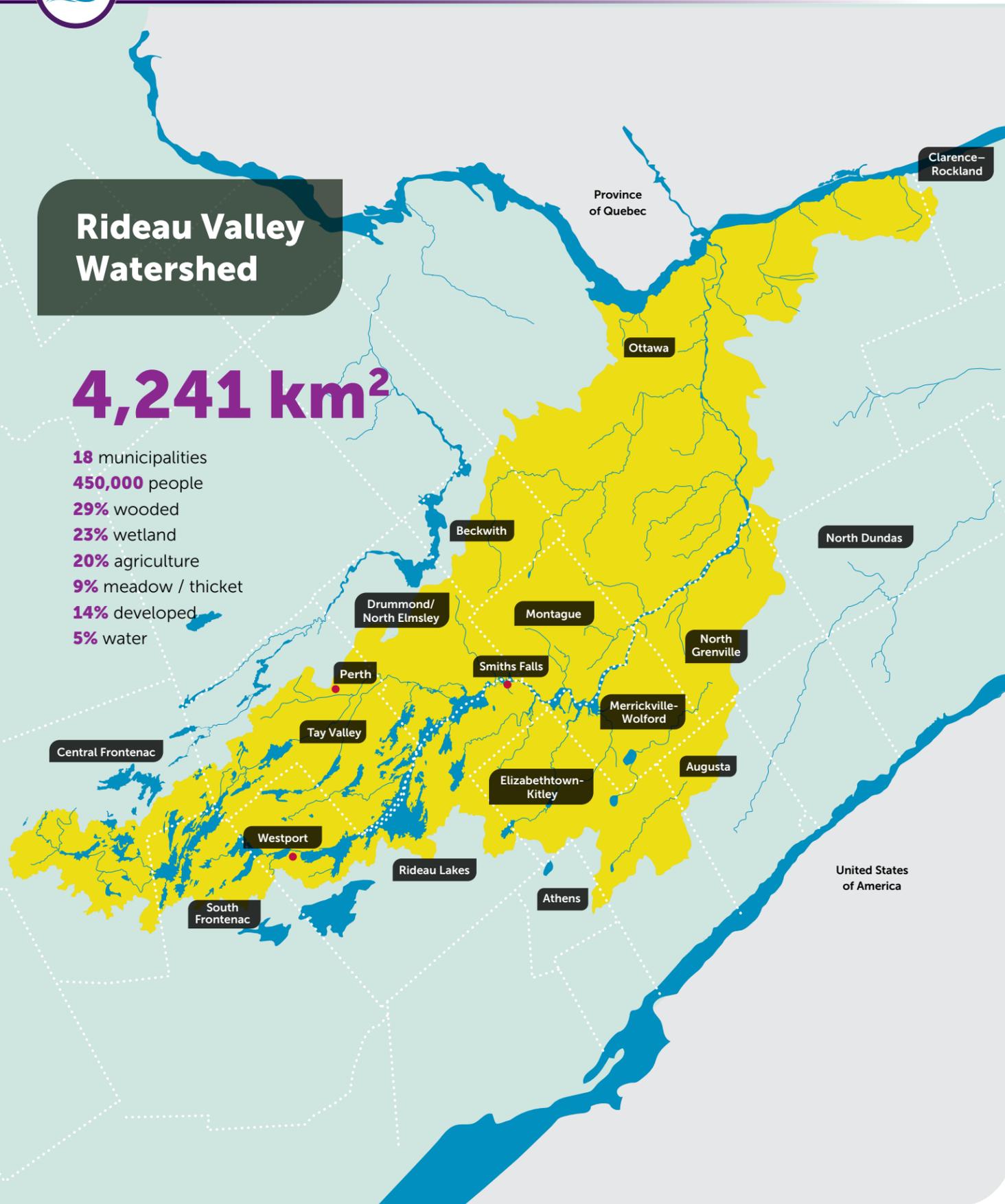
OUR MISSION: To understand, manage, protect, restore and enhance the Rideau watershed through science, stewardship, education, policy and leadership.

2023 Board of Directors

- Kristin Strackerjan (Chair) North Grenville
- Anne Robinson (Vice Chair) Ottawa
- Vacant Athens
- Adrian Wynands. Augusta
- Brian Dowdall. Beckwith
- Susan Irwin Central Frontenac
- Vacant Clarence-Rockland
- Steve Fournier. Drummond/North Elmsley
- Vacant Elizabethtown-Kitley
- Anne Barr Merrickville-Wolford
- Morgan Kenny Montague
- Gerry Boyce/Vacant North Dundas
- Theresa Kavanagh Ottawa
- Wilson Lo Ottawa
- Pieter Leenhouts/Riley Brockington Ottawa
- Shawn Menard/David Brown Ottawa
- Gary Waterfield Perth
- Jeff Banks Rideau Lakes
- Shawn Pankow Smiths Falls
- Charlene Godfrey. South Frontenac
- Angela Pierman Tay Valley
- Barry Card. Westport
- Mel Foster Agricultural Rep

We acknowledge that the Rideau Valley watershed is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people as well as the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Oneida peoples. The RVCA pays respect to all Indigenous peoples in the watershed and acknowledges that they are the traditional guardians of this land and water. RVCA is working to deepen its understanding of local Indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledge and to find meaningful ways to collaborate and support reconciliation.





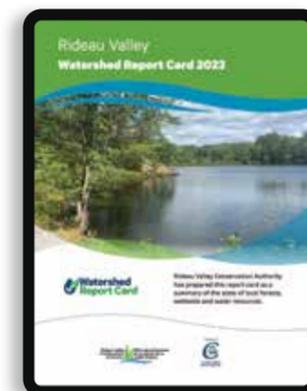
Conditions Report dives deep into data

Completion of our comprehensive *Watershed Conditions Report* was a major 2023 accomplishment, the culmination of several years of hard work on the part of science, engineering, GIS and communications staff. The 193-page report is the first of its kind for the RVCA, compiling decades of monitoring data into one report to assess trends regarding surface and ground water quality, aquatic ecosystem health, hydrological function, natural hazard risks and the status of critical green infrastructure such as wetlands, forests and natural shorelines.

The analysis found several concerning trends, including a continuing steep decline in large woodland patches, increasing chloride levels in our urban streams, and large shifts in surface water flow patterns linked to increased development and loss of wetlands. The report also identified knowledge gaps in some parts

of the watershed regarding natural hazard risks such as flooding, erosion and landslides, as well as gaps in groundwater quality monitoring in rural communities where private wells are the most common source of drinking water.

The next step is to complete a Watershed Management Strategy in 2024 that will serve as an action plan to address issues and areas of concern as well as knowledge gaps in the coming years.



Report Card offers watershed checkup

RVCA also completed a *Watershed Report Card* as part of Conservation Ontario's Watershed Checkup program, offering a snapshot of surface water quality, groundwater quality and forest conditions in the Rideau Valley.



RVCA and RVCF Board members participate in an outdoor education demonstration during the board tour at Foley Mountain Conservation Area.

CORPORATE SERVICES supports the entire conservation authority, enabling it to perform its functions and deliver programs in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The department is responsible for strategic planning, budgeting, financial reporting, business improvement, human resources, communications, IT, GIS, member services, fundraising and administration.



