



# Annual Report **2021**





**THE RVCA** is one of 36 provincial conservation authorities working to protect and conserve our natural resources on a watershed level.

Since 1966, we have worked closely with municipal, provincial and federal government partners, landowners and community groups to protect communities from natural hazards, ensure sustainable development near waterways and to monitor and improve water quality, habitat and hydrologic function across the 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 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.

#### 2021 RVCA Board of Directors

Pieter Leenhouts, Chair	Ottawa
Judy Brown, Vice Chair	Perth
Andy Jozefowicz	Athens
Dale McLenaghan	Augusta
Brian Dowdall	Beckwith
Victor Heese	Central Frontenac
Jamie Crawford	Ottawa
George Darouze	Ottawa
Julie Graveline	Ottawa
Scott Moffatt	Ottawa
Anne Robinson	Ottawa
Guy Desjardins	Clarence-Rockland
George Sachs/	
Steve Fournier	Drummond/North Elmsley
Rob Rothgeb	Elizabethtown-Kitley
Don Halpenny/Bob Foster	Merrickville-Wolford
Vince Carroll	Montague
Gerry Boyce	North Dundas
Barclay Cormack/Kristin Strackerjan	North Grenville
Carolyn Bresee	Rideau Lakes
Shawn Pankow	Smiths Falls
Pat Barr/John McDougall	South Frontenac
Gene Richardson	Tay Valley
Melissa Sullivan/Robin Jones	Westport

*\*Throughout 2021 the RVCA was saddened by the passing of three board members: Guy Desjardins, Don Halpenny and Pat Barr. The RVCA Board of Directors sends its deepest condolences to the friends and families of these dedicated community leaders. We will remember them for their many years of contributions to their communities and to our board.*

*+ The RVCA also had three members retire from the Board in 2021: George Sachs, Barclay Cormack and Melissa Sullivan. The RVCA Board of Directors thanks them for their service and contributions to our Board and wishes them well in their future endeavors.*

**2021** was another year of uncertainty and disruption, yet the RVCA team managed to not only keep our programs and services running at top speed, but also lay significant groundwork for a bright and healthy future in the Rideau Valley watershed.

This included the installation of 11 new climate stations across the watershed to improve our flood and drought forecasting – particularly in the face of a changing climate – and the completion of draft hazard mapping studies on the Upper Jock River and Stevens Creek.

Our science department, meanwhile, began an ambitious watershed report card project that will deliver a comprehensive snapshot of environmental conditions in the Rideau Valley. By gathering our rigorous science around surface and ground water quality, hydrology, land uses and habitat into a single document, we will be able to identify trends and problem areas to help guide our priorities and strategies into the future.

Planning and regulations staff were also busy as they engaged an external working group of developers, farmers and municipal staff to help us update our development review policies to better align with provincial legislation and local needs. This was a highly collaborative process that resulted in a draft policy document that will undergo broader public consultation in 2022.

Speaking of collaboration, the RVCA's role on the provincial multi-stakeholder Conservation Authorities Working Group over the course of 2021 was an extremely positive experience. The province was receptive to our concerns and input and as a result the final regulations released in October 2021 are practical, flexible and should be reasonable to implement at the local level while still achieving the province's objectives. Heading into 2022, our job now is to work closely with municipalities to implement these new regulations ahead of the 2024 deadline.

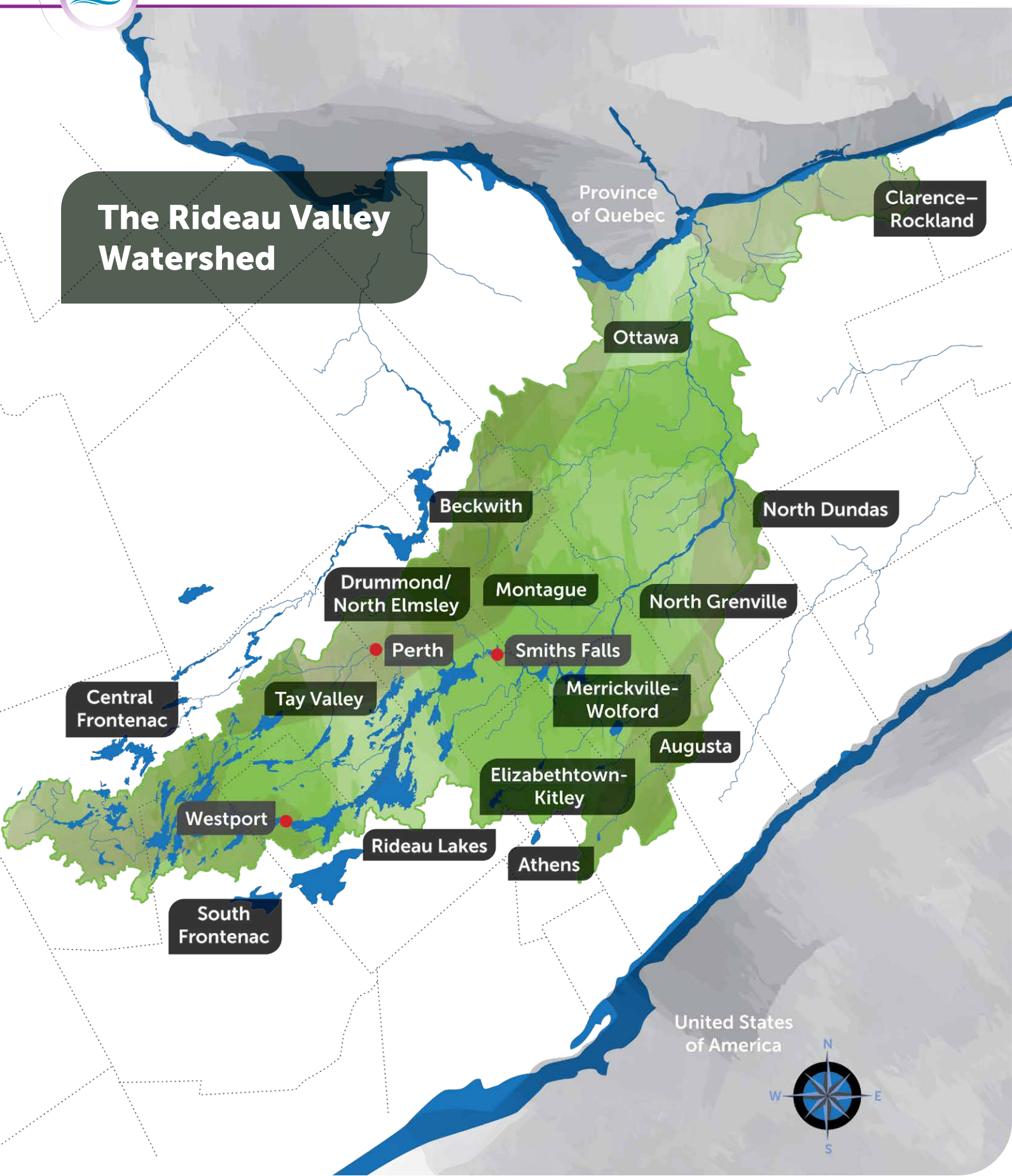
We were so proud of the RVCA team as they continued to rise to the challenges posed by COVID-19, adapting their programs and finding creative solutions to problems only a global pandemic can bring.

As we head into 2022, the RVCA looks forward to tackling the important and challenging work we set out for ourselves in the past year – for the benefit of all who call this beautiful watershed home.

Yours in conservation,

**Pieter Leenhouts,**  
Chair

**Sommer Casgrain-Robertson,**  
General Manager/Secretary- Treasurer





**CORPORATE SERVICES** supports the whole 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, foundation support and administration.

