

# REAL Update



For members and friends of the Rideau Environmental Action League

September 2003

## ***Stopping the Slide, Challenging our Wasteful Ways: A Public Consultation*** by Tom Foulkes

Was the August 14 black-out a wake-up call? Is it another example of waste, of a lack of attention paid to conservation, of inadequate funding put into basic infrastructure, or of poor decision-making? Are smog, polluted water, and garbage all other examples? The Ice Storm was a wake-up call. Did we learn from it? Will we keep snoozing through more wake-up calls?

How can *WE* Stop the Slide? We have the abilities, we have the technologies, what else do we need to really turn things around in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Counties?

Brainstorm these issues with us. Let us know if REAL's strategic plan is on track. Join us for a public consultation facilitated by Paul Cormier of RANA International Consultants.

Five questions will be presented to the attendees for discussion, brainstorming and feedback:


1. What has the Rideau Environmental Action League achieved since 1989?
2. What do you consider to be the top issues affecting Quality of Life in Smiths Falls and District, and in Lanark and Leeds and Grenville counties?
3. What prevents the community from taking positive action on these issues? What can we do to overcome these challenges?
4. How can we break through the barriers as a community and as individuals?
5. What do you expect of the Rideau Environmental Action League?

*(continued inside)*

"STOPPING THE SLIDE:  
Challenging our  
Wasteful Ways"

Wed., Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 p.m.  
Legion Branch 95,  
7 Main St. East,  
Smiths Falls

Refreshments  
provided. All  
welcome.



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We will be broken up into groups of 8, a small-team work session for the first 4 questions while an "Oprah-style" plenary is planned for question 5.

The results of the evening will be used to determine the directions and activities of REAL. For the REAL Board, its active members and sponsors, this is a crucial evening in the life of our organization.

What are some tangible goals for our region? How do we really turn things around? We cannot clean up the World -- BUT-- we can do a better job in our own area. How do we Stop the Slide? Let's talk about it on September 24<sup>th</sup>.

Member participation is critical. We can't do this without you.

Please reply by Sept. 19 to Tom Foulkes at 283-2706 or Susan Brandum at 283-3482 or llgreen@superaje.com.

### ***Receive Up to \$1,000 to Improve Your Home's Energy Efficiency***

*by Susan Brandum*

It's worth improving the energy efficiency of your home simply to reduce your heating costs. And, we've all been challenged under the Kyoto protocol to reduce our CO2 emissions from 5 tonnes/year to 4 tonnes/year--the One-Tonne Challenge.

Now, the federal government has announced a rebate of up to \$1,000 to spur you on. In order to measure real improvements, it is required that you have an EnerGuide for Houses (EGH) to evaluate your current heat loss, then you do the work and have a second EGH. The EGH provides you with a list of recommended actions, their estimated costs and their estimated savings -- it's the best way to find out whether changing your furnace or your windows or adding insulation is really going to save you money or not. It also provides your house with a rating, for example, 61 on a scale of 0-100. If your improvements bring your house up to a 73, your

rebate is based on the difference of the 12-point improvement. The rebate program is based on two pilot programs run by Green Community organizations in Peterborough and Ottawa. Average findings were that the rebate covered 1/4 - 1/3 of retrofit costs and that people reduced their energy use by 23%.

LL Green offered the EGH in the region for two years but interest was not high enough to warrant continuing. However, in that time about 80 people in the region did a first EGH. Most would be eligible for the rebate as long as they have made substantial improvements. Our colleague Green Community, Envirocentre in Ottawa, now serves this region and our EGH assessor Ross Elliott, works from Envirocentre.

To find out more about the rebate program, go to the Office of Energy Efficiency [www.oeenrca.gc.ca/houses-maisons/english/homeowners](http://www.oeenrca.gc.ca/houses-maisons/english/homeowners). To book an EGH, contact Envirocentre at [www.envirocentre.ca](http://www.envirocentre.ca) or call 613/580-2582. Booking on-line saves \$25 off the cost of the EGH.



## **Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup**

*by Corey Turnbull*

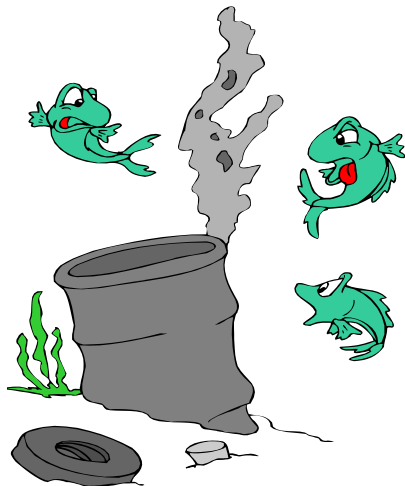
The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup is here! REAL needs volunteers with canoes, kayaks, paddleboats or other small boats, volunteer divers and land volunteers to help with the Smiths Falls cleanup. Those working from the water must provide their own life jackets or PFDs.