RVCA celebrated Foley Mountain Conservation Area's 50th anniversary with a community event that brought municipal partners, provincial representatives and Foley Mountain supporters together. Left to right: RVCA general manager Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, Augusta Township Deputy Mayor Adrian Wynands, Rideau Lakes Mayor Arie Hoogenboom, Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes MPP Steve Clark, Westport Mayor Robin Jones and RVCA Board Chair Kristin Strackerjan.

\$11.8M

budget for 2023

68

staff plus 19
summer students

19

Board Members

- **2** training and orientation sessions held for new and returning Board members as well as training on Section 28 hearings for executive committee members
- **18** MOUs signed with member municipalities to continue providing stewardship and monitoring programs across the watershed (Category 3 Agreements)
- Hosted annual watershed tour for board members and municipalities at Foley Mountain Conservation Area, where staff showcased RVCA's programs and services
- Approved new Fleet Emissions Reduction Guideline
- Initiated new modernized accessible website
- Expanded online payment to outdoor education programs and conservation area rentals
- Updated Purchasing Policy, Administrative Bylaw and Section 28 Hearing procedures

Foley Mountain Site Supervisor Rebecca Whitman and RVCA Board Chair Kristin Strackerjan cut the cake at Foley's 50th anniversary celebration in June.





PLANNING AND REGULATIONS staff bring watershed science, provincial policies and individual municipal needs together to help build safe, sustainable communities. The RVCA provides planning advice to municipalities and is the approval authority for development affecting natural hazards like flooding, erosion, steep slopes, unstable soils and wetlands, as well as watercourses. Staff also approve the construction, enlargement or alteration of septic systems and provide septic re-inspection services to several municipalities.

Planning Reviews

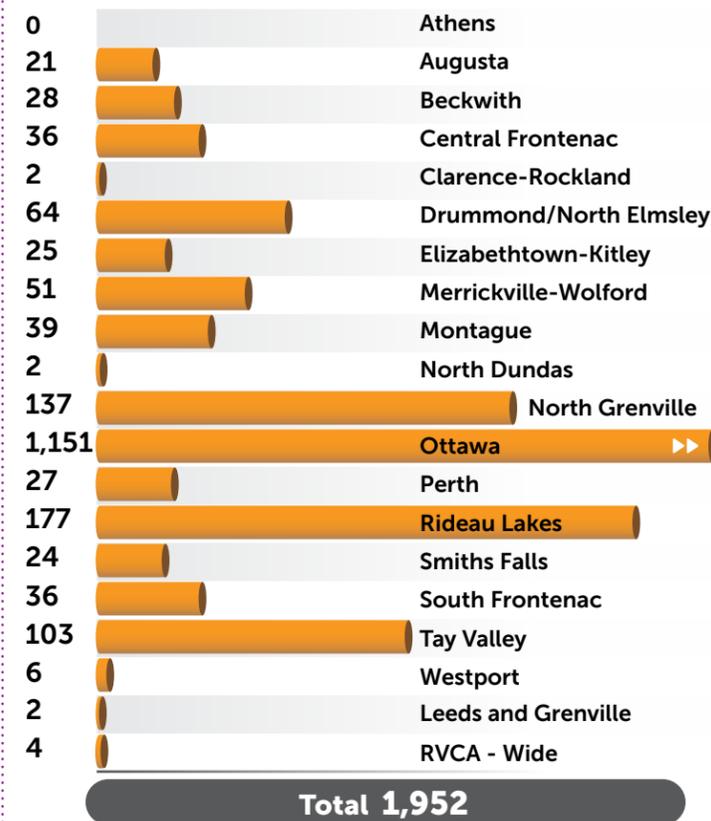
- **132** Pre-consultation Meetings
- **402** Severances
- **326** Minor Variances
- **100** Site Plan Control
- **120** Zoning By-law Amendments
- **16** Official Plan Amendments
- **3** Official Plans
- **16** Subdivision Reviews
- **10** Condominium Applications
- **1** *Aggregate Resource Act* review
- **4** Part Lot Control
- **4** Lifting of 30 cm Reserve
- **4** *Environmental Assessment Act* Reviews
- **1** Lifting of Holding By-law
- **1** Application for Absolute Title
- **1** Disposal of Municipal-Owned Land
- **5** Validation of Title

Partnership Highlight:

- Worked closely with municipalities to implement *Ontario Regulation 596/22*, which now requires municipalities to review planning applications for natural heritage. RVCA had been commenting on natural heritage (in addition to natural hazards and drinking water source protection) at the request of municipalities to help them fulfill their obligations under the *Provincial Policy Statement*

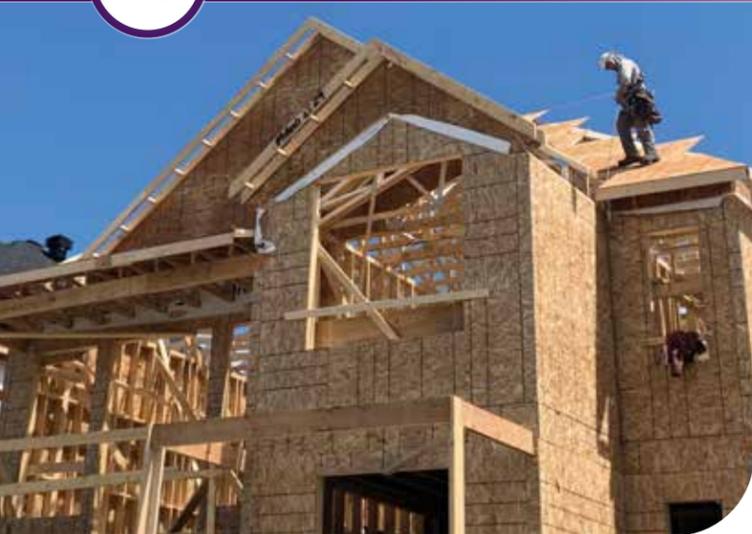
1,952
planning reviews

Planning Activities by Municipality, 2023



Source Water Protection Approvals

- Reviewed development applications to ensure they meet *Source Protection Plan* policies
- Visited **22** local businesses who handle and store certain chemicals in vulnerable areas around municipal drinking water systems to provide spill response kits and assess their storage and handling practices
- Administered a Fuel Oil Tank Replacement Rebate Program in certain areas on behalf of the City of Ottawa



Section 28 Services

- **629** Property Inquiries
- **110** Clearance Letters
- **319** Applications
 - **93%** Approved
 - **5%** On Hold
 - **1** Hearing
- **67** Complaints/Occurrences
 - **16** Violations
 - **2** Charges laid under *Conservation Authorities Act*

Partnership Highlight:

- Presented to the Ottawa Real Estate Board about waterfront properties in February

