

REAL Update



For members and friends of the Rideau Environmental Action League

June 2004



less trash and dog poop than other years. Unusual finds included a Lazy-boy chair in the river, a child's bean bag chair, and a purse that was stolen eight years ago.

The Committee presented these findings and recommendations at a Smiths Falls Town Council meeting May 17. At the suggestion of many of the volunteers, we are considering organizing a smaller scale cleanup in the fall. A big thank you

to our major sponsors: Scotiabank, which made a financial contribution to the event; and Tim Hortons for advertising, cookie coupons, reusable coffee mugs and supplies. Other businesses contributed as well: Canadian Tire,

(continued inside)

Another Successful Pitch-In

Our third annual community wide Pitch-In Smiths Falls was a success. The event is clearly gaining momentum, partly due to cleanup efforts in neighbouring communities. REAL's Waste Reduction Committee was particularly pleased with the large turnout of individuals who came forward to help out. Over 300 bags of garbage and numerous large items were collected by 586 participants. This included the involvement of 16 community groups. Volunteers enjoyed a lunch on the Saturday served up by the Trinity United Church Women and a slide show of their work, thanks to REAL member, Stephen Haggart.

From reports received there are still far too many plastic bags and fast food garbage out there, and too many incidents of dumping of garbage and other large items (mattresses, TV's, construction materials, carpet etc.) The good news is that some areas, for instance Lower Reach Park, had

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Giant Tiger, Garden Market, and Westons.

For all the groups and individuals who cleaned up, the volunteer garbage drivers, and everyone who contributed, our thanks for a job well done!



Band Concert a Resounding Success

Our 7th annual concert by the Central Band of the Canadian Forces held Wednesday, April 14 at SFDCI was an unqualified success. Concert goers filled the gymnasium and enjoyed a wide variety of selections by the band, soloists and singers. Radio celebrity Wayne Cavanaugh was the Master of Ceremonies. Ticket sales, along with patron and sponsor donations, grossed almost \$3400, for a net profit of \$3140. In addition, REAL collected \$115 for a tree planting fund. We are hoping to keep up this tradition with a concert during the 2005 Christmas season, maybe even in the auditorium of the new high school.

Our thanks to the hard-working committee:

Peter Au, Joyce Brennan, Elva Corless, Beth Graham, Bunny Haughton, Sue

Newport and Paul Smith, and volunteers: Daisy Au, Sue Brandum, Susan Corless, Stephen Haggart, and Barb Hicks, who made this happen!



REAL Strategy and Business Plan

Since its public forum last September, REAL has been fine-tuning its Strategic Plan. It has started to determine its priority programs and to increase its capacity to deliver them. We are investigating:

- Mechanisms to involve our volunteers and members in our work in meaningful ways.
- Methods to improve our fundraising activities and funding procurement of grants from agencies and foundations to increase financial resources to support our programs.
- Opportunities to raise REAL's profile.
- Streamline our operation.

We are working with the Town of Smiths Falls to increase collaboration on environmental stewardship issues and projects, and are developing a business plan. REAL is being assisted by RANA International Inc., on a volunteer basis. RANA is a change management company headquartered in Smiths Falls. It helps its clients change and develop their organizations and people to meet new challenges. A Certificate of Appreciation was presented to RANA in the April benefit concert to show our thanks.

Annual General Meeting June 22

REAL is shifting its AGM to better accommodate its planning cycle and fiscal year end.. This year's annual meeting has been set for Tuesday, June 22, 2004 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Heritage House Museum. This will begin with a BBQ and be followed by a presentation from the Green Communities Association. This is the national organization of some 40 green communities across Canada, of which REAL is a member. REAL members and volunteers are cordially invited. To help us in planning, please call 284-8338 to confirm your attendance.



Earth Day Family Festival

Our third Earth Day Family and Garden Festival went well on Saturday, May 15. We had decent but windy weather, which was a great improvement over the torrential rains we experienced the year before. There was good participation from members and the public for the events. Corey Goddard organized a children's program which the Smiths Falls and District Club for Youth delivered. One activity was making a pine cone bird feeder. The perennial plant sale and exchange was well received. More people were interested in buying than exchanging, but we had a good supply from a core of dedicated REAL gardeners. Thank you to Green Acres for donating extra perennials. Everyone enjoyed the bake sale and Tim Horton's coffee, and the BBQ run by the Lion's Club. Ron Labelle was the winner of the draw for the gardening gift basket. Information was available on composting, water conservation, natural landscaping, water barrels - you name it. Thanks to Kim McCann of the Health Unit for her informative presentation on the West Nile Virus.

