



Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
2017 Annual Report



Your Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

RVCA is one of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities. We work 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.

2017 RVCA Board of Directors

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



Springtime marsh marigolds
Cover, back cover and this photo © Simon Lunn

Rideau Valley Watershed



Message from the Chair & General Manager

For the past 50 years, the RVCA and its many partners have been working hard to protect and enhance our watershed environment. While many see the beauty in nature, not everyone sees its benefits. Without natural features like forests, wetlands, lakes and rivers, we wouldn't have healthy ecosystems. And without healthy ecosystems we wouldn't have fresh air to breathe, clean water to drink and sustainable communities to live, work and play in.

It is clear that the work we do to protect our local environment is not an option but a necessity. We cannot afford to choose between our economy and our environment. The two are too closely bound. Instead, we must recognize that today's investment in watershed health will ensure a sustainable future where our natural areas support economic development and property values, reduce flood, erosion and drought impacts and defend against climate change.

The RVCA is committed to protecting watershed health, but we don't do it alone. We work closely with local landowners, businesses and special interest groups. We collaborate with municipal, provincial and federal agencies. These partnerships allow us to complete work that we couldn't do on our own. RVCA finds creative ways to support valuable programs and products here at home while looking to protect the watershed functions

that our communities and economies depend on. The RVCA will continue to protect our natural water ecosystems. We will continue to promote the value of our green infrastructure: seeing value in what is provided free of charge by the environment, not through costly man-made infrastructure. By protecting our ecosystems, our communities will be healthier and more sustainable.

Thank you to our municipalities, board members, partners and staff for their dedication and support. We are also very appreciative of the continuous, enthusiastic efforts of our volunteers. With your support we can look forward to another promising year, one where we tackle new challenges as we pursue our vision for a healthy watershed.

On behalf of the RVCA Board of Directors and staff, we hope you enjoy this snapshot of 2017's accomplishments. If you would like to learn more about our conservation work, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Yours in conservation,
Lyle Pederson, Chair and
Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, General Manager/
Secretary-Treasurer

For a more complete picture of our ongoing work, please visit our website at www.rvca.ca. Join our mailing list or keep informed by liking us on Facebook or following us on Twitter (RideauValleyCA).



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
- Launch of the *RVCA Strategic Plan 2020 — Conserving Our Watershed, Ensuring Our Future*
- Activated the new, user-friendly RVCA website
- Initiated a program review



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2

3

Above

1. Rideau Valley Conservation Centre
2. Fish sampling at Brewer Park Pond during Ottawa Tree Fest, September 23, 2017
3. *RVCA Strategic Plan 2020 — Conserving Our Watershed, Ensuring Our Future*

