

Media Release



Building Bridges: Annual Report highlights year of collaboration, connection

RIDEAU VALLEY, June 3, 2024 – In many ways, 2023 was the Year of the Bridge for the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

In its recently released annual report, it's clear that 2023 was an extremely busy and productive year for all departments as they built bridges both real and figurative across the watershed.

In the most literal sense, staff completed the construction of two much-needed accessible pedestrian bridges at Baxter Conservation Area and Chapman Mills Conservation Areas, which will benefit the community for decades to come.

But staff also spent time connecting with valued partners, expanding their knowledge of the watershed and ensuring the RVCA's services remain relevant, valuable and accessible to everyone who calls the Rideau Valley home.



Throughout 2023, RVCA staff:

- Welcomed more than **8,100** students to outdoor education programs at Baxter and Foley Mountain conservation areas;
- Planted **214,030** trees in partnership with private landowners, with **\$484,000** in external grant support;
- Funded **211** clean water projects on rural and farm properties, providing **\$642,935** in landowner grants;

- Naturalized **1,719** metres of shoreline with more than **9,300** native plants, including more than 1,000 planted at Last Duel Park in Perth;
- Sampled **39** lakes and **119** stream sites for surface water quality;
- Surveyed **361** stream sections to assess aquatic habitat conditions;
- Completed a once-in-a-decade Watershed Conditions Report to bridge the gap between data collection and scientific analysis;
- Began data collection for new flood mapping on several upper watershed lakes and initiated the development of a new hydrologic model of the watershed;
- Accepted **199** hectares of conservation land donations from local landowners;
- Processed **319** Section 28 permit applications (with 98% approved or on hold), issuing decisions for all but 2 within provincial timelines;
- Reviewed **1,952** planning applications, providing natural hazard comments to municipalities;
- Processed **944** septic permit applications (usually within half the provincial timeline) and re-inspected **651** septic systems around lakes.

“I am so proud of our staff as they continue to provide quality conservation services to our watershed municipalities, residents and partners,” said RVCA General Manager Sommer Casgrain-Robertson. “We are committed to bringing value and expertise to all of our partners, and 2023 was a great example of that.”

To read the full report online visit www.rvca.ca or contact the front desk at 613-692-3571 to request a hard copy.

RVCA is one of Ontario’s 36 Conservation Authorities responsible for furthering the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in the watershed. Through the provincial *Conservation Authorities Act*, the RVCA is responsible for protecting people and property from natural hazards like flooding and erosion and managing natural resources within the Rideau Valley.

Learn more at www.rvca.ca.

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