

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

FEBRUARY 2012

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Smiths Falls Commends Residents on Adaptation to Two-Bin Recycling



How is the expanded Smiths Falls recycling program going now it's been in operation a year? January 2011 marked the start of the two-bin, alternate week, recycling pickup program. Residents were provided with both gold and blue boxes: blue for paper products and gold for containers (including glass, metal, and plastic) and new, additional materials were accepted.

Vanessa Bernicky, Engineering Technologist with the Town, reports that the town was very pleased with how quickly the residents adapted to the new program. People were on board quickly, with only the occasional mix up of yellow and blue weeks. Recycling tonnage as a percentage of total waste has increased from 24% to 29%. Some additional education and promotion is needed to ensure residents are recycling all the items they can, avoiding those they can't, and getting them in the right boxes. It is best to follow the Smiths Falls guidelines provided, and not make assumptions based on what is happening in other municipalities. Shoppers could also make more of an effort to purchase products or packaging that are recyclable. With these improvements, the town hopes that recycling tonnage will reach 35% of the total waste tonnage.

But there is still potential to reduce total waste. Smiths Falls residents can take electronics to a local recycling depot, consult the Smiths Falls Recyclopeda (REAL's online Take it Back directory), consult dowhatyoucan.ca, use the Carleton Place Household Hazardous Waste depot and donate usable items to area charities like the REAL Deal Reuse Store. Smiths Falls garbage collection is down by 200 tonnes over 2011, so people are certainly beginning to get the message.

Residents coming to Smiths Falls from larger centres often ask where are their green bins and what to do with Styrofoam. Very few municipalities have found a cost effective way to deal with Styrofoam (see February 2011 Update). The Town is still exploring possibilities for an organic collection system. Staff will also be looking to expand recycling into more public facilities.

You can find the 2012 Waste Management Guide on the Town's website. Navigate to "Living Here", "Garbage and Recycling", and look for the guide in the download section on the right.



Municipal Use of Road Salt

Over two million tonnes of road salts are used in Ontario each year to keep our roads free from snow and ice and safe for travel. But the salt causes corrosion of vehicles, damage to concrete bridges, sidewalks and parking garages, damage to the environment, and annoying salt stains on clothing and carpeting.

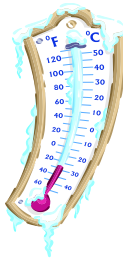


A five year study by Environment Canada released in 2000 determined that road salts were toxic to the environment. The salts damage vegetation, soil organisms and wildlife, and make their way into our waterways where it affects vegetation and animal life not adapted to saline conditions. Salts are even making their way into some municipal water supplies and private wells (including outside Brockville). It is estimated that 30 to 45 percent of all chlorides present in the Great Lakes are a result of winter road salts application.

In 2001, Environment Canada recommended that road salt be added to a list of toxic substances under the Environmental Protection Act, but due to lobbying by the salt and transportation industries, that didn't happen. However, a Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts was released in April 2004 as a result.

A loophole in the province's Environmental Protection Act of 1972 actually exempts substances used by road authorities who are maintaining road safety. But by contrast, the Ontario Water Resources Act does not exempt road salt from regulation. In January 2006 the Riversides Stewardship Alliance and what is now EcoJustice made a submission under Ontario's Environmental Bill of rights for a review of the loophole but the Ministry of the Environment turned them down, saying adequate measures were in place.

Salt is used mainly because it is cheap. "Road salts" generally refers to the four common chloride salts: sodium chloride (NaCl), calcium chloride (CaCl), magnesium chloride (MgCl) and potassium chloride (KCl), along with an anti-clumping agent, ferrocyanide salt. However, sodium chloride is by far the most common. Other de-icing alternatives are still very costly. Sand does not help to melt ice, but may be used to increase traction. It may be used at low temperatures when salt is not effective, on rural roads or snowpacked roads, or in cases where traction is needed immediately such as on hills, curves, bridges or intersections.