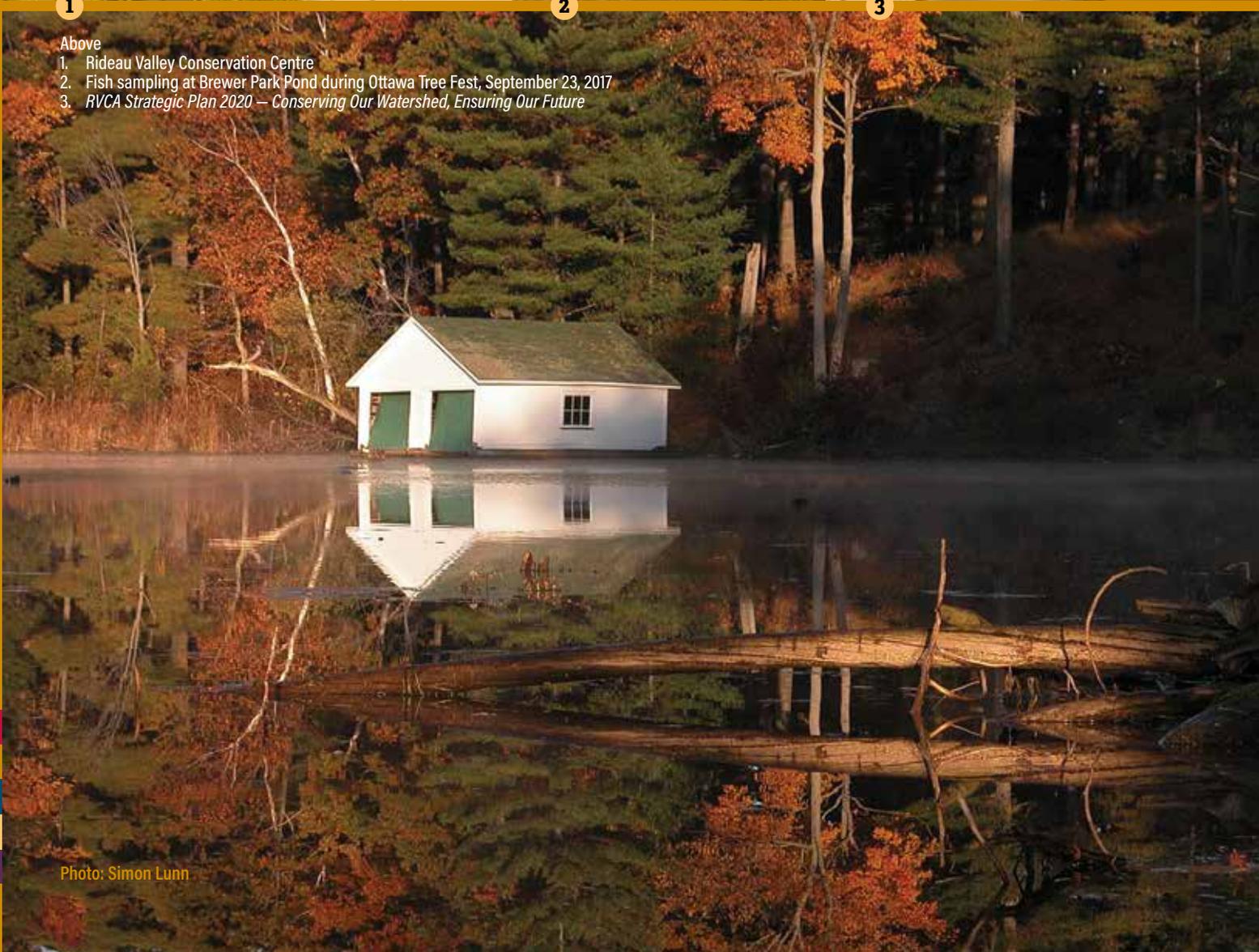


Photo: Simon Lunn

Conservation Land Management Services

The RVCA manages over 3,000 hectares (7,000+ acres) 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 environmental, recreation, education and tourism opportunities to watershed communities.

Land Management

- **\$75,000** in funding raised in partnership with RVCF to offset land acquisition, conservation area development and stewardship activities
- **1,500** trees planted at Chapman Mills Conservation Areas
- **52** nest boxes monitored at nine conservation areas
- **39** natural areas totaling **3,000** hectares of conservation land
- **7** partnership agreements to provide unique opportunities at six conservation areas
- **6** species at risk monitoring or habitat features completed at five conservation areas (bobolink, butternut, barn swallow)
- **4** new memorial benches installed
- **2** new education platforms constructed and Baxter Pond revitalized at Baxter Conservation Area

- **1** species at risk inventory completed at Mica Mines Conservation Area

Conservation Areas

- **200,000** visitors annually
- **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
- **11** developed conservation areas

Education

- **10,200+** students enjoyed outdoor education programs at Baxter and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas

RVCA's Perth Wildlife Reserve is a proud recipient of the Rideau Corridor Recognition Awards Program's Environmental Stewardship Award of Excellence. Honourable mention was also given to RVCA's Rebecca Whitman and her work ongoing education work at the Foley Mountain Conservation Area in the Community Building Category.