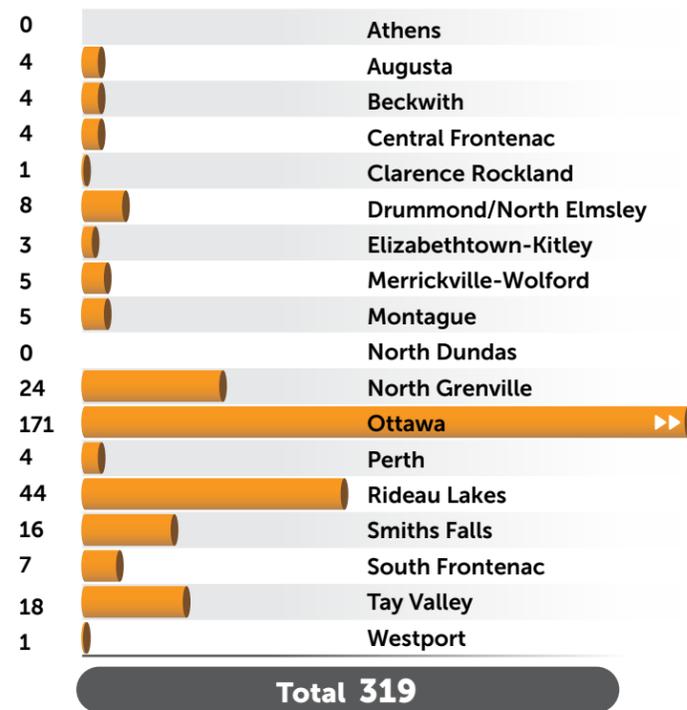
319

permit applications

98%

of applications approved or on hold

Section 28 Applications by Municipality, 2023



RVCA issued 99% of Section 28 permits within provincial timelines:

Permits Issued Within Provincial Timelines	
Major Permits (90 days)	Minor Permits (30 days)
29	267
Permits Issued Outside Provincial Timelines	
Major Permits (90 days)	Minor Permits (30 days)
0	2

Septic System Services

- **218** file search requests
- **806** applications for new or replacement septic systems
- **138** applications for septic renovations or alterations
- **27** complaints
- **651** septic re-inspections

Partnership Highlights:

- Hosted annual septic installers meeting with **30** attendees at MVCA headquarters
- Taught **6** preparation courses for people wanting to become a licensed septic installer or inspector, welcoming **122** participants
- Presented to the Big Rideau Lake Association, Lower Beverly Lake Association AGM, Black Lake AGM and the Ottawa Real Estate Board about septic system care and maintenance/inspections

944 **651**

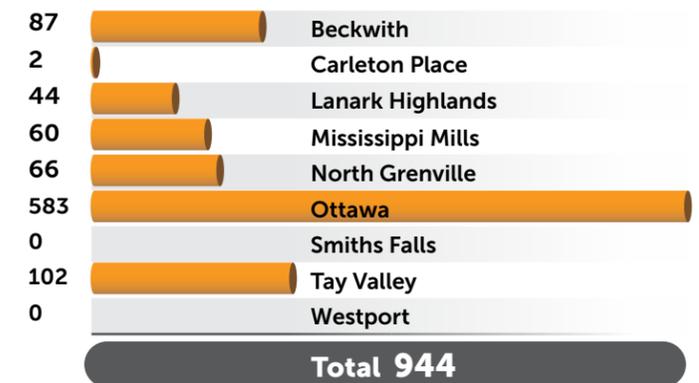
permit applications

re-inspections completed

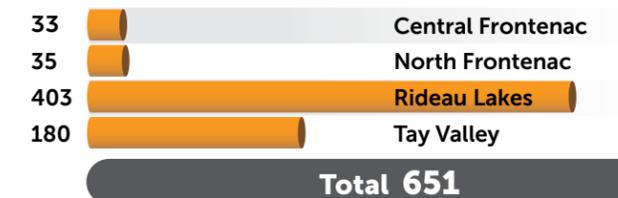
RVCA issues most septic permits within half the time prescribed by the Ontario Building Code:

Building Code Requirement	Building Code Timeline	RVCA Timeline
New Sewage System Permit	10 days	5 days
Clay Seal Inspection	5 days	48 hours
Scarification Inspection	5 days	48 hours
Installation Inspection	5 days	48 hours
Final Grading Inspection	5 days	48 hours

Septic Applications by Municipality, 2023



Septic Re-Inspections by Municipality, 2023



CONSERVATION LANDS staff manage more than 3,400 hectares of conservation land for the strategic protection of natural hazards, critical natural resources and vulnerable habitats. They also maintain 11 developed conservation areas offering public trails, beaches, boat launches and a range of popular outdoor education programs. Conservation areas provide affordable recreation, education and tourism opportunities to watershed residents and communities.



Land Management

- **2,355** hectares of conservation land owned across the watershed
- **1,209** additional hectares managed by RVCA (Foundation and partner properties)
- **3** new land donations totalling 199 hectares (1 RVCA property and 2 RVCF properties)
 - o **146** hectares near Motts Mills
 - o **26** hectares on Big Rideau Lake
 - o **27** hectares on the Tay River
- **55** Species at Risk projects maintained at six conservation areas in support of bobolink, butternut and barn swallows, in partnership with the RVCF
- **2** Managed Forest Tax Incentive Plans completed for recently acquired properties
- **2** Conservation Land Tax Incentive Plans approved following species at risk monitoring (property taxes now waived for those properties)
- Underplanted hemlock stands with red spruce to prepare for the Woolly Hemlock Adelgid (aphid-like insect killing hemlock trees)
- Thinned red pine and spruce stands at Mill Pond Conservation Area to improve forest health and reduce the risk of damage from weather events

Conservation Areas

- **11** public conservation areas maintained for public enjoyment
- **307,500** visitors in 2023 (up from 200,000 annually pre-pandemic)
- **42** kilometres of trails, **3** beaches, **4** boat launches and **6** picnic shelters maintained
- Shoreline stabilized at Chapman Mills Conservation Area around the water access point
- Installed permanent Storybook Trail at Foley Mountain Conservation Area
- Completed construction on two replacement pedestrian bridges:
 - o Prefabricated accessible bridge at Chapman Mills Conservation Area
 - o Accessible pedestrian boardwalk with learning platforms over the marsh at Baxter Conservation Area
- Started construction on accessible bathrooms and facility upgrades at Baxter's interpretive centre

Partnership Highlights:

- Chapman Mills received **\$150,000** and Baxter received **\$280,000** in funding from the Federal Government's Canada Community Revitalization Fund to replace the pedestrian bridges
- Nature for All Committee continued to guide and support ongoing accessibility improvements at Baxter Conservation Area, including working with the Foundation to secure external funding
- Installed **3** boat launches for municipal and provincial partners

307,500
conservation area visitors



Outdoor Education

Baxter Conservation Area:

- **4,432** students from **66** schools across five school boards (plus two private schools and one university) and numerous community groups participated in Baxter's in-person outdoor education programs
- **168** students attended weekly in-person Forest School in winter, spring and fall
- **144** children participated in Summer Day Camp
- Expanded Forest School's age range to include a day for kids aged 10 to 13

Foley Mountain Conservation Area:

- **3,457** students participated in in-person outdoor education programs, including Forest School sessions in winter, spring and fall. This is an increase of about 20% over 2019 and about 29% over 2022.
- **41** schools from across three school boards came for field trips
- **92** children participated in Summer Day Camps, a 37% increase over 2019 numbers
- Added a new Family Forest School category for kids ages 2 to 5 and their caregivers

Partnership Highlights:

- BOGS, North Face and Starbucks provided bus subsidies to help offset travel costs for school kids
- Township of Rideau Lakes once again sponsored a free monthly forest school drop-in program at Foley Mountain
- Foley hosted **6** student teachers for their practicum placement

Facilities and Rentals

- **1,343** people enjoyed rental facilities at Foley Mountain Conservation Area (Interpretive Centre, Silversides, Group Campsite)
- **3,289** people enjoyed rental facilities at Baxter Conservation Area (group camping areas, picnic shelter, Interpretive Centre, River Cabin)
- **1,500** students plus parents and supporters were welcomed to Baxter for the Ottawa Carleton District School Board Cross Country Meet
- Continued to host two tiny cabins owned by Cabinscape at Mica Mines Conservation Area

8,125

students participated in outdoor education programs





STEWARDSHIP staff work with landowners, farmers, lake associations, businesses, government agencies and the public to undertake on-the-ground projects that improve the health and resilience of the watershed. Programs such as tree planting, shoreline restoration, clean water incentives, wetland enhancement and habitat creation help reduce flooding, erosion and droughts, protect water quality and reduce the impacts of climate change and development.