The event raised about \$450. Additional possibilities to draw more people next year are music and farm animals. REAL would appreciate any of your suggestions and help next year!

Trillium Grant Awarded to Roundtable

The Rideau Roundtable has recently been awarded a Trillium Grant for its Partners' Forum Project. The main goals are a) to facilitate communication and cooperation among government agencies, environmental groups, community organizations and schools with an interest in the health of the Rideau River b) to identify common interests and community needs and c) to seek funding to deliver programs that meet these needs. The Forum will take place in early October.

Well Aware Visits On For Summer

LL Green will again be delivering Well Aware Guided Self Assessments this summer. This part of the Well Aware program has been extended and we're thrilled. It appears that people who have the visits are also thrilled and report that:



1. they now understand the water cycle on their own properties (and now know how to protect their drinking water)
2. they are very pleased that we are a third-party. Being an environmental organization, we are not directly affiliated with regulation. Therefore, the data we collect is confidential, it does not get reported to a regulatory agency. As well, the visits are free and voluntary.

If you would like to arrange a visit, to learn how to protect your water supply, contact LL Green at 283-3482 or 1-877-366-6656. To learn more about your well and the Well Aware program, go to www.wellaware.ca

The Well Aware program has been a huge success and we are awaiting news about new funding to continue this great pilot. Clearly it's necessary - our results show so far that only 12% of wells meet new standards.

Grants for Well Upgrades and Decommissioning

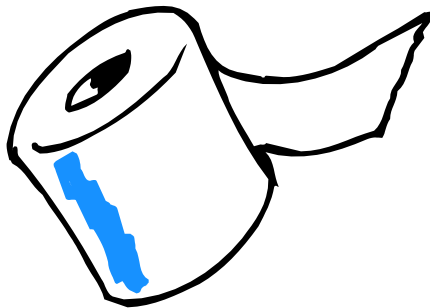
The Rideau Valley Clean Water Program, a project of the RVCA, is pleased to announce that it has new funding for this year to upgrade existing wells and decommission inactive wells in the Rideau watershed. Funding is available for upgrading for up to \$500 and 50% of total cost; for decommissioning for up to \$1,000 and 75% of total cost. To get more information, contact Martha Bradburn at 258-5425 or 1-800-267-3504 x 1136 or the Landowner Resource Centre at 692-3571 x 1128. The same program also has funds to address septic repair, waterfront erosion and a number of other water related projects. See www.rideauvalley.on.ca, and look under Programs & Services.

Shopper's Guide to Tissue Products

"If each household in Canada replaced 1 roll of toilet paper cut from ancient forests with 1 roll of recycled toilet paper, we could save 47,962 trees in a year," says Greenpeace Canada. They have created the Greenpeace Shopper's Guide to Ancient Forest Friendly Tissue Products, including toilet paper, facial tissue, paper towels and napkins, to guide consumers in their selections of these products. The avoid list has companies and brands of disposable tissue products that contain ancient and/or endangered forest fibres and/or whose products are bleached with chlorine.

Those on the green list have made a commitment to go ancient forest friendly and are in the process of maximizing the recycled content

of their products and introducing Forest Stewardship Council-certified fibres. Those on the yellow list may be ancient forest friendly, but it cannot be guaranteed. Take a look for yourself at <http://www.greenpeace.ca/tissue/>.



For the Seafood Lover in You

Here's a handy guide to seafoods that are endangered and should be avoided. The Audubon Living Oceans provides a Seafood Selector card you can download from its website, print and carry with you. If a fish is abundant, well-managed and the fishing methods have little effect on habitat or other creatures, it is placed in the green zone. Examples are: farmed mussels and clams, Alaska salmon and crawfish. In the red zone, are species with significant problems which should be avoided: swordfish, Atlantic cod, groupers, shrimp, Atlantic flounders and soles, shark, monkfish, farmed salmon, orange roughy, snappers, Chilean seabass (toothfish), and Atlantic halibut. And in between in the yellow caution zone are species for which there are concerns about the fishery methods, management, or the species status, including Pacific cod, canned tuna, swordfish and "Maine" lobster. Go to <http://www.audubon.org/campaign/lo/seafood/index.html> to print the card.



