

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

A P R I L 2017

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Be Kind to Bees

Bee populations are under threat, which should concern us all. Two-thirds of the food crops humans eat everyday require bees and other pollinators to successfully produce a crop. But climate change, habitat loss, viruses and pesticides are taking their toll. In Canada, the Rusty-patched bumble bee is almost extinct, and six other species are in serious danger (Friends of the Environment).



*There are many actions you can take to support healthy bee populations, particularly if you are a gardener.
(Ecojustice Photo)*

But there are many actions you can take to help the bees along, especially if you are a gardener.

- Plant native plants in a variety of shapes, colours and sizes and in clumps. Try to ensure there is something blooming in each season to accommodate the many different bee species and their life cycles. Honeybees particularly like white, yellow, blue and purple. Friends of the Earth has [a good list of suggested plants](#). They also recommend including at least one native bunch grass or sedge for nesting and overwintering.
 - When purchasing any kind of plant, make sure it hasn't been treated with neonicotinoids, pesticides that have been linked to declining bee populations. Canadian Tire and Home Depot are working on labelling systems so you can choose plants free of the pesticide. [Check here](#) to see what Canadian retailers are doing about it. Write to them if you aren't happy with the actions they have taken.
 - Avoid all pesticides and chemicals on your lawn and garden.
 - Leave some bare ground without mulch, so bees can build their nests. Limit your use of buried or surface weed barrier fabric as it inhibits overwintering and ground nesting sites.
 - Wildflowers are an important source of food for bees. Bees enjoy dandelions and clover, too, so don't try to eradicate them all from your property. Leave your lawn a little longer so the bees can access them.
- (Continued inside)



Ways to Be Kind to Bees (continued)

- Create homes and nesting sites for bees with a purchased bee block or bee hotel. Create your own by drilling various sized holes in a standing dead tree, or get more elaborate using online instructions: Here is [one possibility](#).
- If you have lots of bees coming around, put out a basin of water – they get thirsty.
- Once you've created a bee-friendly landscape, [download a Bee and Bee sign](#) to help your neighbours understand what you are doing.
- Consider taking up beekeeping yourself!

If you haven't got property to modify there are still some actions to consider:

- Learn about bee behaviour so you won't feel threatened by them. Bees will not sting unless provoked. They are vegetarians! If one comes near you, move away slowly, into the shade if possible. If it lands on you stay calm. And avoid standing in a pathway to a concentration of flowers where you can get in their way.
- Buy local honey. Avoid foreign produced honey, and do not leave it where local bees can feed on it and become infected with bacteria and spores.
- [Sign the bee petition](#) that is being sent to Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change.
- Friends of the Earth and [Bumble Bee Watch](#) organized the Great Canadian Bumble Bee Count last summer. Watch for future editions.

If you want to learn more, the Friends of the Environment Canada's [The Bee Cause](#) information is well-worth exploring.



A "bee hotel". These provide nesting sites (not just short term accommodation!) to solitary bees, and should be placed in the sun. (Photo from Friends of the Earth, UK)

REAL Action Grant Winners Announced

REAL is pleased to announce we have awarded REAL Action Grants to three deserving community groups.

Youth Connections Program. A youth day program of RNJ Youth Services will use the money to establish a green house for the community garden being developed on the site of the Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Brockville.

Outdoor Education and Mock Climate Change Summit. SFDCI teacher Meaghan MacPherson is organizing an overnight field trip to Beachburg for her Grade 10 Applied Science class in June. REAL's contribution will be used to fund one of the student's participation in the trip.

Food for Thought Program, SFDCI. A group wants to expand the nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack options for students by further developing the school gardens. The funds will be used to build a hinged-lid composter and purchase other garden supplies.

Congratulations to the winners!

The groups will be reporting back at the completion of their projects. We hope to provide some photos in our fall issue.

REAL first offered REAL Action Grants in 2015 in honour of its 25th anniversary year. Eight winners were chosen. REAL hopes to be able to award three grants annually, so watch for an announcement in early 2018 for the next round.

Great Response to Second Chance Art Sale

A few changes made to our Second Chance Art Sale led to greater sales. This year the art pieces were put out in the store itself to give them more exposure. The table and wall at the customer entrance were used to display pieces, and temporarily rearranging some furniture next to the appliances gave us room to set some pieces up on easels and a room divider. This time the sale ran for the full month of March. In four of the previous five years, we used the front room of the REAL Deal for the sale.