**\$12.58M**

budget

**64**

staff plus 8  
summer students

**23**

board members  
representing 18 member  
municipalities

- Continued to manage RVCA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (policies, program and budget modifications, remote working, virtual meetings)
- Provided advice to the Province to help ensure new regulations under the Conservation Authorities Act would be practical and implementable for both municipalities and conservation authorities (this included the General Manager providing advice as a member of the Minister's Conservation Authorities Working Group).
- Migrated all of RVCA's information and data to new SQL Scale VM servers to provide better storage, security and accessibility for staff and clients.

A photograph of a young child wearing a bright yellow raincoat and brown boots, standing on a wooden dock and fishing with a net. The background shows a lush green landscape with tall reeds and trees.

**THE RVCA** manages more than **3,200** hectares of conservation land for the strategic protection of vulnerable habitats and valuable natural resources.

This includes 11 developed conservation areas offering trails, beaches, boat launches and a range of popular outdoor education programs. Conservation areas provide affordable recreation, education and tourism opportunities to our watershed communities.

### Land Management

- Own **2,210** hectares of conservation land across the watershed; **1** new conservation easement accepted in 2021
- Manage **3,200+** hectares of conservation land (inspected and assessed annually)
- **52** nest boxes monitored at nine conservation areas
- **23** Species at Risk monitoring and/or habitat feature projects maintained at six conservation areas (in support of bobolink, butternut and barn swallow)

### Conservation Areas

- **11** developed conservation areas
- **300,000** visitors in 2021 (up from 200,000 annually)
- **42** kilometres of trails and 3 beaches maintained for public use
- **1,923** people enjoyed rental facilities at Foley Mountain and Baxter Conservation Areas (group camping areas, picnic shelter and the Baxter river cabin)

- Continued successful partnership with Cabinscape to host a tiny cabin at Mica Mines Conservation Area, with an agreement to add a second cabin in 2022

### Outdoor Education 2021

- **1,612** students from **35** schools participated in new virtual outdoor education programs at Baxter Conservation Area as part of a pilot program with Ottawa Catholic School Board
- **184** students attended weekly in-person Forest School at Baxter and Foley Mountain conservation areas
- **94** children and caregivers participated in six free Forest School drop-in programs at Foley Mountain (sponsored by the Township of Rideau Lakes)
- **84** children took part in three in-person outdoor education programs at Foley Mountain
- **194** children participated in summer day camps at Baxter and Foley Mountain
- **450** free Outdoor Adventure kits were distributed in partnership with local libraries, townships and community groups in the Foley Mountain region
- Foley Mountain introduced a winter story book trail featuring *"Over and Under the Snow"* by Kate Messner



**11**  
Conservation  
Areas



**OUR PLANNING AND REGULATIONS DEPARTMENT** brings watershed science, provincial policies and individual municipal needs together to assist municipal decision-makers in building safe, sustainable communities.

The RVCA is also the approval authority for development on lands affected by natural hazards like flooding, steep slopes or unstable soil, and near sensitive areas like wetlands, shorelines and watercourses. Staff also approve the construction, enlargement or alteration of septic systems in the City of Ottawa and Tay Valley Township and provide septic re-inspection services in several other municipalities.