Mow Down Pollution

We've missed the "Mow Down Pollution" deadline, but the message still stands. "Mow Down Pollution" was a program run April 19 to May 2 at Home Depot locations across Canada. Consumers were offered a rebate on the purchase of a cleaner electric or push power mower, electric trimmer, or low emission gas mower. The oil and gas was then removed and the parts re-used or recycled.

Why is this necessary? The small engines in garden equipment produce between three and five percent of Canada's air pollution. A typical older 3.5 horsepower engine can emit the same amount of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) in an hour as a new car driven 550 km. And millions of gallons of fuel are spilled while outdoor power equipment is being filled.

An environmentally friendly option is the reel push mower, which emits no pollution and gives you some exercise. A number of manufacturers are producing electric or cordless rechargeable mowers, which require no gas or oil and generate less noise than

gas-powered mowers. If you have a larger rural lawn, there are newer gas mowers that generate up to 70% lower emissions than older models and lessen the environmental impact of using gas-powered mowers.



Let's hope for a repeat of "Mow Down Pollution" next year, so more consumers will have added incentive to make the switch. For more information on this and other interesting consumer programs, go to mowdownpollution.ca or the cleanairfoundation.org.

Cut Your Gas Costs and Protect the Air

Don't be a Jackrabbit. Hard starts and stops increase fuel consumption by 39% and emissions five-fold.

Keep your tires properly inflated. Running a tire 20 percent underinflated, by just 5 to 7 pounds per square inch, can increase fuel consumption by 10 percent.

Keep your car well-maintained. An engine that is poorly tuned can use up to 50% more fuel and release 50% more pollution than a properly maintained vehicle.

Avoid Idling. If you are going to be stopped for more than 10 seconds, except in traffic, turn the engine off. Why waste fuel and contribute to air pollution while waiting for the locks to turn, while running into a convenience store, or while chatting in the driveway?

Smog Alerts Advisory Service

We have just entered smog season, May to September. And no, this is not just a southern Ontario problem - more and more frequently we get smog alerts in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville. It's the heat that increases the levels of ozone and fine particulate matter.

You can sign up for the Smog Alert Network and get e-mail notification of Smog Alerts by going to <http://www.airqualityontario.com/alerts/signup.cfm>. Select the Smiths Falls-Frontenac-Lanark region or whatever other regions interest you. Three types of notices are possible: Smog Watch (50% of smog advisory in the next 3 days), Smog Advisory (strong likelihood of smog alert in the next 24 hours) and termination notice once a Smog Alert is over. You may also phone for a recorded message at any time: 1-800-387-7768.



This is a great service for asthmatics, the elderly and others with breathing problems. Close to 2,000 people die prematurely each year in Ontario from smog.

Community Compost Site Now Open

The Community Compost Site on Hwy 43 just west of Smiths Falls (near Hillcrest Cemetery) is now open, and will be Saturdays 9 - 4 until late November. Yard and brush from Town of Smiths Falls and North Elmsley residents only will be accepted. Be prepared to show proof of residency, e.g. a driver's licence, if the attendant asks. If you bring the material in bags you will be asked to empty them. Please do not bring kitchen or other compost. Those who leave other garbage at the site or at the gate are subject to a fine.

Canadian-Led Environmental Victory

An international agreement has come into force limiting the use of a “dirty dozen” chemicals. Canada was the first country to sign and ratify the Stockholm Convention in 2001. Canada raised the concerns internationally back in 1989 and conducted much of the research that convinced other countries to act. Now that the 50th country has ratified the convention, signatories are committed to eliminating the use of a list of persistent organic pollutants including PCBs, DDT, dioxins and furans.

This is also a health issue for Canadians, as these chemicals have been accumulating in the tissues of Arctic animals commonly used for food. PCB levels of up to 10 times the level of Southern Canada have been found in the Inuit, and it has been found in the breast milk of Inuit mothers.