The annual sale is an opportunity to showcase art we have saved up over the year: oil paintings, acrylics, watercolours and prints, framed and unframed, as well as some accent pieces. Some art books sold quickly as well. With lots of art available, we were able to continually replenish what was sold. The art sale brought in over \$600. In addition to the “never before seen” pieces, any art already on display in the store was 50% off. Thanks to Donna McKenna and her assistant Brenda King for the cleaning and repairs required, as well as their creativity.



Donna McKenna with a few of the art pieces available during our March art sale. Previously displayed art pieces were 50% off. The store usually has a nice selection of art throughout the store.



Vimy Ridge Memorial to be Dedicated at Evergreen Avenue June 3

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the historic World War One Battle of Vimy Ridge. Many local soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice at Vimy and other significant battles in France.

REAL’s Evergreen Avenue Committee is honoured to be dedicating a monument at Evergreen Avenue, Victoria Park on June 3, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. to commemorate the soldiers who made this sacrifice.

The monument was made possible through the efforts and contributions of Kinkaid Loney Monuments, Royal Canadian Air Force Association 443 Wing, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 95, The Smiths Falls Rotary Club and the Smiths Falls Kinsmen Club and the Evergreen Committee. The public is welcome to come and help dedicate this monument on June 3 and remember those who fought and died in France.

[Evergreen Avenue](#) is a living memorial and community beautification project in Victoria Park which began as a Millenium project. The environmental focus is to encourage residents to use the native plants, such as those planted at the park, as one action against climate change. An interpretive panel installed two years ago at the west end of the walkway explains the concept to park visitors.



Student Jared Hayes addressing the guests at the 2015 Evergreen ceremony about [his experience](#) with the War and the Canadian Experience Battlefield Project.

What Not to Flush

Your toilet is not a garbage can!

Most rural dwellers are familiar with what should not be put in a septic system, but there are many things that should not go down a toilet connected to a municipal sewage system either. These can result in:

- Clogged toilets and blockages in your home
- Damage to your town's sewer pipes
- Damage to water treatment systems, which can cause sewage overflows
- Harm to the environment and aquatic habitats, as some dissolved substances will not be removed at the sewage treatment plant.

Just because something can be flushed away, doesn't mean it should be. The only things that should be flushed is human waste and toilet paper. Choose single ply toilet paper, as the plusher kinds do not break down as well, and could cause plumbing problems.



Here are some things that do not belong in the toilet, even if they can be flushed:

- Personal wipes, baby wipes or any cleaning wipe - these create major blockages, maybe even before they get to the street. There is lots of graphic evidence of this on the web. Soon the packaging will be indicating that they are not to be flushed. [Read more](#)
- Tampons, tampon applicators and sanitary pads – they do not fall apart the way you might think
- Diapers – they'll never go down anyway, but they really expand when they come in contact with water and will cause major blockages



- Condoms - these don't break down and inflate like balloons, causing blockages
- Cotton swabs and cotton balls – they don't break down, and swabs get stuck in the bends of pipes
- Kleenex – facial tissues are designed tough and will not fall apart like toilet paper
- Paper towels – do not fall apart and will probably clog toilet
- Dental floss – seems harmless but wraps around smaller clogs, causing trouble at the sewage treatment plant, and is not biodegradable
- Hair - one of the top clogging agents
- Chewing gum – sticks to pipes
- Bandages and their wrappings – contain non-biodegradable plastics
- Kitty litter - even if it says flushable. Clay and sand are heavy and will cause a blockage.
- Fat, oil or grease – they cool and congeal on the sewer walls, eventually causing blockages sometimes called fatbergs. [Read about the London fatberg](#). See what's [happening in Vancouver](#).
- Cigarette butts – toxic and not biodegradable

All of the above should go in the garbage. Keep an accessible garbage can near the toilet so no one will be tempted to use it as a trash can.

Besides the hazards of these items to your pipes, flushing for miscellaneous waste items is a waste of water.

(Continued)

What not to Flush (continued)

Here are couple of other things that shouldn't go down the toilet but don't belong in the garbage either:

- Food items. In particular, these should really go in the compost: coffee grounds, eggshells, nutshells, seeds or peelings
- Medications should not be flushed, or poured down a sink. Check with your pharmacy to see under what conditions it will take them back. Trace amounts of medications are being detected in the environment, and can harm wildlife and make their way back into our water supply.