Butternut Recovery

- **3,312** free butternut seedlings distributed to landowners to help replace dead and dying butternut trees in Eastern Ontario
- Continued effort to locate and assess healthy trees in Eastern Ontario
- Tracked the survival and health of planted butternut seedlings and completed survival site visits with landowners who had planted seedlings

Partnership Highlights:

- Worked with the Canadian Wildlife Service to manage the butternut population in the Mississippi Lake National Wildlife Area. This includes releasing **21** natural seedlings on site, planting **37** new Butternut seedlings and under crown release.
- Continued partnership with Ontario Nature to search for the endangered American Ginseng on landowner properties involved in the Butternut Recovery Program



Tree Planting

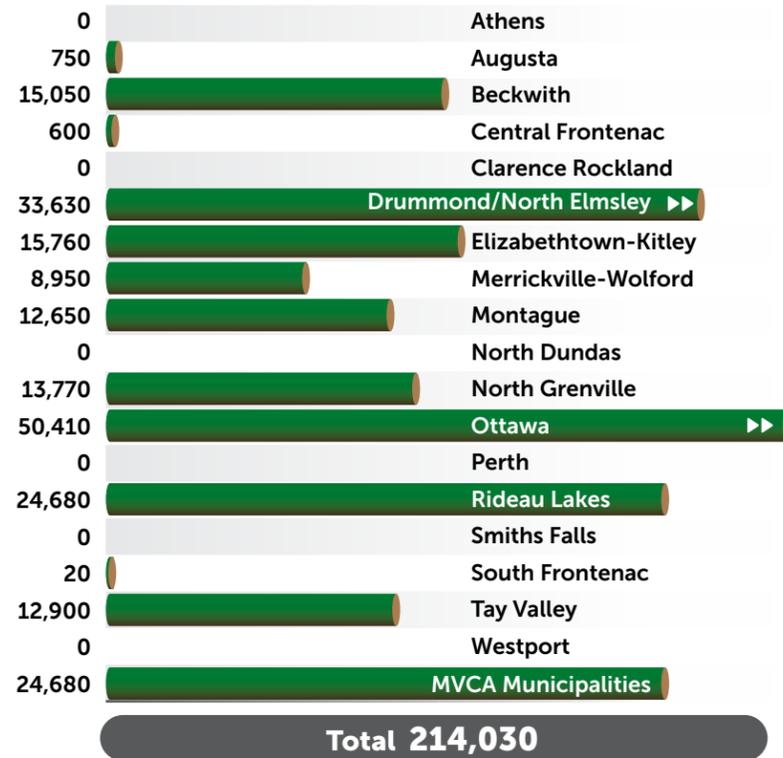
Also delivered on behalf of MVCA

- **214,030** trees planted in the Rideau and Mississippi watersheds
 - o Almost **100** hectares of new forest
 - o **132** landowner participants
 - o **50,410** trees planted in Ottawa through the City's Green Acres program
 - o Largest project was **14,680** trees planted in Rideau Lakes
 - o **16,000** trees planted by landowners through over-the-counter sales

Partnership Highlights:

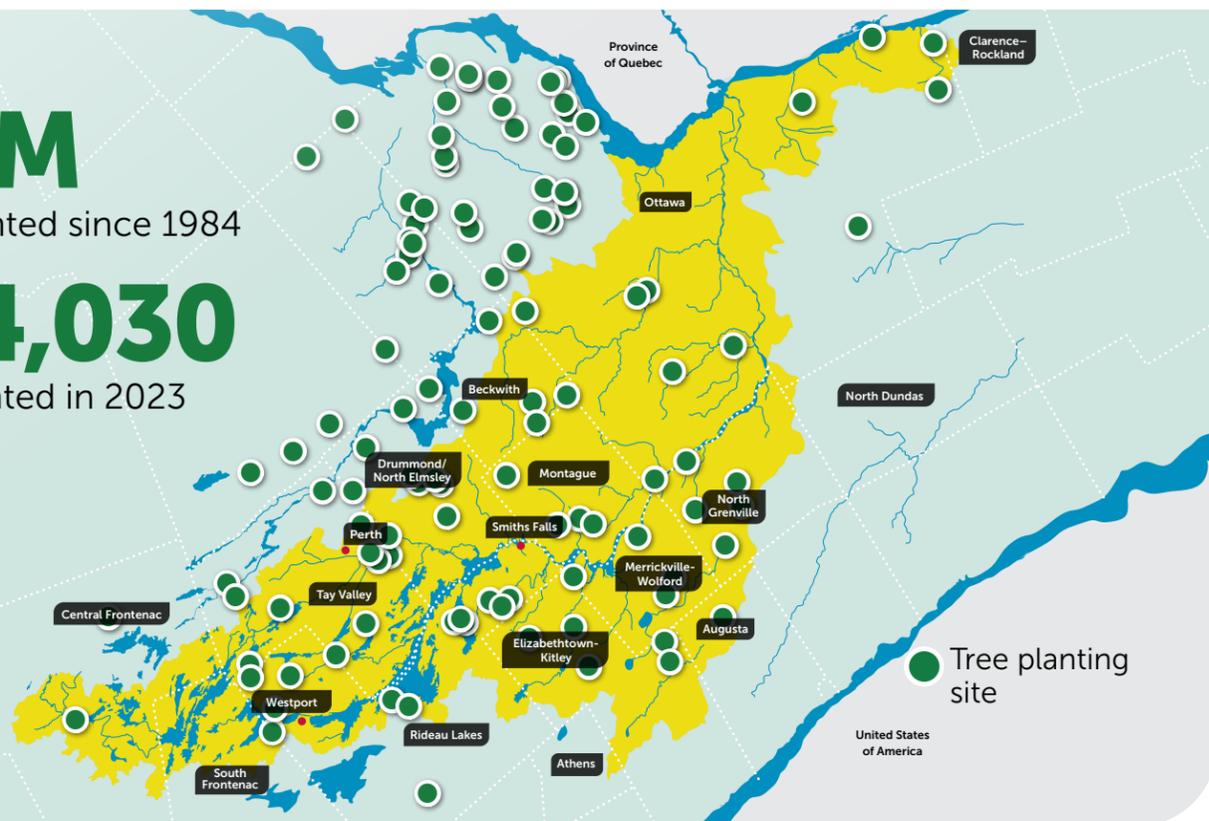
- More than **\$484,000** in external funding secured to subsidize tree planting costs
- Provided Lanark County with **12,000** trees for their annual free tree give-away
- Partnered with the Invasive Species Centre to start monitoring Hemlock Woolly Adelgid on our conservation lands

Tree Planting by Municipality, 2023



7.4M
trees planted since 1984

214,030
trees planted in 2023



Left: RVCA General Manager Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, Elizabethtown-Kitley Mayor Brant Burrow and RVCA Board Chair Kristin Strackerjan plant a ceremonial tree in Richmond to mark 7 million trees planted since 1984.