Many road authorities still use road salt exclusively. Ottawa spreads about 175,000 tonnes of road salt each winter, the most of any municipality in Canada. Provincially, an acetate solution with a small amount of a natural anti-corrosion agent is used on a few bridges and tunnels that are particularly susceptible to salt damage. Popular as salt is, it does not work well at temperatures lower than minus 15 degrees C. In some cases, agricultural by-products of corn, sugar beet and alcohol processing are being mixed with the salt brine. This increases salt's effectiveness, and less salt can be used over the same area. Grey County and Toronto are two municipalities that use a sugar-beet derivative called Fusion in severely cold weather. Grey County first tested a beer distillation by-product, but found it attracted deer and wild turkey to the roads, and road kill rates increased. The Ottawa Citizen reported that the city had declined to do a formal trial of a salt alternative marketed by a Dunrobin firm, EcoTraction. Their product, a natural volcanic mineral, is very expensive for a product that is more of an abrasive than an ice melter, and one wonders about the carbon footprint of transporting it to Eastern Ontario.

The 2004 voluntary salt management program applies to road authorities using more than 500 tonnes/yr of road salts or applying salts near vulnerable ecosystems. It is being used by 200 municipalities which together represent 95% of Ontario's population. The program focuses on three areas of best management practices (BMP)s: storage, application and snow disposal. Covered salt storage facilities can eliminate salt runoff. Application techniques that minimize the salt use



Municipal Use of Road Salt (Cont'd)

include: calibrated spreaders, better calculations through road weather information systems, infrared thermometers and road surface friction sensors. An important advance has been the pre-wetting of salt so the salt sticks to surfaces better and melts ice quicker. Spreading salt prior to a storm can actually prevent ice from forming. Snow disposal sites should be sited away from environmentally sensitive areas, and the runoff should be contained and treated for salt, oil, grease and heavy metals.

The “Low Salt Diet for Ontario’s Roads and Rivers Report” points out that, in addition to these Best

Management Practices, there are other approaches that could be taken. The public demands bare pavement, but is this really necessary? There has been a trend towards all-season radial tires and away from snow tires. If all cars had to use snow tires, and if lower winter speed limits were set and enforced, perhaps Ontario’s reliance on road salts could be reduced. In fact, the province of Quebec now requires all taxi and passenger vehicles to use snow tires between December 15 and March 15. Could Ontario be next?

For more information, the [Riversides Road Salt Report](#) Summary is very comprehensive.

De-Icing at Your Home

Here are some suggestions for homeowners and small organizations who need to de-ice surfaces:



1. Determine if you really need to melt ice, or if you simply need better traction.
2. Keep in mind that salt causes cement and paving stone to deteriorate. It should be kept ten meters away from plants that are sensitive to salt such as red and sugar maples, white pine, dogwood, spirea, and Kentucky bluegrass.
3. To improve traction, you can use sand, wood ashes or kitty litter. Wood ashes condense heavy metals and should not be used near or on food producing plants or trees.
4. Salt works best at temperatures between 0 and -10 degrees C. Outside those temperatures, don’t bother with salt.
5. To use salt, shovel snow early and often. Salt works best on a thin layer of ice. Apply salt early and sparingly. Give it time to work, then shovel up the ice.
6. Calcium chloride is better than sodium chloride since you use less, and it can be used at somewhat lower temperatures. Use about one handful of calcium chloride for three square meters of ice or one handful of sodium chloride per one square meter of ice.
7. Urea is not recommended. While it is a fertilizer, it will run off into water courses, contributing to nitrogen loading and weed growth in our waterways.

Well Water Testing Made Easier

If you get your water from a well, you are responsible for testing it regularly. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is making it easier for residents to have their water tested with two additional sites for the pick-up and drop-off of sampling bottles.

Samples can now be dropped off at the Country Roads Community Health

Centre in Portland and at The Office at 11 Wilson St. E., Perth, Monday through Thursday. Existing drop off points include the Mississippi Mills Township office and the Health Unit office locations in Brockville, Smiths Falls, Kemptville and Gananoque. Hours at each location and complete instructions are available online at http://www.healthunit.org/water/test/test_water.htm.



Environmental Titles at the Smiths Falls Public Library

by Karen Schecter

Winter can be a great time to catch up on your reading. Here are just a few interesting selections available at the Smiths Falls Public Library. You can also access their [catalogue online](#).