Above:
 4. Meisel Woods Conservation Area
 5. Receiving the Rideau Corridor Recognition Award for Perth Wildlife Reserve Conservation Area
 6. Foley Mountain Conservation Area's group camping area

Opening of Chapman Mills Conservation Area Trail Improvements, July 27, 2017

Planning Advisory & Regulatory Services

The 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 is the review and approval authority for development on hazard lands affected by flooding, 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

- **1,187** *Planning Act* applications:
 - **431** severances
 - **393** minor variances
 - **144** site plan control
 - **134** zoning by-law amendments
 - **37** pre-consultation meetings
 - **20** subdivision reviews
 - **12** Permit to Take Water review
 - **8** Official Plan amendments
 - **4** *Environmental Assessment Act* reviews
 - **4** condominium applications

Section 28 Conservation Authorities Act

- **952** property inquiries
- **300** *Conservation Authority Act* files
- **129** clearance letters
- **79** complaints/occurrences

Septic System Approvals and Inspections

- **628** applications for new or replacement septic systems (**568** in the City of Ottawa and **60** in Tay Valley Township)
- **348** septic re-inspections completed in North Frontenac (**91**), Rideau Lakes (**127**) and Tay Valley Township (**130**)
- **247** file search requests in the City of Ottawa
- **75** septic renovation and alteration applications in Ottawa and **20** in Tay Valley
- **39** complaints/occurrences in Ottawa

Below:

1. Town of Smiths Falls
2. RVCA Regulations and Planning section of RVCA website
3. Septic system project



1

Sediment Control



2



3



Watershed Stewardship Services

Programs 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

- **274,550** trees planted in 2017 with a total project value (watershed investment) of **\$522,048** with **\$345,692** fundraised to offset planting costs for landowners
- **5.97** million trees planted since 1984
- **108** hectares (**268** 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

- **9,700** trees and shrubs planted in 2017 along **2.7** kilometres of shoreline resulting in **44** projects with a total project value (watershed investment) of **\$188,784**
- **150+** landowners directly assisted by providing advice, site visits, custom planting plans and assistance with planting
- **300** native wildflowers distributed with funding provided by Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program
- **180** volunteers contributed **670** volunteer hours to assist with tree and shoreline planting

Below:

4. Tree planting
5. Butternuts
6. Shoreline naturalization plants ready for planting



4

5

6

Clean Water Erosion Control Project – before



Shoreline Naturalization – before

Shoreline Naturalization – after



Clean Water Erosion Control Project—work underway, shoreline plantings scheduled for the spring



- **1** bioengineering project completed at Chapman Mills Conservation Area
- **1** demonstration rain garden initiated at Baxter Conservation Area
- Shoreline restoration plans developed for landowners affected by Heart's Desire Weir Decommissioning
- Worked with the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation and forestry staff to deliver year two of the Mud Creek East Trailsedge Development Restoration Plan
- Special projects on municipal properties included:
 - **1,100** new trees planted with the Lanark County Municipal Trail Corporation along the Tay River Trail extension in Perth
 - Shoreline remediation along Mud Creek on City of Ottawa property
 - Removal of invasive Japanese Knotweed along shoreline of Jock River in Heart's Desire Community

Lake Planning

- 15th annual Lake Links workshop attended by **100+** local lake stewards and residents
- Partnership with Bobs & Crow Lake Foundation and Association to promote shoreline property best management practices and stewardship funding top ups for select projects

Clean Water Projects

- **107** projects were approved through the Rideau Valley Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$195,500** in grants; **73** of these projects were completed and the remaining are expected to be completed in early 2018. These grants will support a total project value of **\$523,000**
- **79** projects were approved through the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program, allocating **\$211,000** in grants; **52** of these projects were completed and the remaining are expected to be completed in early 2018. These grants will support a total project value of **\$442,000**
- In addition to the normal delivery of the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program within the Rideau Watershed, we also began delivering within the Mississippi Watershed in partnership with Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority

Below right:

1. Baxter pond rejuvenation (pond full)
2. Brush bundle installation as fish habitat at Otter Lake
3. Black Rapids Wetland Restoration Project
4. Seining at Black Rapids Wetland

Baxter Conservation Area Pond Restoration Project



Watershed Science & Engineering Services

RVCA 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

- 2017 marked the third year of implementation of the *Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Plan*, which came into effect on January 1, 2015. We continue to provide support to municipalities including policy interpretation and implementation tools. This helps to ensure policies are understood and that they are successfully implemented.