Above: RVCA Board member and Barrhaven East Councillor Wilson Lo plants a tree during the Richmond event.

Left: Forests Ontario's Eastern Ontario field advisor Jim Hendry and RVCA Forestry Manager Ian Cochrane plant trees in Richmond during the 7 million tree celebration.

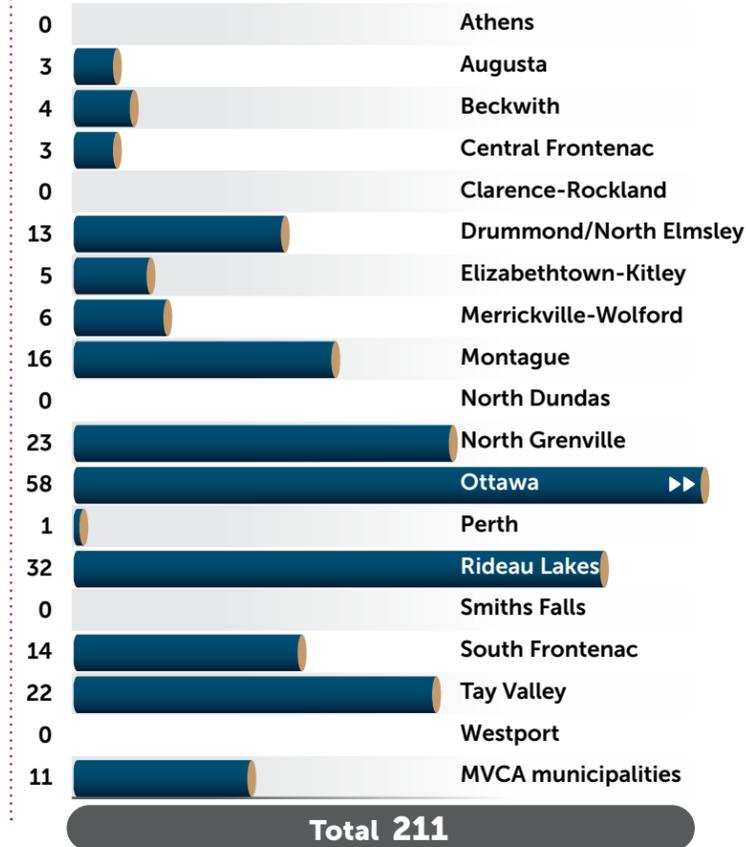
Rural Clean Water

- **136** projects approved through the Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$287,062** in grants with landowner contributions totaling **\$1,148,055**
- **57** projects approved through the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$268,355** in grants with landowner contributions totaling **\$578,777**
- **18** projects completed through ALUS Lanark
 - Distributing **\$87,518** in grants towards projects valued at **\$98,185**
 - **39.86** acres of new environmental services through wetlands, tree planting, buffers and delayed haying

Partnership Highlights:

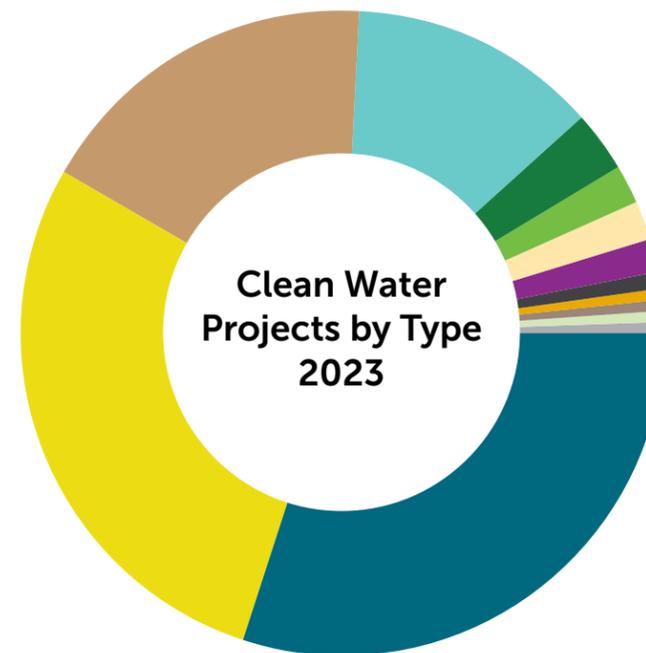
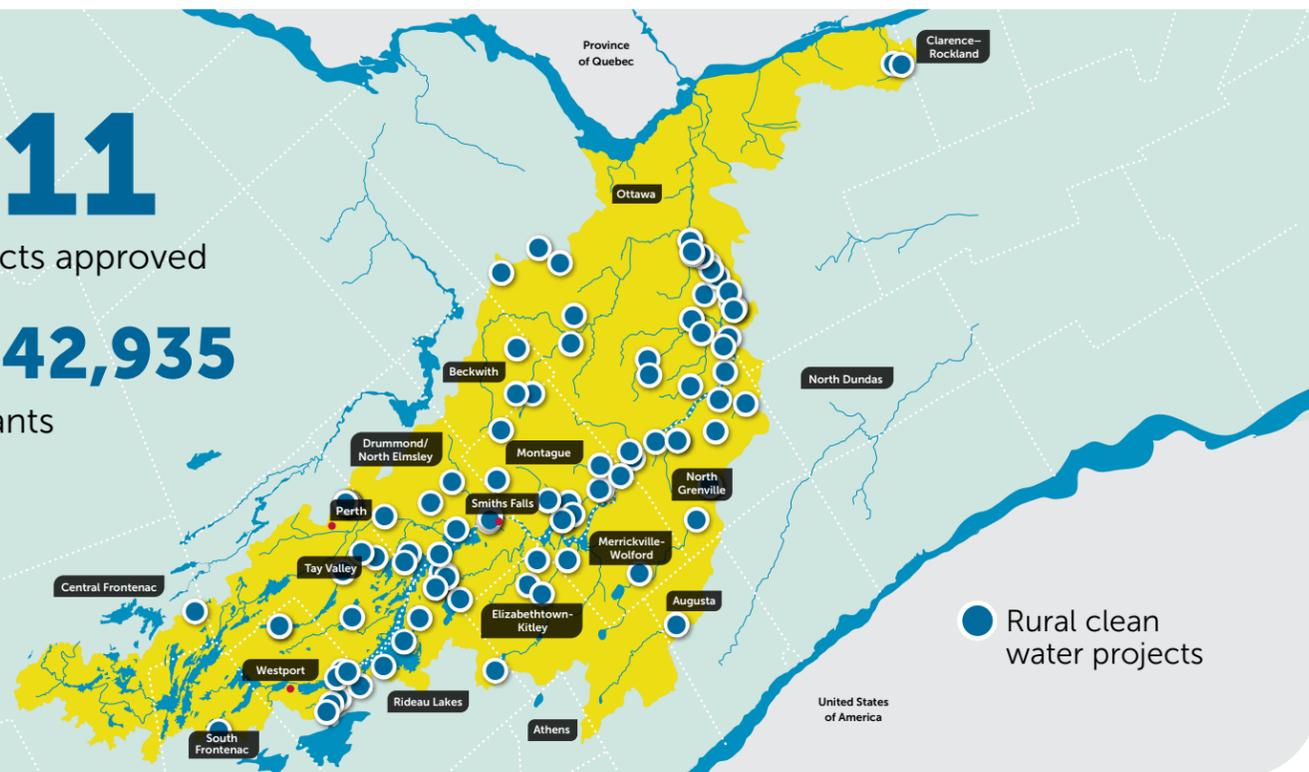
- Worked with Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority to deliver ALUS Lanark, which was initiated by the County of Lanark and Climate Network Lanark
- Shared a booth with Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority and South Nation Conservation at the Ottawa Valley Farm Show in March

Clean Water Projects by Municipality, 2023



Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston MPP John Jordan addresses ALUS Lanark partners and supporters at the program's official launch at Milkhouse Farm & Dairy in Montague.