This video is good evidence that most items should not be flushed! <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/247465> . Seemingly innocent items like dental floss, Kleenex and hair are bad news for pipes and water treatment plants.

Mail Chimp Reminder

Our MailChimp email list is self-serve! If you are not getting REAL emails, please get on over to the home page of our [website](#) and click on the green "sign-up form" box. Add your name and address on the little form. When the confirmation email arrives in your inbox, click on spot indicated to confirm you want to be on the list . This two step process stops unscrupulous people and organizations from adding people who don't want to be added to the mailing list, and is for your protection. You can remove yourself from the list by clicking unsubscribe at the bottom of any emails you receive from us. We promise we won't send you too many emails!

Hazardous Waste Depot Opens May 20

Saturday, May 20 is opening day for the Hazardous Waste Depot on Patterson Crescent in Carleton Place. It will operate 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. every Saturday for 16 weeks until September 2, 2017. The depot is open to residents of Carleton Place, Mississippi Mills, Beckwith, Smiths Falls, Perth, and Drummond North Elmsley only. [Check this document](#) for what is and is not accepted, as well as directions.

Compost Site Opens May 13

The Smiths Falls community compost site will be opening for the season on Saturday, May 13 and will be open every Saturday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. until November 19. Please note that only leaf and yard waste is accepted, not your kitchen compost! The site is located along Hwy 43 just east of Hillcrest Cemetery.



Sunday Hours are Back at the REAL Deal !

**Now Open Sundays
Noon to 4:00 p.m.**

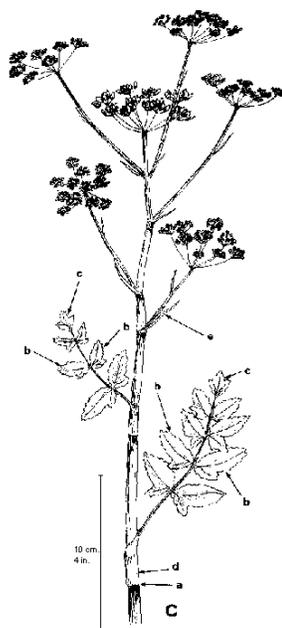
In addition to:

**Thursdays, Fridays
and Saturdays
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Friends of Lanark County Opposing Wild Parsnip Spraying

Friends of Lanark County are working hard to make it clear to area councillors that they are opposed to roadside spraying, and would appreciate any help like-minded individuals can provide.

Wild parsnip is commonly found on roadsides and along abandoned railbeds and thrives in the thin alkaline soils predominant in Lanark County. The issue is that for some people, its sap on their skin when exposed to sunlight can cause a blistering rash. The County of Lanark, which is responsible for 562 km of roads, has plans to spray county roadsides with Clearview. But while effectively dealing with the wild parsnip, the pesticide kills all broad leaf plants it comes in contact with. It can move through soil and water and kill aquatic plants as well. The cautions expressed for its application are enough to cause doubt that it is safe for humans, although its effects are not well-documented.



Is spraying necessary? There are some alternatives. People could be taught to avoid and minimize their risk of rash from contact with the plant without resorting to eradication. Some feel that the wild parsnip does not need to be controlled at all. It has not been proven that spraying is an effective control of the weed, so is it worth the risk or expense? Other suggested methods of control include mowing or pulling.

Local Situation. Individual Lanark County municipalities do have the option to opt out of spraying the roads that they maintain in their jurisdiction. Currently only Tay Valley and Mississippi Mills have decided not to spray their roadsides this year. County roads going through their township will be sprayed. Lanark Highlands, Beckwith and Drummond North Elmsley piggy back the contract with the County so

they will spray if the County does.

Last year Lanark residents were given the option of posting a “No Spray” sign on their property, but this is no longer an option. At their March 22 meeting, the Public Works Committee of Lanark County decided to modify the existing Adopt – A- Road program to include weed management. The County will not spray the roadsides that are adopted by groups of citizens who agree to control the wild parsnip by other means. This will, however, not protect many other residents who would prefer their frontage not be sprayed.

REAL’s Position. Late in 2016, the REAL Board sent a letter to the Township of Rideau Lakes Township opposing the spraying. REAL took this position primarily because there is limited data available to assess the magnitude of the impact on the public, there is a lack of quantifiable data on the benefits of spraying versus other mitigation strategies, and spraying comes with risks to the natural environment and public health. Rideau Lakes eventually decided against spraying in 2017. REAL plans to send similar letters to other neighbouring municipalities both in Lanark and Leeds Grenville.