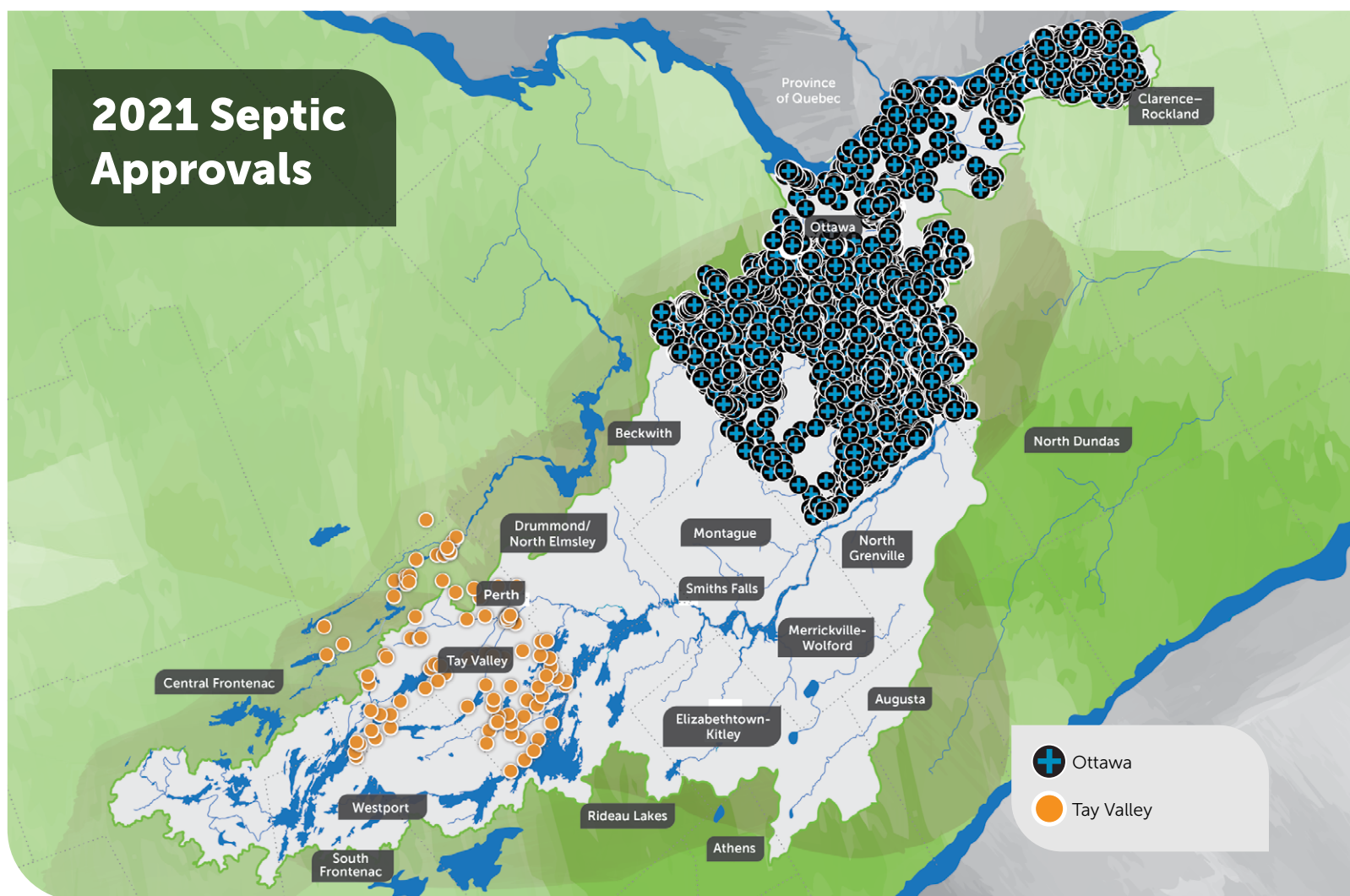
# 810

applications for new or replacement septic systems

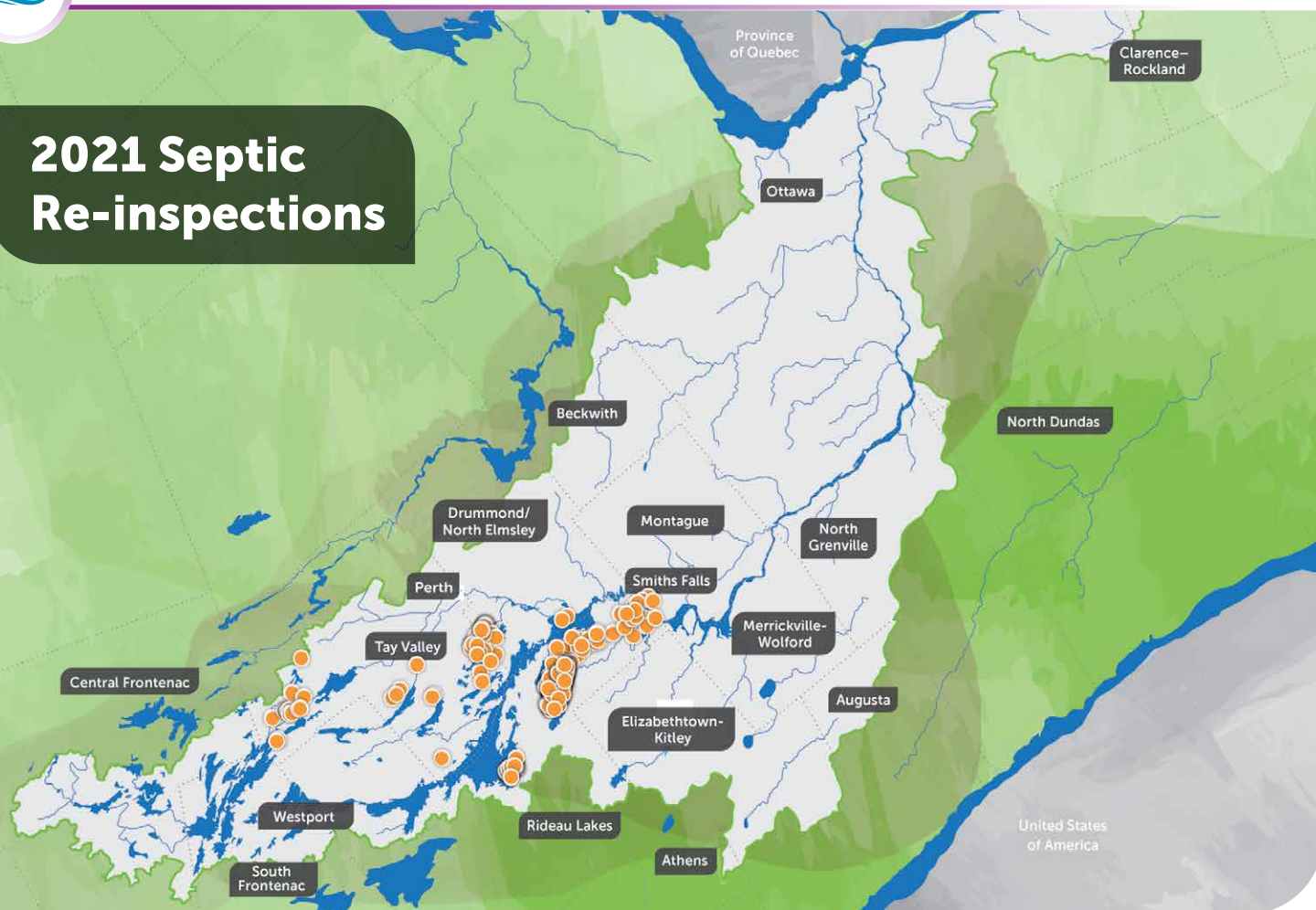
## 2021 Septic System Approvals and Re-inspections

- **254** file search requests (253 Ottawa, 1 Mississippi-Rideau)
- **810** applications for new or replacement septic systems (702 in Ottawa, 108 in Tay Valley)
- **103** applications for renovations or septic alterations (89 in Ottawa, 14 in Tay Valley)
- **54** complaints/occurrences (51 in Ottawa, in Tay Valley)
- **463** septic re-inspections completed (310 in Rideau Lakes, 109 in Tay Valley, 39 in North Frontenac and 5 in Central Frontenac)
- Distributed educational material to landowners about the care and maintenance of their septic systems
- Taught **4** virtual sessions of the Ontario Building Code Part 8 Installers Course (**66** participants)

## 2021 Septic Approvals



## 2021 Septic Re-inspections



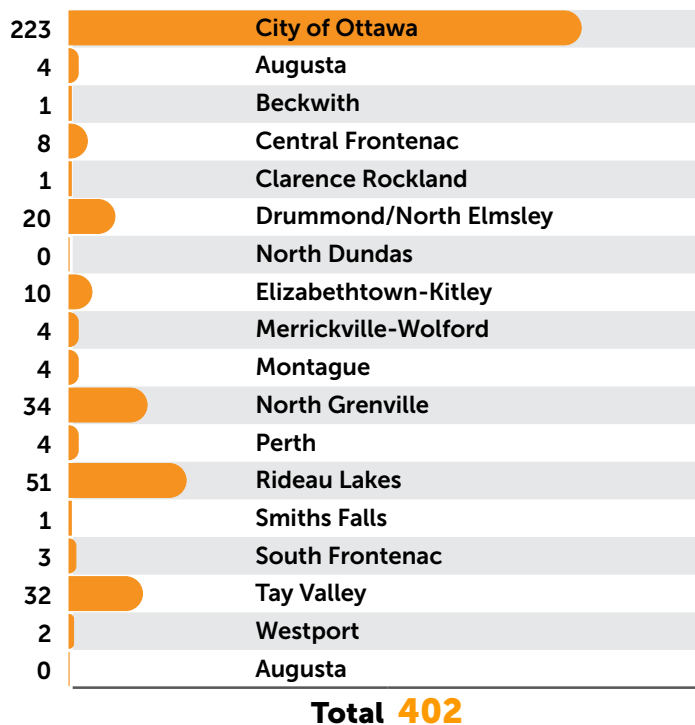
### 2021 Section 28 Activities

- **1,677** property inquiries
- **187** clearance letters
- **402** applications
  - 89% approved
  - 7% on hold
  - 3 hearings
- **115** complaints/occurrences
  - 17 violations
  - 2 charges laid under the Act

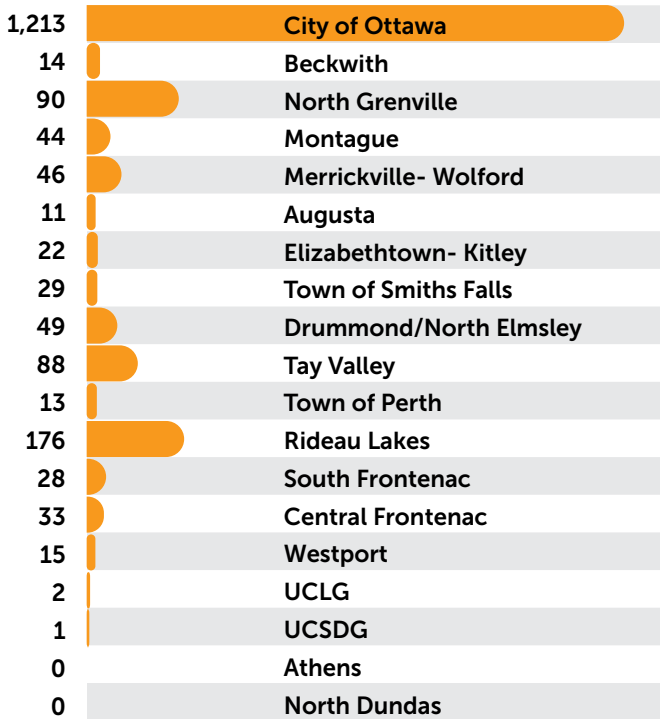
### 2021 Source Water Protection Approvals