211
projects approved
\$642,935
in grants



- Buffers and Land Retirement
- Erosion Control
- Forest Management Plans
- Septic and Well Projects
- Wetland Restoration
- Livestock Fencing
- Manure Storage
- Runoff Management
- Nutrient Management Plans
- Education
- Cover Crops
- Precision Farming
- Fuel Storage

Shoreline Naturalization

- **9,394** trees and shrubs planted on 67 properties
- **1,719** metres of shoreline naturalized
- **377** native pollinator-friendly perennials distributed to landowners through over-the-counter sales

Partnership Highlights:

- **2,135** trees and shrubs distributed to lake residents through over-the-counter plant sales through Upper Rideau Lake Association and Otty Lake Association
- **1,070** native trees, shrubs and wildflowers planted with community volunteers along a 350-metre stretch of Tay River shoreline in Last Duel Park in partnership with the Town of Perth, which secured funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund

9,394

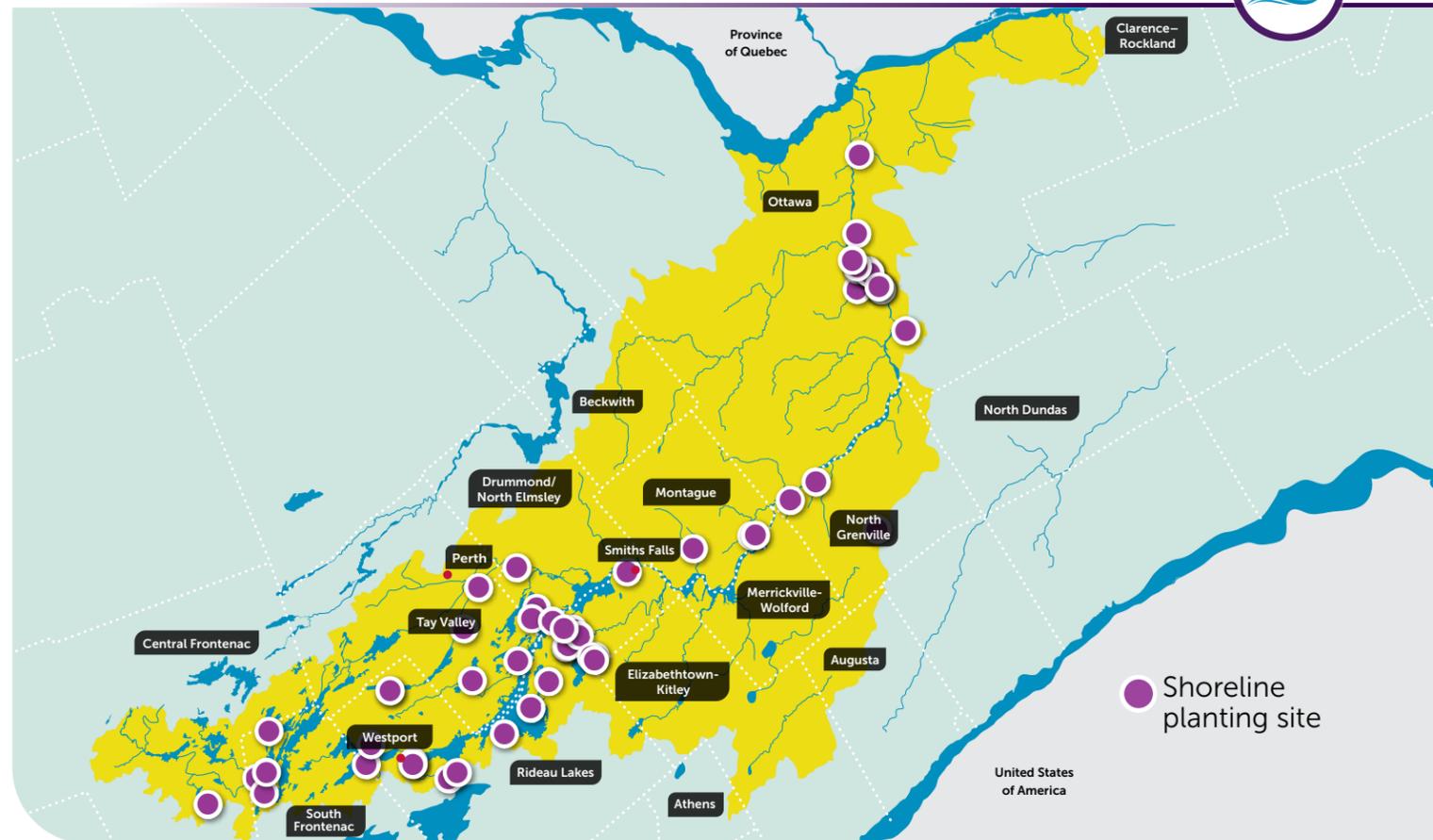
trees and shrubs planted

1,719m

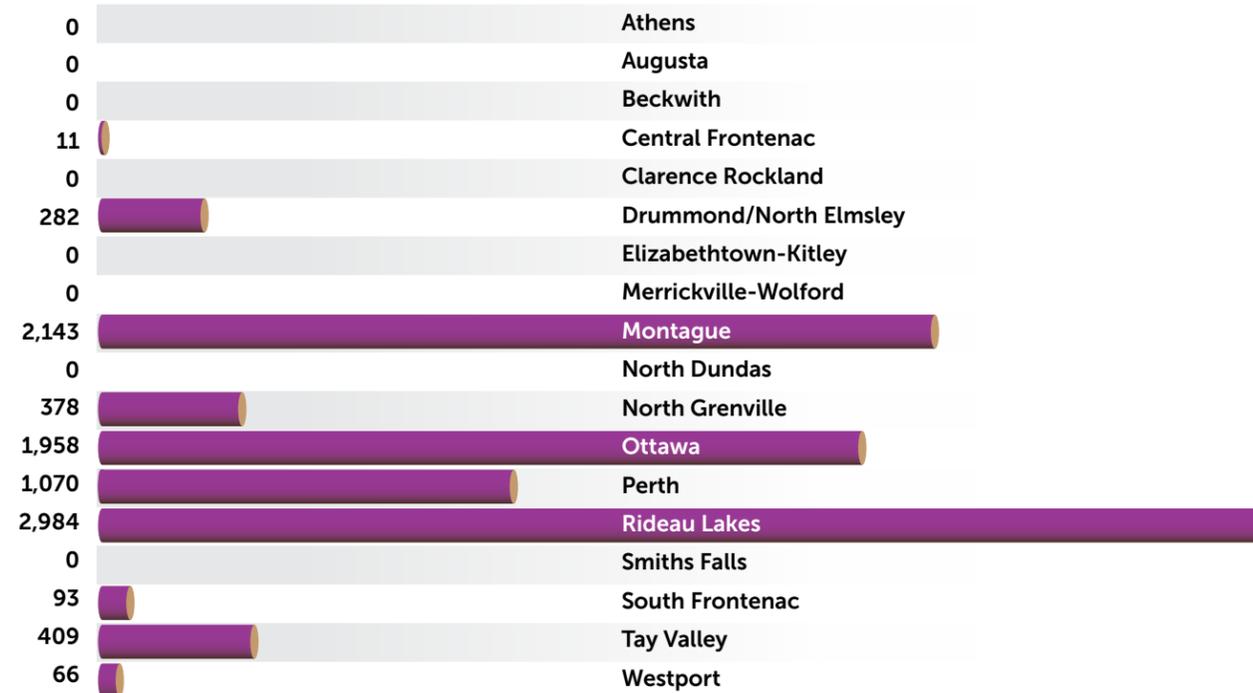
of shoreline naturalized



The Town of Perth, RVCA staff and community volunteers help naturalize a stretch of Tay River shoreline in Last Duel Park.



Shoreline Plantings by Municipality, 2023



Total 9,394

SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING staff monitor watershed conditions to understand and manage natural hazard risks to people and property, and to protect water quality and natural resources. Data about water levels and hydrology, land cover and elevation, surface and ground water and aquatic environments is critical to guide decisions about land and water to keep people and development safe from hazards and protect the many benefits of a healthy watershed.



Flood Forecasting & Warning

- **13** flood messages issued for the Rideau River
- **8** flood messages issued for the Ottawa River
- **2** low water messages issued
- **26** sites monitored for water levels and flow
- **7** Parks Canada water level gauges monitored by staff through public info-net site
- **24** sites monitored for precipitation, including 11 new RVCA Weather Stations installed in 2021
- **6** sites monitored for snowpack

Partnership Highlights:

- Hosted annual flood forecasting and warning meeting in February for all municipalities and partner agencies
- Presented at the Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Workshop in September
- Completed Phase One of a new flood forecasting and warning model for the Rideau River with funding from the City of Ottawa



Natural Hazard Mapping

- **6**-year workplan approved to complete natural hazard mapping on the following watercourses to fill gaps in existing mapping:
 - o Brassils Creek, Graham Creek, Greens Creek, Sawmill Creek, Stillwater Creek and Faulkner Drain in the City of Ottawa
 - o Bobs Lake, Otty Lake, Lower Rideau Lake and Big Rideau Lake in the upper watershed
- Continued work on hazard mapping for Middle Rideau River, Wolf/Sand Lake and Stevens Creek

Partnership Highlight:

- Finalized a new 5-year funding agreement with the City of Ottawa to prioritize floodplain and erosion hazard mapping within the City as well as additional products on Cardinal Creek
- Received federal funding to collect data to support future flood hazard mapping on watercourses prioritized in the workplan

Source Water Protection

- Welcomed two new Source Protection Committee members
- Advancement of major updates to the both the *Technical Assessment Reports* and *Source Protection Plan*

Partnership Highlight:

- Partnered with the Eastern Ontario conservation authorities to jointly host a 5-part webinar series called Drinking Water Wise to promote Best Practices for Source Water Protection. **557** audience members attended virtually





Surface Water Quality Monitoring

- **119** sites sampled for the Baseline monitoring and Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Program, which monitors the water chemistry of major rivers and tributaries
- **39** lakes sampled from May to October