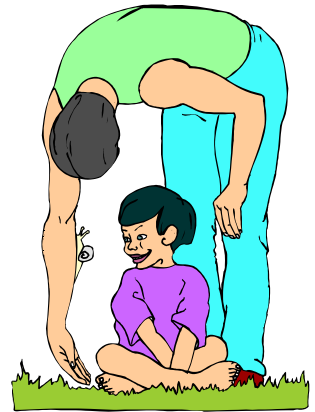
Canada has standards on emissions and a national inventory on chemical stockpiles, but much work needs to be done. New chemicals that behave similarly to banned substances have come on the market in the meantime, and nothing has been done about unintentional byproduction of these chemicals. Incinerators, and some industrial plants and municipal landfills are still releasing PCB’s. Oddly enough, private homes are one of Canada’s largest sources of dioxins and furans. LLGreen has played a role in helping people do the right thing with it’s Backyard Burning project and their Green Home visits with the focus on EPA woodstoves.



A plan of how Canada will implement the convention should be ready for May 2005.

Avoidance of Cosmetic Pesticides Recommended

The Ontario College of Family Physicians made the news recently when it called for a province-wide ban on cosmetic pesticides.



The college conducted a 14-month review of more than 250 studies and found that pesticides are "strongly linked to prostate, brain and pancreatic cancer as well as acute leukemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. They also may increase the rate of birth defects, fetal death and infertility, can have mental health impacts and cause disorders such as Parkinson's," reported the Globe and Mail.

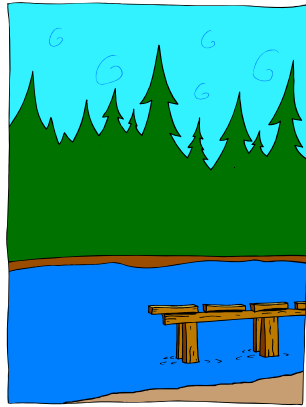
The college's overall message to patients is to avoid exposure to all pesticides whenever and wherever possible.

"People need to think long and hard before using pesticides in order to have a lawn that looks like a golf green," said Dr. Cathy Vakil of the College and of Queen's University. REAL members may recall Dr. Vakil. She presented the health effects of cosmetic pesticides at the series of Get Your Lawn Off Drugs that LL Green conducted throughout Lanark, Leeds and Grenville two years ago.

LL Green's Pesticide Free Naturally campaign, which it has run for four years, is in abeyance this year, pending the possibility of a province-wide ban on cosmetic pesticides and municipal action. We feel we have done as much as we can with a simple public education campaign, and that if the community wants further action on this issue it must press municipal and provincial governments to bring in cosmetic pesticide control bylaws. However, we still have a few information kits if anyone would like a copy. Contact Susan Brandum at 267-2257.

Protect Local Fish Spawning Areas

The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority reminds waterfront property landowners, cottagers and construction project managers that there are restrictions for in-water work in various waterways and lakes in our area. The purpose of these timing windows is to allow an appropriate time and stress-free environment for fish to spawn and raise their young in our local lakes and streams.



Here are the main timing restrictions when no in-water work may occur in areas of the Rideau Valley:

- warm water fish communities: from March 15 to June 30
- mixed fish communities: from October 1 to June 30 (e.g. Big Rideau Lake)
- cold-water fish communities: October 1 to May 31

People wishing to report violations, ongoing in-water work or other problems are encouraged to contact their local Conservation Authority, Department of Fisheries and Oceans or Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. It is also a wise idea to call the LandOwner Resource Centre in Manotick at 1-800-387-5304 if you are considering shoreline work such as docks, boat slips or shoreline erosion protection measures. Staff can assist and advise you on permit requirements or restrictions.

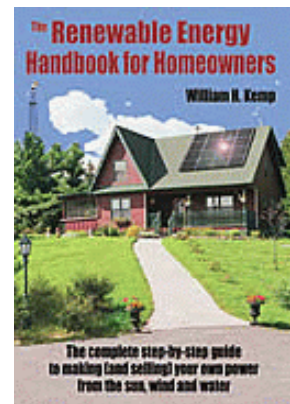
Construction in or close to water can affect fish by disturbing the soil and causing erosion. The release of construction runoff and soil into the water can stress fish and reduce their chances of survival. Make sure you know the rules. The quality of our environment is at stake.