- Two newly trained and appointed Risk Management Inspectors/Officials
- Renegotiated Part IV Risk Management Agreements with Partner Municipalities
- Continued to assist the City of Ottawa with Risk Management work

### 2021 Section 28 Applications by Municipality



### 2021 Planning Activities by Municipality



**Total 1,874**

### Planning Advisory Reviews

- **339** pre-consultation meetings
- **591** severances
- **459** minor variances
- **199** site plan control
- **172** zoning by-law amendments
- **27** Official Plan amendments
- **17** subdivision reviews
- **8** condominium applications
- **4** Part Lot Control
- **1** lifting of Holding By-law
- **5** lifting of 30 cm reserve
- **7** *Environmental Assessment Act* reviews
- **1** Aggregate Resource Review
- **3** Master Servicing Studies reviewed (City of Ottawa)
- **1** comprehensive ZBA reviewed (City of Ottawa)
- **40** utility clearances





**STEWARDSHIP** is a key component to overall watershed health. Our stewardship team works with landowners, farmers, lake associations, NGOs, businesses, government agencies and the public to undertake on-the-ground projects that directly improve the health of the watershed. Programs such as tree planting, shoreline restoration, landowner clean water incentives, wetland enhancement and Species At Risk habitat creation help protect the watershed and reduce the impact of development pressures.



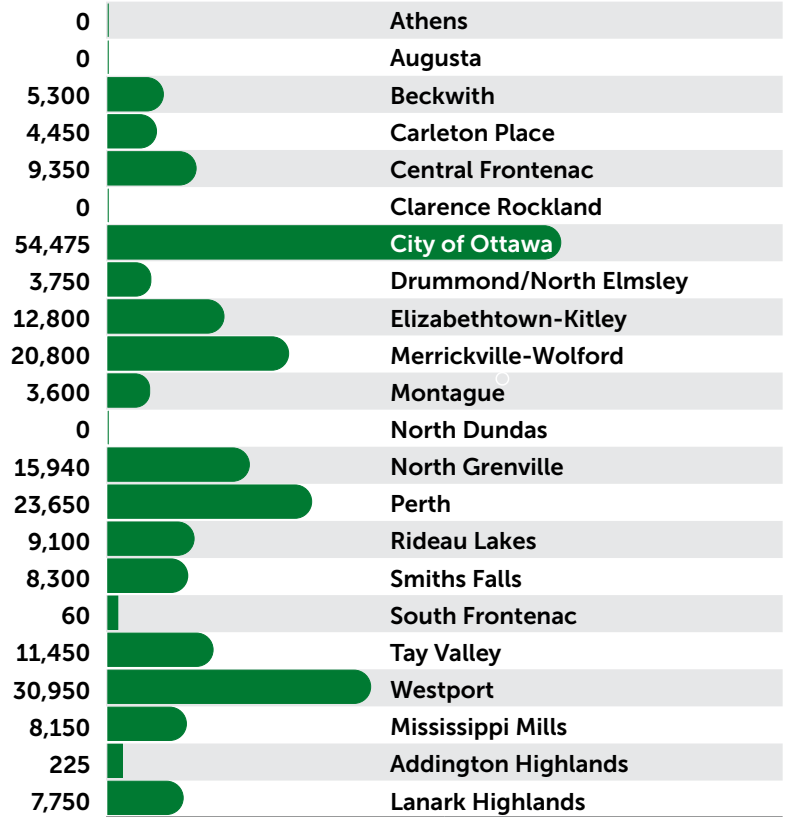
## Tree Planting 2021

- **230,100** trees planted in the Rideau Valley watershed, including 33,900 in Ottawa through the Green Acres Tree Planting program
- **20,575** trees planted in the Mississippi Valley watershed as part of Ottawa's Green Acres program
- Celebrated the Green Acres program's **2 millionth** tree with a dedication ceremony on Memory Lane at the RVCA headquarters in Manotick
- **\$356,420.26** fundraised to offset landowner costs