Mapping

- RVCA, in cooperation with the City of Ottawa, updated mapping and created new hazard mapping
- **64** kilometres of updated Rideau River hazard mapping from Hogs Back to Burritts Rapids
- **23** kilometres of new hazard mapping on Kings Creek

Water Control Infrastructure

- Completed the Britannia Village Flood Control Project
- Supported the Town of Perth's decommissioning of the second Haggart Island Dam and the construction of rocky ramp

- Completed design work for the decommissioning of the Hearts Desire Weir; construction and restoration to be completed in 2018

Flood Forecasting and Warning

- **40** flood messages were issued in 2017 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

Stream Characterization Monitoring

- **1,191** hours of volunteer work by **262** volunteers for the City Stream Watch Program (CSW)
- **299** stream surveys completed on Becketts Creek, Stevens Creek, Pinecrest Creek
- **336** stream surveys completed on the Tay River and the Scots Snye
- **9** temperature probes installed on the Tay River and Scots Snye; **11** temperature probes installed on Becketts Creek, Stevens Creek and Pinecrest Creek



Haggart Island Dam — before



Haggart Island Dam replaced with rocky ramp — after



Spring Flooding 2017

- **58** fish sampling sessions on the Tay River and the Scots Snye and **38** fish sampling sessions on Becketts, Stevens Creek and Pinecrest Creek
- **168** headwater drainage feature sample locations on the Lower Tay River catchments and **126** headwater drainage feature sample locations on Becketts, Stevens Creek and Pinecrest Creek
- **6** invasive species removals completed on Sawmill Creek, Remic Rapids wetlands (x2), Jock River, Brewer Park Pond and the Rideau River
- **5** garbage cleanups completed on Billings Park, Pinecrest (x2) and Sawmill (x2) Creeks
- **1** invasive species workshop
- **1** restoration project at the Baxter Conservation Area pond

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
- Renewed funding partnership within the City of Ottawa to deliver the Ottawa Hydrogeological Harvested Information

Geodatabase (OHHIG). OHHIG captures critical historical hydrogeological report information into a spatial referenced database for Conservation Partner and City of Ottawa decision making processes.

Surface Water Quality Monitoring

- **380** hours donated by **25+** lake steward volunteers to help monitor and sample Watershed Watch lakes sampled for water quality conditions
- **39** lakes monitored **4** times each from May to November to sample nutrients, *E. coli* and key physical parameters through the Watershed Watch Program
- **58** 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

Watershed Reporting

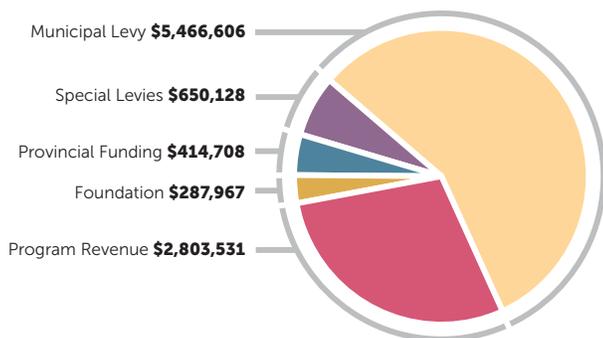
- Jock River Subwatershed Report completed
- **12** Jock River catchment reports completed
- All **6** subwatershed and **66** catchment reports available online at watersheds.rvca.ca