Duke, Deana. The non-toxic avenger: what you don't know can hurt. Gabriola, B.C.: New Society Publishers, c2011. After concluding that the autism and cancer affecting her family were likely the result of environmental toxins, blogger Deanna Duke dramatically reduced her family's chemical exposure. Discusses day-to-day chemical exposure, health implications for your health, and solutions.

Carol Baroudi ... [et al.]. Green IT for dummies. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, c2009. A guide for businesses or organizations exploring ways to save energy and reduce environmental waste. Packed with cost-saving ways to make your company a green technology leader and case studies from other organizations.

Chiras, Daniel D. The homeowner's guide to renewable energy: achieving energy independence through solar, wind, biomass and hydropower. Gabriola, B.C. : New Society, c2011. This new edition describes the most practical and affordable methods for home energy efficiency improvements and examines the latest clean and affordable technological advances for each residential renewable energy alternative.

Nikiforuk, Andrew. Empire of the beetle: how human folly and a tiny bug are killing North America's great forests. Vancouver: Greystone Books: c2011. Drawing on first-hand accounts from entomologists, foresters, and rural residents, award-winning journalist Andrew Nikiforuk investigates this unprecedented beetle plague, its startling implications, and the lessons which we can learn from this outbreak.

Reed, Sue. Energy-wise landscape design: a new approach for your home and garden. Illustrations by Kate Dana. Gabriola, B.C.: New Society Publishers, c2010. Illustrated guide combines general guidelines with tips, techniques, and actions for conserving energy with our landscapes. Readers will learn how to lower a home's heating and cooling costs and choose landscape products and materials with lower embedded energy costs.

Harley, Bruce, Cut your energy bills now: 150 smart ways to save money and make your home more comfortable and green. Newtown, CT: Taunton, c2008. Offers eye-opening incentives and easily achievable tips for cutting energy costs by up to 20% -- and even 40% in some cases.

ecoENERGY Registration closed (and new deadline for post-retrofit evaluations)

The federal government has announced that the ecoENERGY Retrofit - Homes program has reached its goal of 250,000 registered homeowners and is now closed to new registrations.

"The deadline to obtain the post-retrofit evaluation is now June 30, 2012. All upgrades must still be completed by March 31, 2012 to be eligible. Only upgrades purchased and installed between the program eligibility dates of June 6, 2011 to March 31, 2012, will be considered for a grant and must be validated with receipts dated between those dates. "



According to the website, registration is also closed for returning participants. People who have already registered are still eligible for the program as long as they have their first audit and work completed by March 31. They can schedule the 2nd audit up to June 30, but are strongly advised to schedule it earlier.

For more information go to: <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/personal/retrofit/17864>. If you are a client of REAL's and have questions, please call Sue at 613-283-9500.

REAL Deal Happenings

The REAL Deal continues to grow and has become a destination point for people throughout the region. Much of course due to our very capable staff: Tracy, Don and Sue, and a dedicated team of volunteers, but partly due to our amazing stash of Christmas items. The items were deep discounted immediately after Christmas, although a string of bad weather meant not as much sold off as we had hoped. Some of the items were demoted to “free” and found happy homes that way. Our collection of Christmas paraphernalia to sell in 2012 has already begun, as we had several donations of Christmas items after Christmas.

We had a little gift exchange amongst volunteers just before Christmas, where everyone was challenged to select a gift costing no more than \$5 from the REAL Deal store. Many enjoyed the yummy refreshments at our annual Staff/Volunteer/Customers Appreciation Day Friday, December 23, and many good naturedly took home a free Christmas mug. (Make sure you drop by next year!) An earlier decision to remain open over the Christmas season was reversed, so the staff and volunteers enjoyed a well-deserved break from December 25 to January 4th. Thankfully, the store did not experience many “drop and run” donations outside the store those weeks. Sue Brandum, Executive Director of the REAL Deal, filled in as Store Manager January 5-6-7 and 12-13-14 while Tracy was on vacation.

Donations are typically slower at this time of year, but we have received some items of exceptional quality, and had set aside many boxes before Christmas when there was less space available. This also gives us more time to do some cleaning and rearranging.