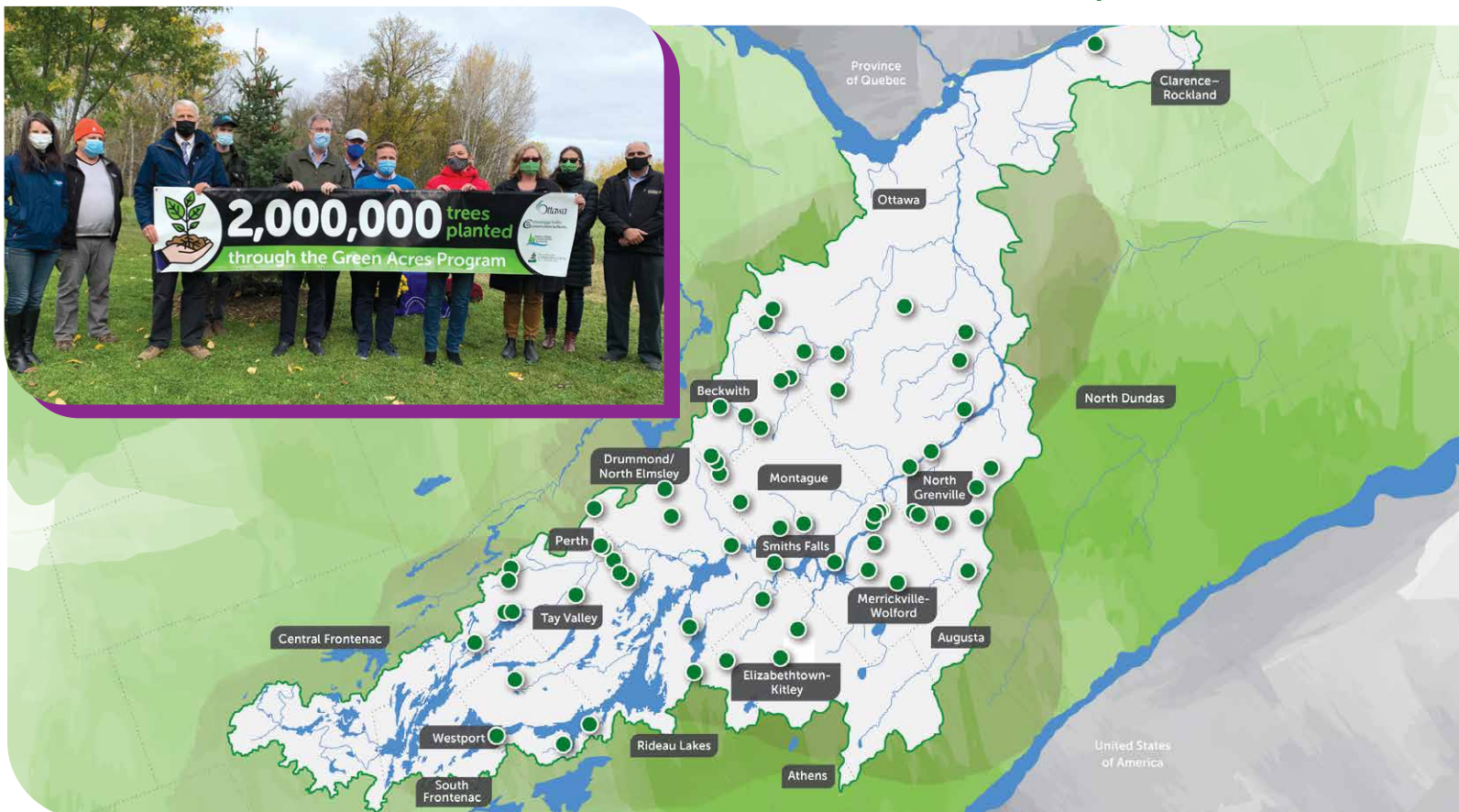
# 6.8

million trees planted  
since 1984

### Tree planting by municipality 2021



**Total 230,100**





## Shoreline Naturalization 2021

- **16,412** trees and shrubs planted on 61 properties
- **1.9 km** of shoreline naturalized
- **2,000** trees planted at new John Miller Park along Grants Creek in Tay Valley
- **5,700** trees distributed to landowners through partnership with Lanark County
- **2** lake associations worked with us to distribute 2,500 trees, shrubs and wildflowers to lake residents through an over-the-counter plant sale (Upper Rideau Lake Association, Otty Lake Association)
- **10** free shoreline planting projects provided to Bobs and Crow Lake residents thanks to top-up partnerships with Bobs and Crow Lake Association Foundation
- **5.5** hectares of new pollinator meadow habitat established in partnership with Hydro Ottawa
- **350** native pollinator-friendly perennials distributed to landowners through over the counter sale

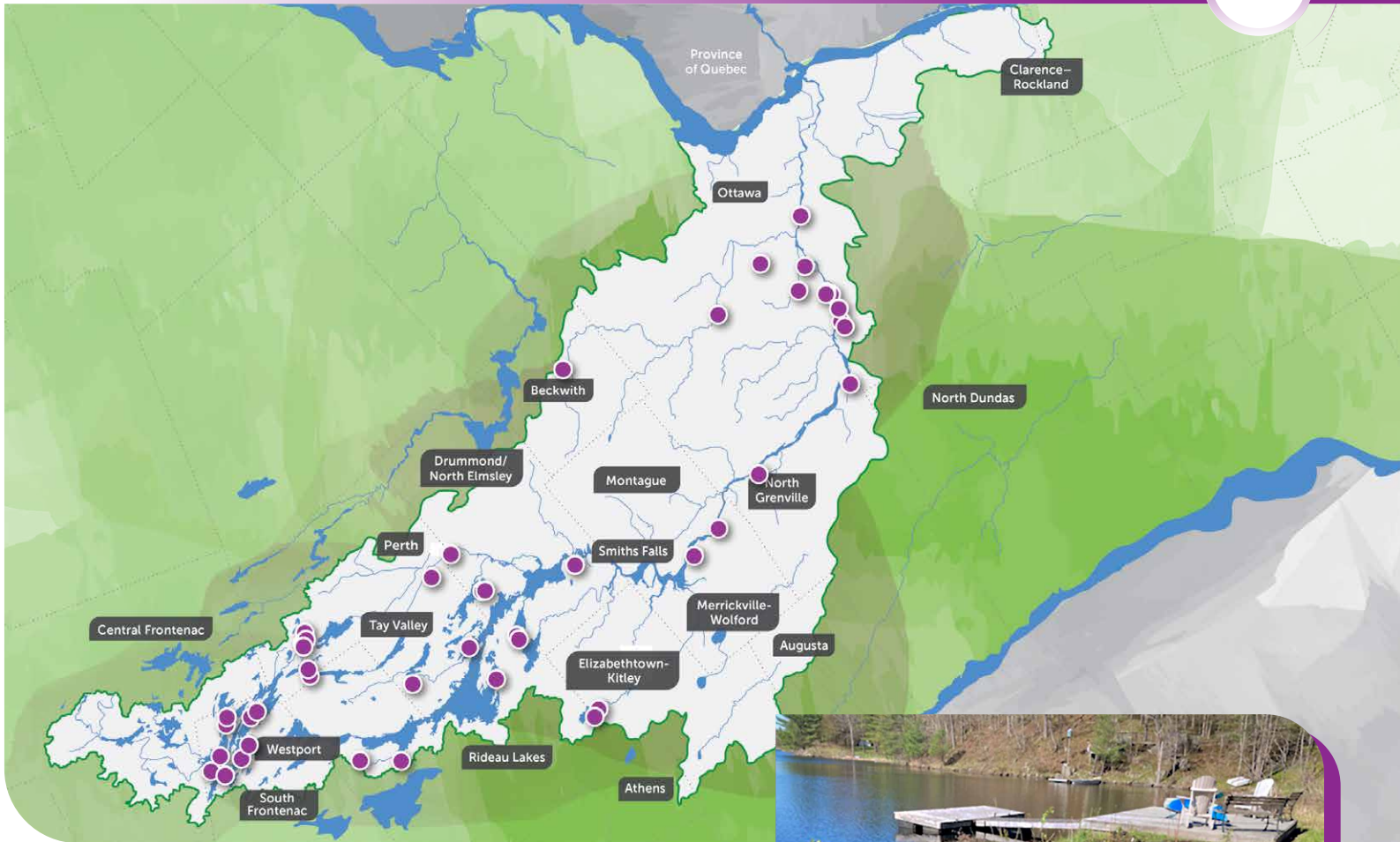
# 16,412

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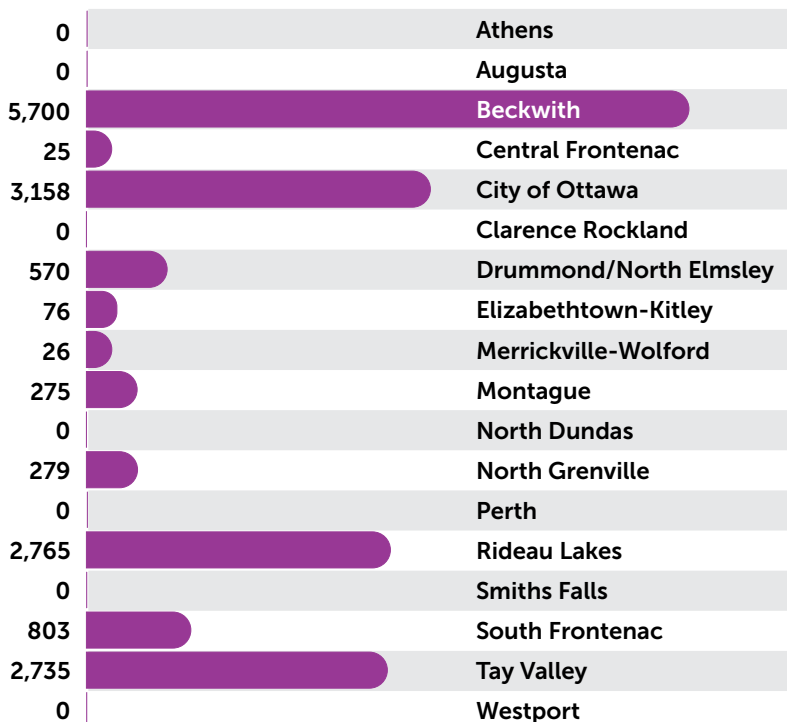
# 350

native pollinator-friendly perennials distributed to landowners through over the counter sale

