

REAL

*REAL people taking REAL action
to protect our environment*

ANNUAL REPORT
Feb 1, 2013 - Jan 31, 2014

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

YEAR IN REVIEW

REAL has had another exceptionally busy year as we continued to take environmental action in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville. This annual report highlights some of our major projects, but every activity listed is important to what we want to accomplish. That could be encouraging individual actions, supporting community actions, working with our municipalities, increasing public awareness or building our own capacity as an organization.

This will be the year we remember having several people express interest in joining our board at once! We feel very fortunate that Margot Allen and Shawn Merri-man have joined our board. Our local foods dinner and murder mystery evening was a lot of fun and a successful fundraiser. We were pleased that the REAL Deal has become the site of an electronics recycling depot, and that we went “back to our roots” to promote home composting once again. Sue Brandum and Shawn Merri-man made great progress presenting to area municipalities on how REAL serves their residents.

REAL appreciates the support of our members, who are also at times also volunteers, donors, advisors and our moral support. We always have more ideas for environmental projects than we have time to take action. With your help we could do even more. Make this the year that you make a greater commitment to REAL, and participate in whatever capacity you can. And please come help us celebrate our 25th anniversary in 2014!

Barb Hicks
Interim President

Banner photo courtesy of Simon Lunn.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING DEPOT

The REAL Deal Reuse Store is now an approved electronics waste collection site. Residents can bring their used televisions, computers, computer peripherals, stereo components, cell phones and other electronic appliances to the depot during store hours, free of charge. The items are collected in an outdoor waste bin and hauled away for proper recycling under the Ontario Electronic Stewardship (OES) program. Besides offering a valuable service to this community, collecting e-waste will generate a small amount of revenue for REAL.



2013 Activities

☆ LOCAL FOODS DINNER BECOMES OUR NUMBER 1 FUNDRAISER

REAL repeated two tried and true fundraisers in 2013. The “Donate a Toonie” customer ask at Andress’ Independent Grocers during June’s Environment Week raised \$693. And a bottle drive at The Beer Store, Smiths Falls, one August weekend raised \$475. A Local Foods Harvest Dinner and Murder Mystery Evening at the Smiths Falls Curling and Squash Club in October was well-received by the community. The dinner was catered by Jo Edwards and featured a tantalizing range of foods produced close to home, and the actors from the Smiths Falls Community Theatre group entertained us before and during dinner with an interactive whodunit. We were pleased that past supporters of the Christmas concert continued their support of this event, bringing in a total of \$5000 for local environmental projects. Besides generating much needed funds, these fundraisers give REAL a chance to increase its profile in the community



☆ REAL DEAL CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS AT WILLIAM STREET



The REAL Deal Reuse Store reached its five year anniversary in June, and is a popular destination for residents and tourists alike. The store is successfully generating revenue for REAL, reducing the volume of good usable materials going to landfill, and providing work skills training for many volunteers. Regular features and promotions all contribute to its success. This year some pilot tear out projects tested the viability of REAL removing architectural features from buildings for resale in the store. Major changes have happened in the yard with the addition of bins for scrap materials and for scrap metal, which will keep things neater. Day to day operations are handled by Tracy Thomson, the Store Manager, Don Harvey, our Store Assistant,

and a crew of volunteers. Susan Brandum, the store’s Executive Director, oversees strategic operations. A group of volunteer consultants from the Toronto-based non-profit, Endeavour, is working with REAL to determine the best direction for future development of the REAL Deal.

☆ OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

REAL takes advantage of the many local opportunities to promote REAL and promote eco-friendly practices. This year we participated in the Friends of the Library’s Annual Trivia Challenge, the fall Volunteer Fair, and the Smiths Falls Home and Living Show. In the surrounding region, we attended the North Grenville Sustainability Fair, the Merrickville Go Green Fair and the Rideau Ferry Regatta . Our first participation in Doors Open Smiths Falls, brought 50 people to tour the REAL Deal Store and Environment Centre. Members participated in the newly formed Lanark County Climate Action Network, and attended information sessions on the TransCanada Energy East Pipeline proposal. Staff participated in a golf tournament to network about residential well and energy possibilities, and REAL hosted three musicians who cycled into town for a “Tune your Ride” show.



☆ COMPOSTING DEMONSTRATION SITE TO BE FEATURED ON PROPERTY



REAL took advantage of a generous private donation to take another look at promoting home composting. Two workshops, led by Cheryl Nash, were offered at the REAL Deal. Many of the participants had already tried composting but were interested in solutions for some of the difficulties they had experienced. A new composting information sheet was created for distribution. Plans were laid for a compost demonstration site to show off the various styles of backyard composters. The composters will be next to the Community Garden and protected from excessive sun and drying by a cottage-style shelter made of used materials. The building permit was secured, and the cedar rail fence moved closer to William Street, which precipitated our fifth cedar rail fence building workshop. Watch for the demonstration site to take shape in the Spring of 2014 .