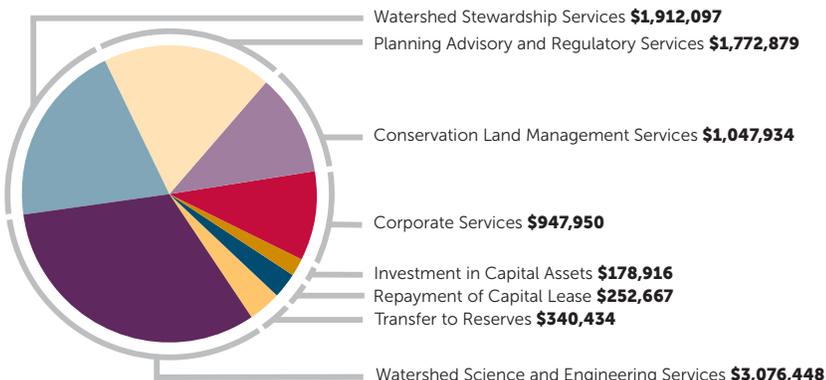
Portland Bay Conservation Area

Financing Conservation (unaudited)

2017 Revenues \$9,622,940



2017 Expenditures \$9,529,325



Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation

The Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation is your local, accountable, registered environmental charity dedicated to supporting on-the-ground conservation projects right here in the Rideau River valley. Thanks to your help, the Foundation surpassed its fundraising goal in 2017! We sincerely appreciate your continuing confidence in our conservation programs. It is a pleasure to acknowledge and thank the many hundreds of generous and community-minded people who made a gift to conservation in 2017 and look to "give where you live."

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 2017. We look forward to continued success in 2018.

Jason W.M. Kelly, Chair
Michael Poliwoda, Executive Director



2017 RVCF Board of Directors

- Bryan Baker
 - Charles Billington
 - Mary A. Bryden, Vice Chair
 - Leann Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer
 - Andrew Harkness
 - Jason W. M. Kelly, Chair
 - Anne Simmering
 - R.E. Smith
 - Richmond Wilson
 - Kathy Thomas
-
- Dan Cooper — Executive Director (January to September 2017)
 - Michael Poliwoda, Executive Director (September 2017 to present)

2017 Highlights:

- Achieved accreditation from Imagine Canada's Standards Program — providing public confidence in the RVCF who has demonstrated excellence in board governance, financial accountability and transparency, ethical fundraising, staff management and volunteer involvement
- Remained a proud and practicing member of both the Ontario and Canada Land Trust Alliances
- Celebrated the improvements to the Chapman Mills Conservation Area thanks to funding from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, through the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program, and donations from Movati Athletic Group, RVCA and RVCF
- Worked with Canon Canada volunteers who donated time and money to complete improvements at Baxter Conservation Area
- Welcomed Carleton Refrigeration, Heating and Air Conditioning as our newest corporate citizen that has made their local operation "carbon neutral" in 2017 through tree planting
- Partnered with the Remembrance Park Organizing Committee, the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 314 Manotick and the City of Ottawa to ensure accessibility at Manotick's Remembrance Park with the help of special funding through the Rick Hansen Foundation's Access4All Program
- Planted another 39,900 trees as part of LiVE 88.5 FM's effort to offset carbon emissions. Over the past 7 years, 20 hectares (50 acres) of forest have been planted by the LiVE 88.5 team
- Enjoyed the continued confidence of several land development companies who use the Foundation's Species at Risk Compensation Program services to compensate for unavoidable loss of butternut, barn swallow habitat or bobolink habitat during their business activities. We are currently managing 45 projects
- Acknowledged the continuing support of over 210 local businesses who are recognized on our famous "Partners in Conservation" wall in our Manotick office
- Accepted a new land donation on the Rideau Rover north of Kemptonville
- Accepted Mattamy Homes' major donation to the RVCA's Environmental Land Fund. Mattamy (who recently acquired Monarch Homes) is upholding Monarch's long and generous history by donating to the Environmental Land Fund that helps 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