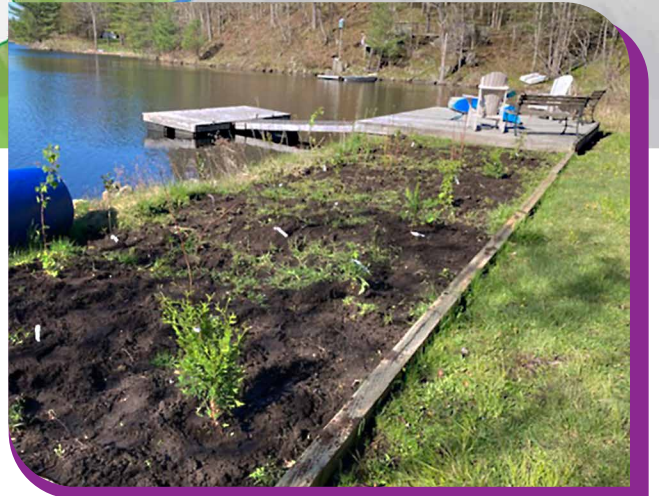




### Shoreline Plantings by Municipality



**Total 16,412**



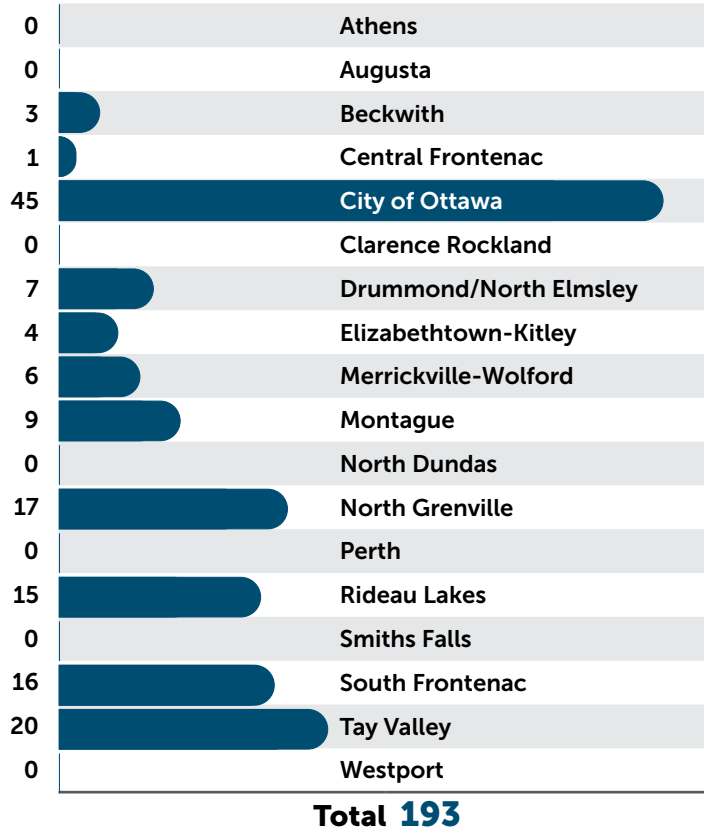
## Lake Planning 2021

- **20th** annual Lake Links Workshop attended virtually by **120+** local lake stewards and residents

## Clean Water Projects 2021

- **132** projects were approved through the Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$237,228.96** in grants; these grants will support a total project value of **\$1,184,181.69**
- **61** projects were approved through the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$241,167.69** in grants; these grants will support a total project value of **\$470,016.30**
- RVCA also delivered the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program in the Mississippi watershed in partnership with Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority

### Clean Water Projects by municipality

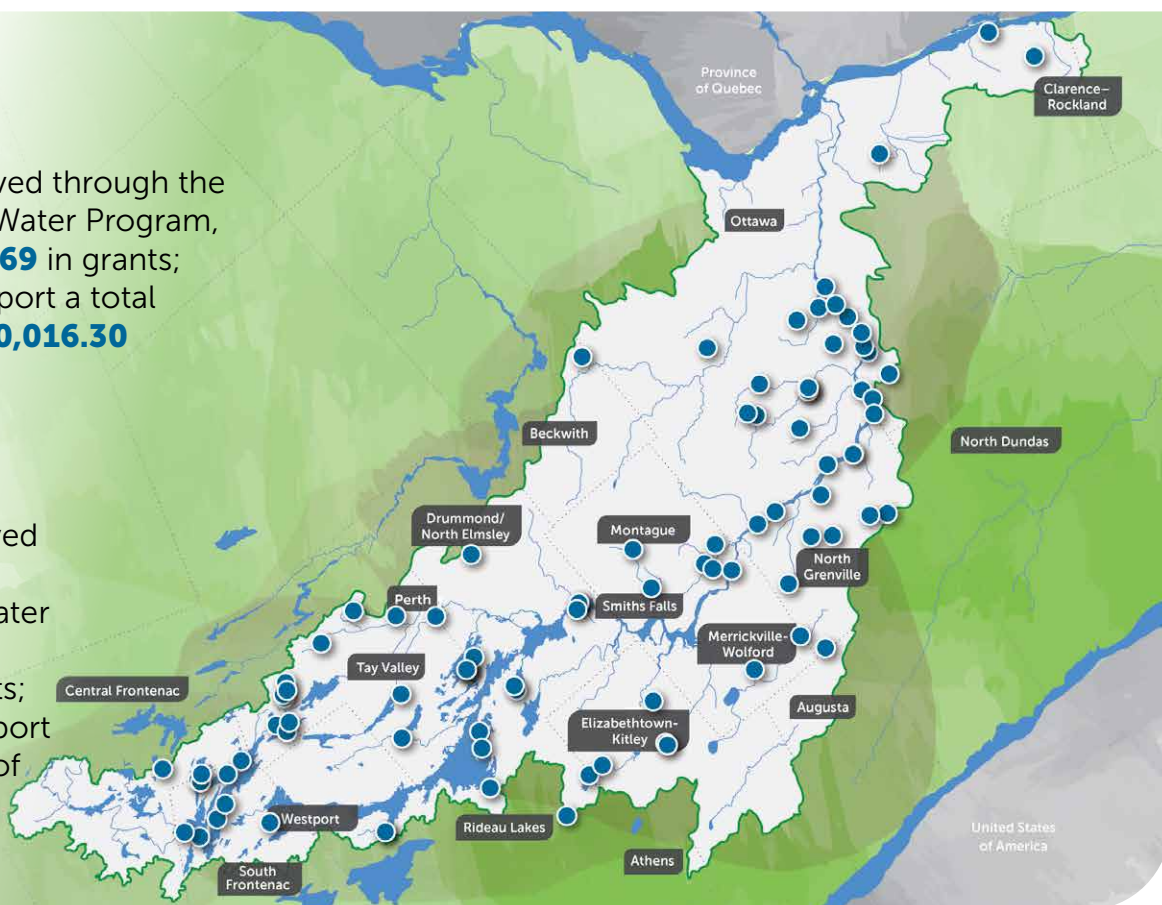


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# 11,222

seeds collected from healthy  
butternut trees to grow  
seedlings for future planting

## Butternut Stewardship 2021

- **1,440** free butternut seedlings distributed in spring to help replace dead and dying butternut trees in Eastern Ontario
- Continued effort to locate and assess healthy trees and track survival and health of planted butternut
- Partnered with FGCA for the initial Critical Habitat project
- Partnered with Ontario Nature to search for the endangered American Ginseng on properties already involved in the Butternut Recovery Program
- Partnered with Ontario Nature to assess an entire Butternut population on a 200-acre federal property owned and managed by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS)



**OUR SCIENCE TEAMS** collect, monitor and analyze our watershed's conditions to better understand its health and to help us better protect its resources and the people who live in it. Data about water levels and hydrology, surface and ground water quality and aquatic environments is critical to guide decisions about land and water use to ensure we continue to reap the many natural benefits of a healthy and thriving watershed.