A hearty thank you to all of our regular donors for the goods we receive throughout the year, with a special thank you to Lanark Animal Welfare Society (LAWS) and Chris Colton for two especially large donations of quality goods during the 2011 calendar year. We appreciate you thinking of the REAL Deal Reuse Store!

December marked a major purchase for the REAL Deal in the form of a fifty-three foot storage trailer from Wills Transfer. For our purposes the trailer will remain stationary behind the store, but it has wheels and can be moved if the need arises. A platform was constructed under the direction of handyman volunteer Bernie Laframboise, which along with a purchased ramp, will ease loading and unloading. Larger construction items or furniture will be safe in the trailer from the elements, and staff will be better able to manage inventory. Customers are not to enter the trailer, however.

January’s “disaster of the month” was a major electrical power inconsistency that affected all things electrical, including the operation of our propane furnace, our phones, and the cash register in addition to lights, and left us with no baseboard heat in the two front offices. Hydro determined there was a fault in the underground electrical line just as it entered the building. Many thanks to the electricians, furnace technicians, town staff and hydro who kept at the problem until it was solved. A full repair will have to wait until spring when the line can be dug up and replaced. (And we thought January’s disaster would be a flood!)

We say “goodbye” to receiving volunteer Rob Watts, and wish him success in an HVAC program at Algonquin College. And we welcome back volunteer Barb Ellis.

Looking ahead to February and March, watch for another edition of our three day Second Chance Art Bazaar, and deep discounts on doors and windows. Every day, watch for 30% and 50% discounts on special items.



Membership Renewal and Donations

Individual and family members should soon be receiving a membership renewal request via Canada Post. Memberships run for a calendar year. The cost is \$15 for individuals, \$20 for a family, and \$5 for students. If you represent a school or non-profit organization, please consult us for rates. Membership entitles you to five issues of the REAL Update per year (printed or via e-mail), notices of upcoming events, and gives you the right to vote at membership meetings – most commonly our Annual General Meeting in June. New members are always welcome. Please use the form on the

back of the printed newsletter, or print one from our website.

Membership Reminder

Many members choose to make a donation to REAL at the time of their membership renewal. REAL sincerely appreciates any-sized contribution to our work, and are able to issue charitable receipts for income tax purposes. If you prefer to donate by credit card, you can use the online service, CanadaHelps.org to do so, and direct your donation to a particular project. You will be issued a receipt by e-mail immediately.

Christmas Concert a Hit - Let's Plan the Next One!



Two hundred area residents thoroughly enjoyed the Prelude to Christmas concert performed by the Central Band of the Canadian Forces on December 7th. Major Dave Shaw led the band through a lively collection of traditional and Christmas favourites, and the audience enjoyed the vocalists, soloists, bagpiper and slide shows. Adding to the entertainment of the evening was the live auction by John Joynt of four Disney Live! tickets courtesy of the EMC and a car care package courtesy of Hyundai. A captivating photo image of the northern lights over the Smiths Falls Bascule Bridge by Simon Lunn was the first prize in the raffle, with second prize, a gift certificate for a house wine kit from the Rideau

Winery, Smiths Falls. Everyone in attendance was eligible for door prizes. REAL was grateful for the support of 33 patrons, sponsors and 'Stars' who help make this 13th annual benefit concert such a success. (A list of sponsors is available on our website.) A big thank you for the enthusiastic concert-goers who make the event worthwhile. We raised \$4,000 for REAL's environmental programs!

Pulling these events together takes hours of preparation. A big thank you to Betty Davis for so ably coordinating the effort, and to the rest of the concert committee: Peter Au, Cathryn Davidson, Ken Graham, Barb Hicks, John Joynt and Larry Manson. Additional volunteers

helped out on concert day: Daisy Au, Sue Brandum, Carolyn Fraser, Don Harvey, Mary Joynt, Brenda King, Bonita Lucas, Donna McKenna, Una Pugh and Karen Schecter.