- **51** water quality parameters monitored annually

Partnership Highlights:

- **29** landowners provided access to lakes and streams through their properties to enable sampling, and **10** waterfront landowners provided on-water transportation for staff as part of the Watershed Watch (lake) monitoring program (**80** volunteer hours)
- Continued to partner with the Township of Rideau Lakes, Big Rideau Lake Association and Cataraqui Conservation on the Sustainable Drainage Project:
 - o Installed a second rain garden and seven catch basin filters in the village of Portland
 - o Produced a series of fact sheets focused on property-level low-impact development options (i.e. rain barrels, rain gardens)
 - o Held a rain barrel sale in Portland
 - o Hosted an information session attended by **115** municipal and conservation authority staff on new stormwater management opportunities through reuse and recharge

- Presented on water quality / invasive species to the Upper Rideau Lake Association, Black Lake Property Owner Association AGM, Long Lake (East) AGM, Long Lake (West) AGM and Pike Lake AGM
- Presented at the Lake Networking Group Meetings (May and October)

51
water quality parameters
monitored annually





Aquatic Habitat Monitoring

- **44** sites sampled across the watershed in spring and fall for the Ontario Benthic Biomonitoring Network (OBBN)
- City Stream Watch Program monitored four creeks in the City of Ottawa: Bilberry Creek, Mosquito Creek, Mud Creek (Manotick) and Stillwater Creek
- **361** stream survey sections completed
- **16** temperature loggers installed
- **107** headwater drainage features surveyed
- **23** fish sampling sites monitored
- Catchment level watershed conditions were classified across the watershed by aquatic score, benthic community score, fish community score and thermal classification

Partnership Highlights:

- **268** community volunteers contributed a total of **811** hours towards stream monitoring, **12** stream cleanups and **15** invasive species removals on the Jock River (in Richmond), Graham Creek, Sawmill Creek, Mud Creek, Bilberry Creek, Rideau River, Tay River, Barrhaven Creek and Stillwater Creek

- Hosted an invasive species identification workshop in July with **30** participants
- Hosted an interactive booth with benthic invertebrates at the following community events: North Grenville Sustainability Fair, Sandy Hill Ecofair, Ecofest Westport, Tay Watershed Discovery Day and Ottawa Ward 22 Open House
- Presented at the Annual Lake Links Workshop in October on fish habitat restoration
- Partnered with Parks Canada to help remove Water Chestnut along the Rideau River (Black Rapids Lock station) and the Tay River (Port Elmsley)
- **82** Landowners provided access to streams through their properties to enable surveying for the City Stream Watch program.
- Partnered with the Alta Vista Community Association to help cleanup and rehabilitate Sawmill Creek

Wetland Restoration

- Phase Two of the Motts Mills Wetland Restoration Project was completed, creating additional open water ponds with connecting channels to support increased biodiversity within the provincially significant wetland. This work was completed in partnership with the Mott's Mills Steering Committee
- Post-effectiveness monitoring was undertaken at the Stillwater Wetland Creation Project (Year 3) and Jebbs Creek Wetland Embayment (Year 5)



Partners and supporters gathered at the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre in May to celebrate ongoing efforts to restore the Stillwater Wetland in Nepean back to a functioning part of the local hydrological system. Left to right, RVCA General Manager Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, Bay Ward Councillor and RVCA Board member Theresa Kavanagh, RVCA Aquatic Biologist Jennifer Lamoureux and RVCA Board Chair Kristin Strackerjan celebrate Lamoureux's recognition for her role in restoring the wetland.



Workers clear open channels and ponds in Hutton Marsh as part of the Motts Mills Wetland Restoration Project in February.