## Source Water Protection

- Seventh year implementing the Mississippi Rideau Source Protection Plan
- Continued support provided to municipalities including policy interpretation and implementation tools
- Completed our fourth annual Source Protection Annual Report
- Continued work on an update to our Source Protection Plan and Assessment Reports
- Submitted a Section 34 Amendment for a new municipal well in Kemptville

## Flood Forecasting & Warning

- **6** flood messages for Rideau River
- **1** flood message for Ottawa River
- **5** low water messages
- **21** sites monitored for water levels and flow
- **24** sites monitored for precipitation, including 11 new RVCA Weather Stations installed in 2021
- **6** sites monitored for snowpack

## Stream Characterization Monitoring

- **44** sites sampled throughout the watershed in the spring and fall for the Ontario Benthic Biomonitoring Network (OBBN)
- Catchment level watershed conditions were classified across the watershed by the following parameters
- Staff prepared the fish community data set and completed data analysis in support of the Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program review

## Wetland Restoration Post-Effectiveness Monitoring

- Remic Rapids Wetland Restoration Project Phase 1 (Year 5) and 2 (Year 2)
- Black Rapids Wetland Restoration Project (Year 5)
- Stillwater Creek Wetland Restoration Project (Year 3)
- Jebbs Creek Wetland Embayment Project (Year 3)

## Surface Water Quality Monitoring

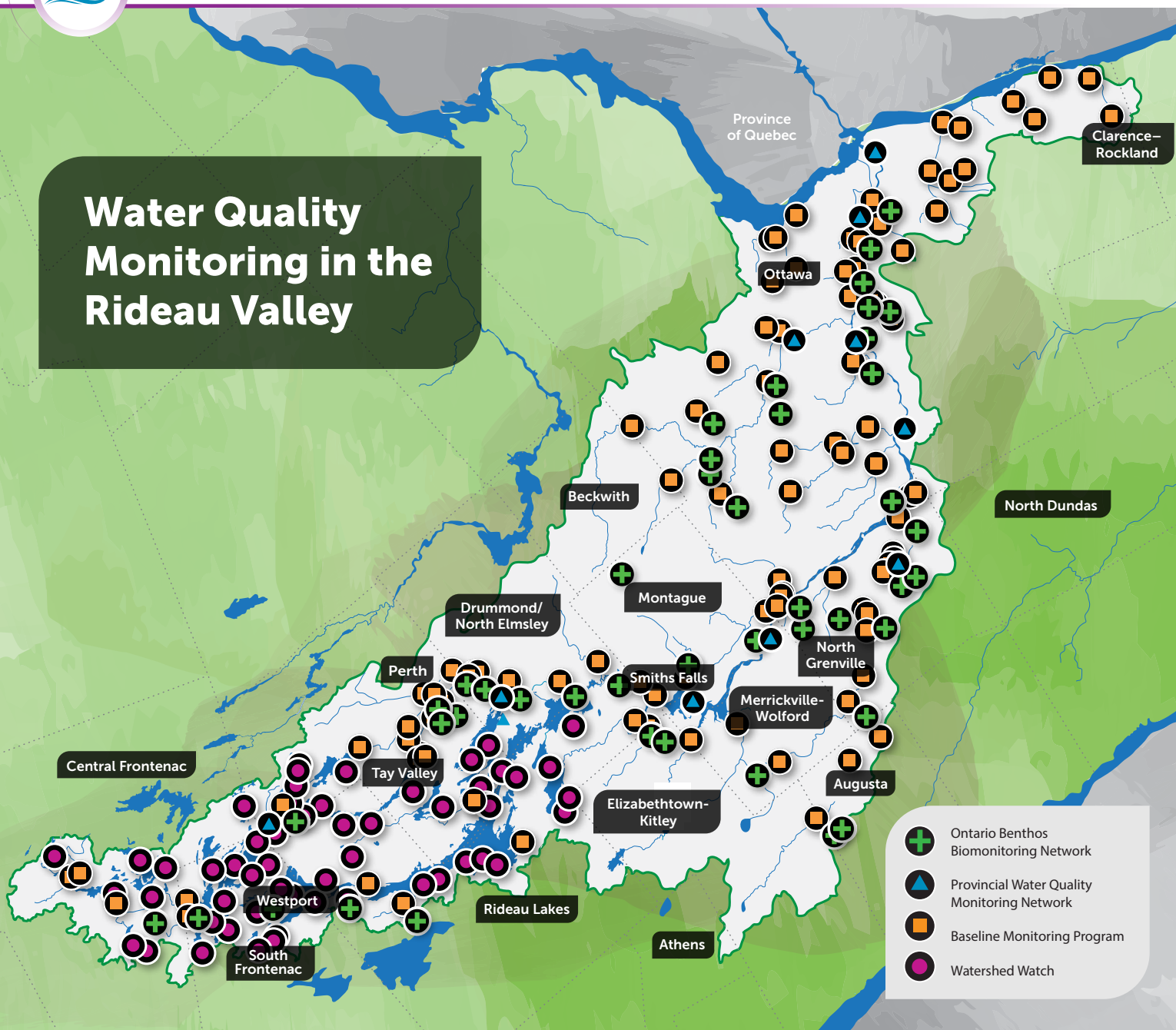
- **117** sites sampled for the RVCA Baseline Monitoring Program, City Baseline Monitoring Program and Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Program which monitors the water chemistry of major rivers and tributaries.
- **51** Water Quality Parameters monitored annually
- **19** landowners facilitated sampling by providing access to lakes and streams through their properties
- Due to Covid-19 restrictions, more than **140 hours** were donated by **13** lake stewards to support a piloted Watershed Watch community monitoring program