☆ HUMAN RESOURCES ARE THE HEART OF REAL

A range of enthusiastic and dedicated people keep REAL moving in the right direction.

Our Staff. We are fortunate to have such consistency in our five part time staff. Susan Brandum is our Environmental Projects Manager and Executive Director of the REAL Deal, as well as an active volunteer. Tracey Thomson manages the REAL Deal Store, and is assisted by Don Harvey. Al Leonard, Energy Auditor and Angela Northfield, Well Aware Guide, are contracted staff. REAL is pleased to be able to contribute to the local economy by providing employment.



Our Board. REAL's activities are overseen by a seven person volunteer board. We welcomed to the board this year Shawn Merriman and Margot Allen. Returning Board members are Barb Hicks, Peter Au, Karen Schecter, and Donna McKenna. Larry Manson, our President, passed away in January 2014. There is one vacancy for someone well-connected with the community who shares our interest in environmental issues.

Our Volunteers. Several long time REAL Deal volunteers, Ed Crawford and David Grant moved on this year. Julia Comerford was our summer student at the REAL Deal. The store team includes Eddie Locket, "small's vols" Jon Fisk, Brenda King, Una Pugh and Barb Hicks, and cashiers Bonita Lucas and Heather Warren. Other volunteers help us in a multitude of ways from grass cutting, to postering, to photo taking and beyond, and we sincerely value everyone's contributions.

Milestones. It was a very sad year as several REAL supporters passed away. Pat Foulkes, Dan Davidson, Tom Graham, Larry Manson and Carolyn Fraser were all REAL volunteers and members. The Evergreen Committee lost Alec Banford and Jack Rabb. We appreciate their contributions, are grateful for the time they shared with us, and will do our best to continue the environmental work they endorsed.

Major Funders, Donors & Partners



THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION TRILLIUM DE L'ONTARIO

RECURRENT ENERGY



Mississippi Mills

Green Communities CANADA



North Grenville

ecoPerth

Other 2013 Achievements

Pitch In Smiths Falls. Another successful campaign had Smiths Falls residents cleaning up litter across town, and attracted some new participants.

Municipal Support. Presentations have been made to five area municipalities with a further four planned to update councillors and staff on how REAL can help their residents, and to seek financial support.

Promoting Biking. Park 'n Pedal, a bike and car parking arrangement at the REAL Deal, was launched, but the fencing for the secure enclosure will be delayed until spring 2014. REAL arranged a meeting with Don Palmer of Right Bike to learn about his Ottawa social enterprise bike share program

Home Energy. Energy audits continued to be offered homeowners and small commercial or municipal buildings to demonstrate ways to save energy. REAL's promotion resulted in 71 applicants to the Ontario Power Authority Energy Home Assistance program, which provides free home energy upgrades.

Evergreen Avenue. An interpretive panel was designed to describe the memorial path and the native species planted at Victoria Park. A birch tree was planted in memory of REAL supporter, Pat Foulkes, and the existing plantings were maintained.

Community Garden. Gardeners had a successful fourth season tending their plots on the REAL Deal site, and the Stone Soup Sharing Plot was enjoyed by the community. Many individuals donated seedlings to the project, some of which were sold in the store.

Rideau Mississippi Take it Back (TIB). Our directory of area organizations that accept materials for recycling, supported by four municipalities, continues to be a valued source of waste reduction opportunities.

Environment Centre. Discussions continued with Parks Canada and funders for our one-stop centre to promote and demonstrate eco-friendly living. Arrangements completed for Park 'n Pedal and compost demonstration sites additions in Spring 2014.

Communication. REAL produced five newsletters, operated our website, maintained three Facebook pages, and used local newspapers and radio to promote REAL.

Solar Farm Water Sampling. REAL is completing its contracts with Recurrent and The Township of Drummond North Elmsley to do baseline well water sampling for homeowners adjacent to solar farms, prior to and following the solar installation.



The Environment of Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Needs Your Help

As a non-profit, charitable, volunteer-run organization, a significant portion of REAL's revenue comes as contributions from our community. REAL is a locally based, home-grown organization that addresses the specific environmental needs of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville and its residents. REAL gratefully accept financial donations of any size from individuals, groups and businesses to support its ongoing work. If the quality of our natural systems is important to you, please consider the environmental future of your community with a tax-deductible donation to REAL, or by including REAL in your estate planning.



**RIDEAU
ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE**

Box 1061
Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
(613) 283-9500

info@REALaction.ca
www.REALaction.ca

85 William St. W.
Smiths Falls ON
(613) 283-7999