REAL would like to build on the success of the evening, possibly with a silent auction, and would like to discuss possibilities. If you would like to be involved in next year's concert preparations, we'd love to hear from you. We will be having a meeting in late February or March to lay the groundwork. **Please contact Betty Davis at 283-6001 or bdavis@netrover.ca**

In REAL Life***Please - We don't accept or sell clothing***

Just a reminder that we do not accept clothing at the REAL Deal. This includes shoes, boots, purses or other accessories like hats and mitts. There are many organizations that welcome these donations and resell them to support their causes. Here are some suggestions:

- In Smiths Falls: Salvation Army Thrift Store at 5 William St. W., or Jewel's, a project of Big Brothers Big Sisters, at 18 William St. E.
- In Perth: Salvation Army Thrift Store at 53 Foster St., or Jewel's at 37B Foster St.
- In Carleton Place, try the As Good as New Store, run in support of Lanark County Interval House, 33 Bridge Street.
- In Almonte, use the Hub, at 118 Mill St.



If the REAL Deal receives these items we turn them over to the Thrift Store or Jewels in Smiths Falls. So please just save our staff a step and take them directly there!

Don't assume a torn or stained fabric item is of no use at all. For example, the Smiths Falls Salvation Amy Thrift Store makes and sells rags from used fabric, and also earns cash selling any remnants by weight to a salvage company.



Pitch In Smiths Falls, a community wide cleanup project, will be happening April 21 to May 6, 2012. Contact Brenda King if you would like to participate or be on the organizing team: bking16@sympatico.ca or (613) 283-4416.



Thanks to Larry Manson, Karen Schecter, Len Johnston and Barb Hicks for representing REAL at the Salvation Army Christmas Kettle at the Smiths Falls Canadian Tire, Saturday, December 17th.



Three plots are available for the 2012 gardening season at the REAL Community Garden on the REAL Deal site. If you are interested, please get in touch by March 1. Contact Mona Wynn, Community Health Promoter at (613) 283-1952 x136 or mwynn@RideauCHS.ca.

See what some other communities have done to become more sustainable:

<http://www>

- Energy. See slides of a German Village that produces 321% more energy than it needs. <http://inhabitat.com/german-village-produces-321-more-energy-than-it-needs/wildpoldsried-germany/?extend=1>
- Food. See how a UK community gardens everywhere! <http://wake-up-world.com/2011/12/14/a-deliciously-resourceful-town-aims-for-total-food-self-sufficiency-within-7-years/>
- Transportation. Hoboken, New Jersey has made city-wide changes to improve vehicular and active transportation options. <http://www.hobokennj.org/departments/transportation-parking/> .

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**Environmental
Projects Manager**
Sue Brandum
613-267-2257
sbrandum@cogeco.ca

**REAL Deal Store &
Environment Centre**

85 William St. W.,
Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
613-283-7999

Store open Thurs, Fri, Sat
10am—4pm

Well Aware, ecoENERGY
or other programs
Phone: 613-283-9500



Slow Food Lanark County and REAL

present

More About Meat

A Teach and Taste Event

Sunday, February 5th

Smiths Falls Community Health Centre Kitchen
2 Gould St (old high school) Smiths Falls

featuring

Chef Tibrata Gillies

formerly of Pan Chanco, Kingston

Chef Tibrata, with her culinary arts students at St. Lawrence College, prepare and describe a sampling of dishes that feature locally-raised grass-fed beef, goat, and more

4 pm: presentation

potluck supper to follow – taste the meat dishes prepared in the afternoon! In the culture of Slow Food, we invite guests to bring a potluck dish, preferably made with local ingredients. Whether you bring a dish or not, please come and enjoy the tasting and learning.

\$5 per person or \$15 per family covers the cost of the meat

Please RSVP to info@REALaction.ca

**Make a
REAL
Difference**

Please return this form to:
REAL
Box 1061
Smiths Falls, ON
K7A 5A5

Or bring to
The REAL Deal

Make a Donation

I would like to make a donation of

\$ _____

A charitable receipt for income tax purposes will be issued. To donate by credit card, go to www.Canadahelps.org.

Volunteer

I want to help

Become a Member

I would like to become a member

- Individual membership \$15
- Family membership \$20
- Student membership \$5
- Corporate membership \$50

Contact Information

Name

Street/RR Address

Town, Province

Postal Code

Home Phone

Work Phone

Best time to reach me

Email address