Risk of WNV Low This Year

The final “Evaluation Report” from the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark Health Unit’s 2003 West Nile Virus program called for a repeat of the 2004 larviciding program, but that decision has been reversed. In February the Board of Health eliminated the budget for the Health Unit’s mosquito prevention and control activities. Research completed at Brock University has shown a direct relationship between a high percentage of mosquitoes in an area belonging to the genus *Culex*, and the occurrence of human cases of WNV in that area. Since the percentage of *Culex* mosquitoes in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville is low, the Health Unit has concluded that the risk for human cases of WNV here is low, and that larviciding is not necessary here this year. Municipalities have been informed that they are responsible for mosquito breeding area surveillance and reduction activities, and mosquito trapping. The Health Unit is continuing to monitor the situation. The WNV Advisory Committee will not meet again until the fall of 2004, unless there is an emergency.

REAL Proud Parents

REAL has adopted “The Renewable Energy Handbook for Homeowners” by local author William Kemp. It is described as “the complete step-by-step guide to making (and selling) your own power from the sun, wind and water”. Kemp, a policy researcher for the David Suzuki Foundation, has recently given two well-attended talks in Perth on renewable energy. Through the Adopt-a-Book program, groups or individuals donate the cost of books pre-purchased by the library, and are acknowledged on a book plate inside the book’s front cover. The handbook is ready to be borrowed by Smiths Fall Public Library members.



Science Fair Award Presented

Congratulations to Meghan Scott and Lindsay Smiths of St. Francis De Sales School for winning the REAL Environmental Award at the Smiths Falls and District Science Fair held March 25. Their project "You're Choking Us" tested how second hand smoke affects a person's lung capacity by having twenty 13 year-old female subjects blow into a peak flow meter. The toxins in second hand smoke reduce lung capacity by 32%. Everyday chemicals and pollutants in our lives affect 6-8% of our lung capacity.

The students' prize was a \$50 cash award. The REAL Environmental Award has been granted every year since 1989. The students also won an award for their project at the regional Science Fair in Brockville a few days later.

Announcements

Saturdays, 9 - 4. **Community Compost Site** open, Hwy. 43 W. of Smiths Falls for Town and North Elmsley residents. Yard and brush waste only, please.

Every Saturday, 9:30 - 12. **Reuse Centre**, end of Johnston St., Smiths Falls. Free exchange of household goods too good to throw away. Call Elva at 283-0309.

Reminder to Rideau Lakes residents using the **South Elmsley recycling depot** on Hwy. 15. New reduced hours for 2004 are: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00 - 3:30, and Saturdays 9 - 1.

1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month, 9 - 12. **Plastics (#2 through #7) Recycling Depot** open to Drummond-North Elmsley and Perth residents, at Town Yard, Perth.

Sat., June 12, 8 a.m.- noon, **Hazardous Waste Depot**, Patterson Cres. off of McNeeley Ave., Carleton Place. Open every Saturday until Sept. 25 to Town of Smiths Falls and Lanark County residents. See town.smiths-falls.on.ca under "What's New" for details.

Tues., June 22, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m., **REAL Annual General Meeting** at Heritage House Museum. BBQ and Green Communities presentation. RSVP to Peter, 284-8338.

Sat., June 5, noon - 5 p.m. **World Environment Day Fair at Sharbot Lake Beach** and Oso Hall. Displays and presentations on fish, wildlife and land stewardship. LLGreen will be there, too, presenting on wells and backyard burning.

July 17 and 18, **Lanark Highlands Energy Festival**, Lanark Village. Trade show, workshops, children's activities etc. See lanark-highlands.com or call 1-866-559-9154.

Membership Rates

Annual rates are: Individuals - \$15, Family - \$20, Partners in Future (schools) - \$15, Students - \$5, Corporate - \$50. If you haven't renewed your 2004 membership, please do soon.

Next Issue

The next issue of the REAL Update will be September 2004. Submissions, particularly those of a local nature or tips for environmentally friendly living, are welcome. Please send them to Barb at dhicks11@cogeco.ca by August 15 or call her at 283-9966.



How to Contact Us

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