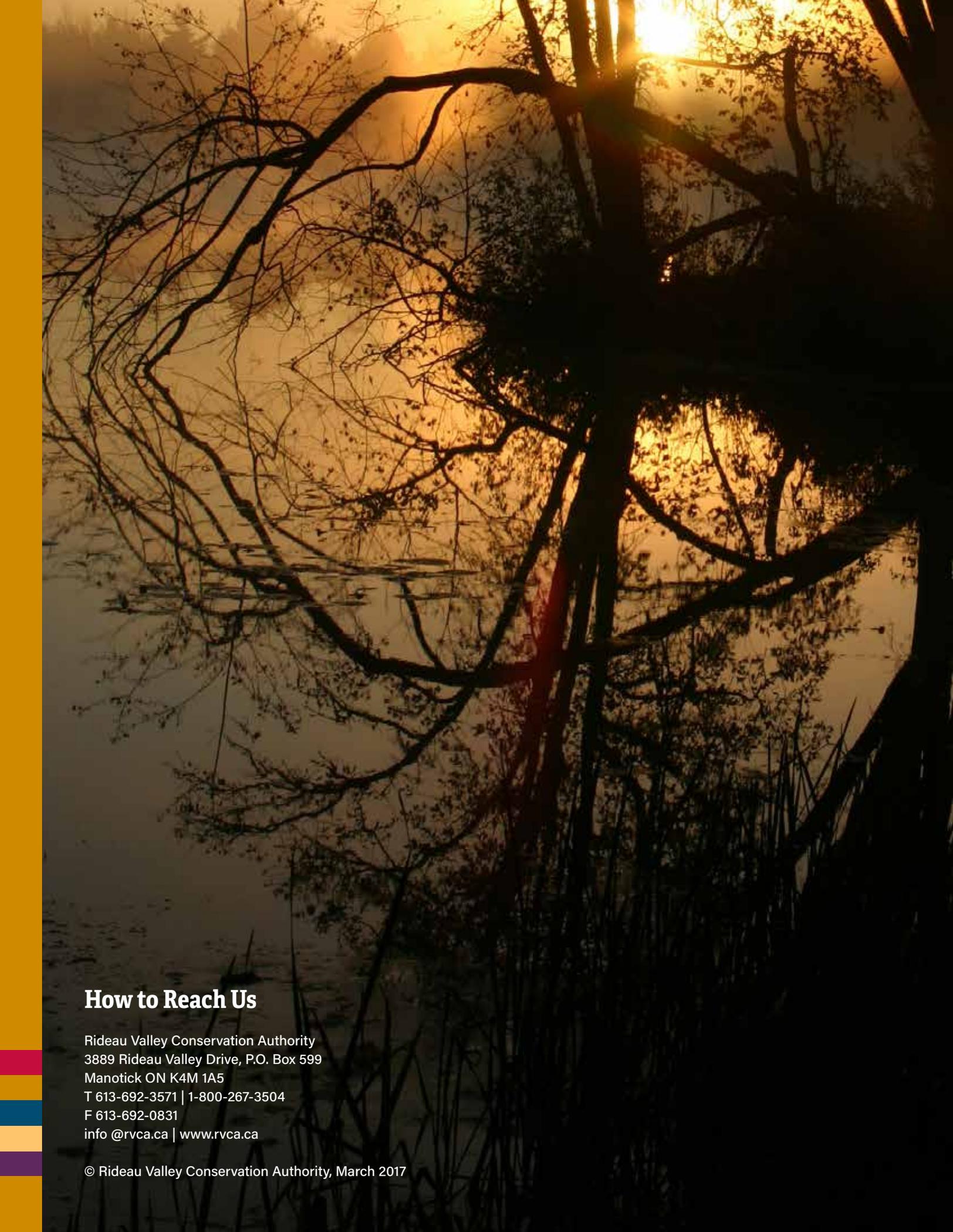
We would be delighted to talk to you about a gift to conservation whether of property, funds or in-kind services. Please call or write for confidential advice and opportunities. We can match your gift objectives with some very meaningful and long lasting conservation projects that all will enjoy.

Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation

Box 988, 3889 Rideau Valley Drive, Manotick ON K4M 1A5
Phone: 613-692-6823 Email: info@rvcf.ca Website: 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.



How to Reach Us

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