- Science & Engineering Services **\$2,911,493**
- Planning Advisory and Regulatory Services **\$2,457,920**
- Corporate Services **\$1,817,028**
- Stewardship Services **\$1,661,038**
- Conservation Land Management Services **\$1,565,852**
- Investment in Capital Assets **\$1,677,113**
- Transfer to Reserves **\$ 793,256**
- Repayment of Capital Lease **\$202,704**



- Municipal Levy **\$6,719,748**
- Program Revenue **\$4,406,595**
- Foundation **\$844,824**
- Special Levies **\$716,736**
- Provincial Funding **\$398,501**



Open fields at the newly acquired ParMc property will provide space for species at risk habitat projects and other stewardship efforts.



The new bridge at Baxter Conservation Area.

Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Thank you for an incredible year.

Looking back at 2023, I'm amazed at the impact of our work. In many ways, it was the culmination of many years of work as we moved forward with several significant campaigns, including the installation of a new accessible pedestrian bridge at Chapman Mills Conservation Area and the construction of our accessible bridge and education platforms at Baxter Conservation Area.

We also continued our important work as a land trust, welcoming more than 130 acres of forest, wetlands and shoreline in new donated lands through the Foundation and continuing to protect another 7,350 acres of conservation land through the Steve Simmering Conservation Land Endowment Fund.

Our generous donors and supporters make it all possible; this and our many other conservation projects including tree planting, shoreline restoration, invasive species removal and outdoor education.

The RVCF is delighted to be the vital bridge between ideas and actions, bringing together individuals, partners and businesses to achieve our shared goals through funding, in-kind support and volunteer hours. Together we channel our efforts towards the protection of the Rideau's natural environment – ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense gratitude for your unwavering support and commitment to our shared mission – thank you.

Yours in conservation,

Andrew Harkness,
RVCF Chair

RVCF Board of Directors

- Andrew Harkness, Chair
- Tom Scott, Vice Chair
- Jason W. M. Kelly, Past Chair
- John Batson
- Allison Gibbons
- Gary Howard
- Mark Mortimer
- Jake Rice
- R.E. (Bob) Smith
- Kathy Thomas

Support Team

Diane Downey,
RVCF Executive Director
Kathy Dallaire,
Secretary- Treasurer

2023 Highlights

- Renewed accreditation from Imagine Canada's Standards Program. Earning the Imagine Canada Accreditation Trustmark verifies RVCF's excellence in governance and non-profit management.
- Constructed Baxter Conservation Area's accessible boardwalk bridge and education platforms thanks to funding from Canada's Community Revitalization Fund, City of Ottawa Rural Community Building Grant, RVCA support and many generous donors.
- Installed the Chapman Mills Conservation Area accessible pedestrian bridge thanks to funding from Canada's Community Revitalization Fund and private donors.
- Retrofitted Baxter's Interpretive Centre washrooms to include accessibility features thanks to funding from the Government of Canada (Employment and Social Development Canada).
- Honoured Year 3 of our partnership with Modern Niagara, which will provide \$300,000 over five years to help acquire and protect vulnerable land.
- Celebrated two land donations to ensure the long-term protection of two small islands and 133 acres of green infrastructure including shorelines, wetlands, forests and meadows.
- Secured funds from Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Government of Ontario to support the acquisition of conservation land.
- Protected more than 7,350 acres of conservation land throughout the Rideau watershed.
- Invested \$152,000 into the Steve Simmering Conservation Land Endowment Fund to support perpetual care of conservation lands.
- Raised \$128,100 in support of Phase 2 of the Hutton Marsh Restoration Project, thanks to a dedicated group of local stakeholders and funders including Ducks Unlimited Canada, Leeds Grenville Stewardship Council, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters Zone F, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG), Wildlife Habitat Canada, Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

RVCF has raised
\$8.3M
for conservation since 1994.



The new bridge at Chapman Mills Conservation Area.



Several Carbon Neutral and Tree Planting partners joined RVCF board members, RVCA staff and many volunteers to celebrate the 7 millionth tree planted across the watershed in May.

2023 Highlights (continued)

- Planted 30,000 trees with support from One Tree Planted.
- Continued partnership with Hulse, Playfair and McGarry to plant 1,500 trees seedlings annually.
- Planted 652 memorial and special occasion trees in tribute of loved ones.
- Welcomed returning Carbon Neutral individuals, businesses and events including Capital Pyro, LIVE 88.5, Elephant Print, Greek Fest Ottawa, McCooeye Wealth Management – Mandeville Private Client Inc., Somersault Events and Velofix Ottawa.
- Celebrated the official opening of the Foley Mountain Story Trail made possible thanks to the Lawson Foundation, Westport Lions Club, Friends of Foley Mountain and the RVCF.
- Received funding from TD Friend of the Environment to install a permanent Story Trail Adventure at Baxter Conservation Area.
- Supported the Nature for All Committee in its fundraising efforts for accessibility projects at Baxter Conservation Area.
- Raised funds to eliminate bus and registration fees for priority schools attending outdoor education programs at Foley and Baxter Conservation Areas. Special thanks to supporters of the Don Maciver Memorial Fund for their continued commitment.
- Helped families in need participate in Forest School programming at Baxter and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas.
- Welcomed support for stream protection and invasive species removal from Ferguslea Property Inc.
- Enjoyed 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 barn swallow, bobolink and meadowlark habitat during their business activities. We are currently managing 55 projects.

Thank you for your continued trust in the RVCF. We appreciate you supporting programs and projects that protect our beautiful watershed – for today and the future.



Left to right: Friends of Foley Mountain president Rob Struthers, Foundation board member Mark Mortimer, Foley Mountain Conservation Area Site Supervisor Rebecca Whitman, Foundation board member Allison Gibbons and Lawson Foundation's Tim and Nancy Gardiner celebrate the opening of a new permanent Storybook Trail at Foley Mountain.

Donor Milestones

We recognize the following donors who have reached new cumulative giving milestones in 2023:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrons (\$100,000+)
Modern Niagara, K.A. McClure & R.D. Partridge, Ontario Land Trust Alliance, Thomas Cavanagh Construction Limited • Sponsors (\$25,000 to \$99,999)
One Tree Planted • Benefactors (\$5,000 to \$24,999)
Norman Lepointe, Gillian Shaw | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporters (\$1,000 to \$4,999)
Benjamin Doyle, Elephant Print, Bruce Fanjoy, Fidus, Maureen Gabe, Alain & Maureen Gauthier, HR Ottawa, LP, Melissa Krueyne, Ottawa Greek Fest, Tarandeep Sehgal • Friends (\$500 to \$999)
AlphaPlus Centre, Amazon YOW, John Kenneth Barr, Hilton, Peter Ide, Maria Yousaf |
|---|---|

For a complete list of our valued donors, visit our digital donor board at rvcf.ca/supporters or in person at 3889 Rideau Valley Drive in Manotick.

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3889 Rideau Valley Drive
Manotick, ON K4M 1A8
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info@rvcf.ca www.rvcf.ca

The RVCF is proudly accredited under Imagine Canada's Standards Program having demonstrated excellence in board governance, financial accountability and transparency, ethical fundraising, staff management and volunteer involvement. RVCF is also a proud and practicing member of both the Ontario and Canada Land Trust Alliances.



In 2023, the RVCF was generously supported by



230
individuals and families



10
corporate partners



7
not-for-profits



5
government partners



2
in-kind donors



10
volunteer directors



Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

Box 599, 3889 Rideau Valley Drive
Manotick, ON K4M 1A5
613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504
www.rvca.ca

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