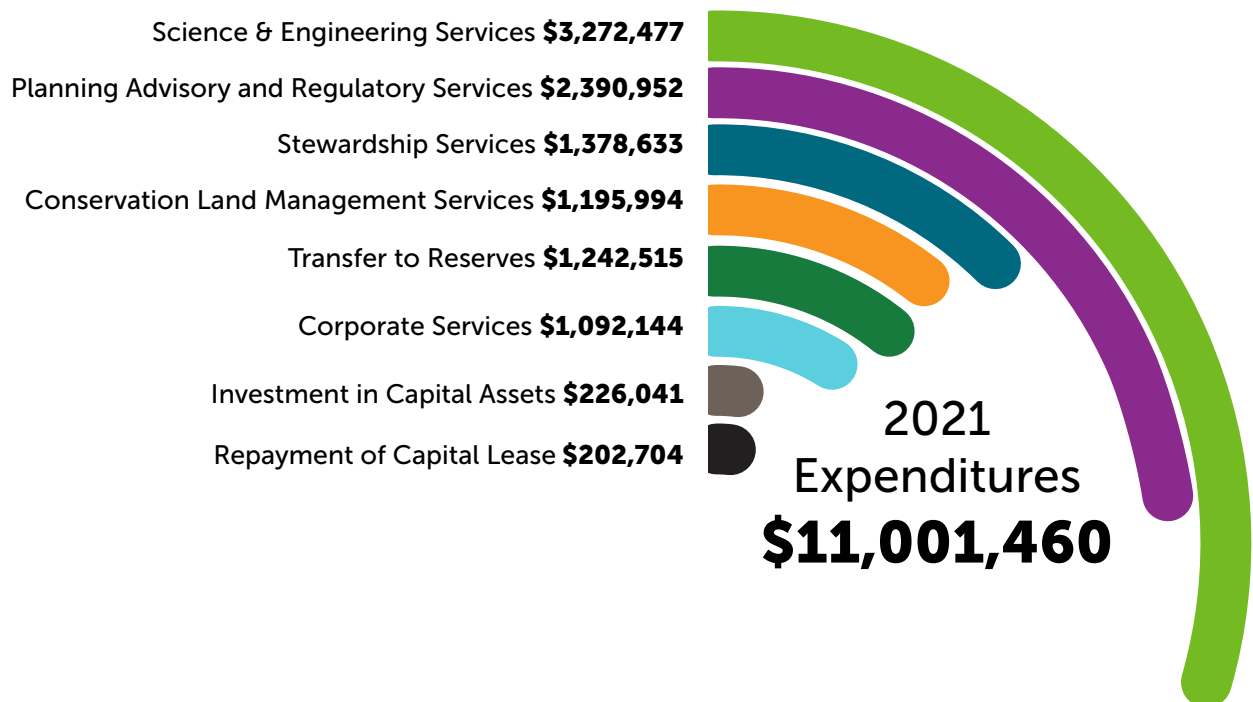
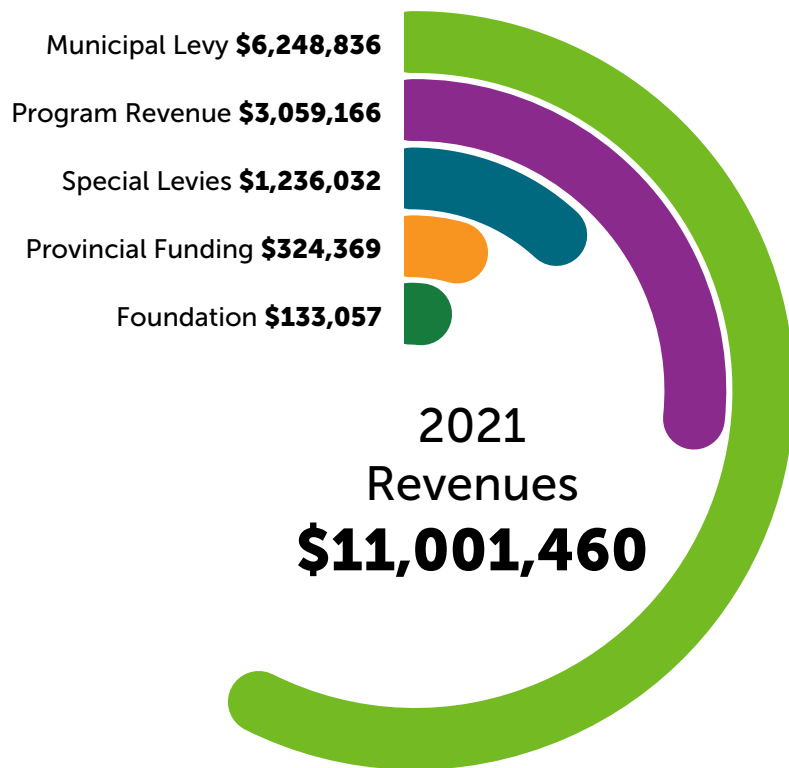
# 39

lakes were sampled  
from May to November



## Water Quality Monitoring in the Rideau Valley





## 2021 Annual Report

With another strange year behind us, it is time to pause and celebrate our collective resilience, our many accomplishments and our shared passion to sustain a healthy watershed for now and the future. Despite the ongoing pandemic, we have continued to fulfill our mission to protect and conserve the lands and waters of the Rideau River watershed. Our board members, donors and many partners stepped up to lend their time, expertise and funds to the cause of conservation.

Thanks, first of all, to our Board of Directors. Your enthusiasm and leadership are greatly appreciated. Two key members who embody these qualities must especially be acknowledged: Jason Kelly and Anne Simmering. Jason has left an indelible mark on the Foundation, having served 11 years as Chair until he retired in June 2021. Over his tenure he has helped shape and guide our many programs, which continue to be warmly received and valued across our watershed. We appreciate his continued commitment as he remains an active Board member. Thank you as well to Anne who, after nine years of service, has quietly stepped down from the board. We value her guidance and commitment to the Steve Simmering Conservation Land Endowment. After 10 years, this endowment remains a very important piece of our fundraising efforts as it strives to protect vulnerable natural areas across our watershed.

2021 welcomed many new and returning donors. With generous donor support, we continued to conserve critical natural spaces, protect species at risk, plant trees, naturalize shorelines and support outdoor education for our youth. We kicked off a transformational accessibility project at Baxter Conservation Area, and thanks to ongoing donor support have initiated plans for several other accessibility projects to take shape in the coming months and years. Thank you for making your local natural environment – and residents' access to it – a priority.

I am proud to share our 2021 highlights. We appreciate your continued confidence in our conservation projects and look forward to a healthy, resilient future together.

Yours in conservation,

**Andrew Harkness,**  
*RVCF Chair*

### RVCF Board of Directors

- Andrew Harkness, Chair
- Allison Brown, Vice Chair
- Jason W. M. Kelly, Immediate Past Chair
- Kathy Dallaire, Secretary-Treasurer
- Allison Gibbons
- Gary Howard
- Bob Ryerson (resigned August 2021)
- Tom Scott
- Anne Simmering (retired September 2021)
- R.E. (Bob) Smith
- Kathy Thomas
- Cynthia Wagner
- Richmond Wilson





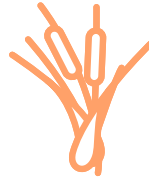
**7.3 million**  
dollars raised  
for conservation  
since 1994



**6,706**  
trees planted to  
offset carbon through  
2021 agreements



**846 total hectares**  
protected for  
conservation



**168 acres**  
preserved  
through new  
conservation easement



**78**  
ongoing  
species at risk  
restoration projects



**5 years**  
as an  
accredited member  
of Imagine Canada

## 2021 Highlights

- Welcomed new corporate partner Modern Niagara, which will provide \$300,000 over five years to help acquire and protect vulnerable land in the watershed
- Raised \$6,880 for the Steve Simmering Conservation Land Endowment Fund during our Giving Tuesday campaign, thanks to private donors and matching funds from McCooeye Wealth Management – Mandeville Private Client Inc
- Partnered with One Tree Planted to plant 40,000 tree seedlings in spring 2021
- Celebrated 30,000 memorial trees planted by Hulse, Playfair and McGarry
- Planted 1,200 memorial and special occasion trees in tribute of loved ones
- Welcomed new and returning Carbon Neutral individuals, businesses and events including LIVE 88.5, Elephant Print, Evergreen Window Solutions, McCooeye Wealth Management – Mandeville Private Client Inc. and Somersault Events
- Supported the Nature for All Committee in its fundraising efforts to begin a transformational accessibility project at Baxter Conservation Area
- Partnered with Girl Gone Good and Fjallraven Ottawa to raise funds for the Nature for All project
- Celebrated Michel and Philip Charron's fundraising efforts in support of the Nature for All project
- Accepted a generous donation from the Lawson Foundation in support of Foley Mountain's Storybook Trail and other site improvements
- Welcomed a conservation land agreement of 186 hectares of wetlands and shoreline along Wolf and Green Lake
- Became the first environmental charity to partner with GiveShop to raise funds through its online community marketplace
- Helped families in need participate in Forest School programming at Baxter and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas

Thank you to all the private individuals and families who donate. Be sure to visit our virtual Donor Recognition Wall at [www.rvcf.ca/supporters](http://www.rvcf.ca/supporters) or in person at our RVCF headquarters.

## Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation

Box 988  
3889 Rideau Valley Drive  
Manotick, ON K4M 1A8

613-692-3571 ext. 1126  
[info@rvcf.ca](mailto:info@rvcf.ca)  
[www.rvcf.ca](http://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.



Rideau Valley  
Conservation  
Authority

**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](http://www.rvca.ca)



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