Actions. Friends of Lanark held a meeting in Perth March 30th to discuss next steps. They are asking for individuals to help in all aspects of their campaign, from writing and calling councillors, to using social media to spread the word, and organizing fundraising.

A paper petition to County Warden Bill Dobson and councillors has been circulating, or you can sign the Change.org online petition [using this link](#).

If you would like to do some more reading on this topic, here are a few suggestions:

- [Friends of Lanark County website](#)
- This [presentation](#) made to Lanark Counties Council on March 22
- This commentary , “[Lab Rats of Lanark County](#) “ in The Millstone.

In REAL Life



Ken Graham has been appointed chair of the [Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee](#). Ken’s experience includes serving as a director and Chair of the RVCA, as a Smiths Falls Police officer, and as an Investigator with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. During his terms as Smiths Falls Town Councillor he served as liaison to the REAL Board, and participated in the monthly board meetings. He now serves on our Evergreen Avenue Committee. Congratulations, Ken!



Thanks to all of you who have already sent in your membership renewals. Several people took advantage of our new PayPal setup to pay by credit card. As of March 28, the renewals came accompanied by \$995 in donations, for which we are very appreciative. If you haven’t renewed, a gentle reminder will be coming your way! Beat us to it and mail or drop payment at the REAL Deal, or go to [the Join page](#) on our website to pay or donate by credit card.



Transition Brockville

[Transition Brockville](#) is celebrating it’s 10th anniversary this year. The Brockville Climate Action Group (BCAG) began in 1997 to help identify personal and community-wide steps to reduce and adapt to climate change. BCAG changed its name to Transition Brockville in 2011. The group offers free public monthly presentations at the Brockville Public Library, and their newsletter is a great source of climate change news both locally and across the globe. [Find out more](#) about what they do.



Our REAL Action Team ably represented REAL at the Smiths Falls Public Library’s 20th Annual Trivia Challenge on Sunday, Feb. 12. These people, including some last minute replacements, braved a winter storm to play: Brittany, Brianna, Pauline, and John McElroy; Mendel Huang; Sue Brandum; Julia Boldt; Jenna McElravy; David Watson and Keely Maddock. Thanks to Keely for pulling the team together.



REAL has applied for funding to hire two summer students this summer. We were lucky enough to be able to hire two last year, but generally we hire one for a reasonably short term (about 6 weeks) minimum wage position. So watch our website if you have a student seeking summer employment.

Smiths Falls residents take note, that beginning this year, the town will only be accepting compostable paper yard waste bags for the spring and fall leaf collection program. Spring yard waste collection will be taking place May 24-26.



- A National Geographic [infographic](#) shows how green buildings – buildings designed to use less energy and water and improve the indoor environment, including air quality – can be used to make our cities more sustainable.
- A new lighting technology, [organic light-emitting diode lights \(OLEDs\)](#), will bring as dramatic a shift as LEDs have, but will be useful in certain limited situations. OLEDs come in panels and will be useful anywhere a smooth, diffused light of reasonable brightness is needed.
- According to the author, there are “[Eight Invaluable Things You Should Always Buy at the Thrift Store](#)” because they just last longer than most things you can buy today. Apart from the dresses and leather shoes, the REAL Deal gets them all!

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We're on the Web
www.REALaction.ca

**Environmental
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Sue Brandum
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sbrandum@cogeco.ca

**REAL Deal Store &
Environment Centre**

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

Store open Thursdays
through Saturdays 10 –4
and Sundays 12 –4

**Community Garden,
Energy Audits, RAIN or
other programs**

Phone: 613-283-9500

Send contributions to the July
issue by June 15, 2017 to
dhicks11@cogeco.ca
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment



April 22 to May 7, 2017

Get your bags starting
April 1 at the REAL Deal
Reuse Store, 85 William St.
W, Smiths Falls.

Cleanup litter at your
choice of location during
the two week period .

Check our website
for sites that are being
looked after by other
community groups.

Report back by May 14
to have your name entered
in a draw for prizes!

www.REALaction.ca

For more details:
cnddavidson@cogeco.ca
or 283-9819



**RIDEAU
ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE**

**Make a
REAL
Difference**

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

Or bring to
The REAL Deal

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\$ _____

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

Volunteer

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I would like to become a member

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

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