Three separate clean-ups will be happening:

Saturday, Sept. 13, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at Baccus Island and Lower Rideau Lake area. Contact Stephen Hagar at [hpc@falls.igs.net](mailto:hpc@falls.igs.net) or by phone at 284-0186.

Saturday, Sept 20, from 9:00 to noon at the lower basin at Smiths Falls ( Between Old Slys and Comfort Inn ). Contact Corey Turnbull at [csturnbull@sympatico.ca](mailto:csturnbull@sympatico.ca) or by phone @ 613-275-4132. Dawn Quinn at 284-4160 (home) or 284-2664 will coordinate the clean-up by Queen Street residents who live along the shore.

Sunday, Sept. 21, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Divers will clean up in the vicinity of the Comfort Inn. Contact Dan Davidson at [dandavi@enoreo.on.ca](mailto:dandavi@enoreo.on.ca) or 283-9819.



This is an easy way to spend a couple of hours helping not only the environment, but our community too. All debris collected will be

tabulated and the data combined with that of other Canadian sites. Looking forward to seeing you there!

The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup is part of the International Coastal Cleanup. The Canadian component is organized by the Vancouver Aquarium. Their goals are education and awareness, community stewardship and environmental monitoring. To see last year's results, visit [www.vanaqua.org/cleanup](http://www.vanaqua.org/cleanup).

## **Voyageur Canoe Trips**

*by Peter Au*

REAL's voyageur canoe trips



offered during the Chocolate and Railway Festival this past July were a success. Kilmarnock Enterprises, Man Ling Restaurant, Murphy's Point Provincial Park and Scotia Bank were sponsors of the event. The Canadian Recreational Canoe Association, the Rideau Canal, Friends of the Rideau, Smiths Falls Parks and Recreation, the Rideau Roundtable and the Festival Organizing Committee pooled their joint efforts to make this happen. Three directors of the Roundtable, together with Rebecca Evoy (who put together the first voyageur tour during REAL's 2000 summer program) and Park's summer staff Andrew Howard acted as volunteer interpreters.

Over 130 people took the trip from Victoria Park to Lower Reach Park or vice versa, and gave very positive responses. We had folks from all over Canada, five organizations, and a group from a huge family event.

Plans are in the works to continue this popular event, and to incorporate the many marvellous suggestions gathered from the patrons. The Rideau Roundtable would like to see similar events happen across the waterway from Ottawa to Kingston to showcase the local jewels of various communities.

## ***Well Aware is here ... in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville***

The name Walkerton still conjures fear. While that terrible tragedy was a rare occurrence, too many residents of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville counties are dealing with contaminated water--or may be if they don't take care of their wells.

But, through LLGreen and Well Aware, residents can now get information on how to protect their water, their wells and our groundwater.

"When I first moved to this area from the city seven years ago, I didn't have a clue about my water, my well or my septic," said LLGreen Manager Susan Brandum. "But, I have learned ...and we've learned through this program, that more and more wells are testing bad and that people are anxious to get information so they can better understand and take control over their water supply."

About 22% of well test samples in Leeds and Grenville tested unsafe for total coliforms and 16% tested unsafe for E. coli, according to Health Unit results reported in the Leeds and Grenville Groundwater Management Study. These results match provincial averages and show an increase in contamination over the years. (Ideally, we will learn about conditions in Lanark County when its groundwater study is released this year.)



Through September and October, rural residents can pick up Well Aware Information Kits at the municipal offices of rural municipalities, at

Health Unit offices, and at other partner locations throughout Lanark, Leeds and Grenville. They're going like hotcakes, so get yours now.

"We are making the kits available throughout Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, but the best part of the program is the Well Aware Home Visit and those we are only making available in municipalities that have taken action to protect their groundwater, namely Merrickville-Wolford, Elizabethtown-Kitley and Tay Valley." The visits are free, voluntary, confidential and non-regulatory. "We are limited to offering only 25 in each municipality. We have already done a total of 20, so I would encourage anyone who is interested to call now."

The visits give the well owner the opportunity to really get to know their well, how to spot potential problems and how to avoid them, how to do their own annual well walk-about, and how to keep our water, our families and our environment safe. We can also tell people about any grants that may be available to help them upgrade or decommission their wells.



Well Aware is a project of the Green Communities Association in partnership with the Ontario Ground Water Association. Funding support is provided by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. Well Aware is endorsed by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Conservation Ontario, and the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (Ontario branch).

For more information, call LL Green at 283-3482 or 1-877-366-6656 or visit [www.wellaware.ca](http://www.wellaware.ca).

## ***Buy Fresh, Buy Local***

Do you really know what you are eating? It could be time to reexamine your food buying practices. Making a few changes will be better for you and the environment.

The easiest way to start is to buy local produce. The food is fresher, tastes better, is more nutritious and supports your community. Many food items at your local grocers have travelled 2,400 km. before they reach the consumer - just think of all the greenhouse gases and packaging than involves! Buying locally grown helps reduce the waste, energy and materials needed in this process. There are a number of alternatives for the consumer.

- Choose local suppliers. You can buy beef, pork, chicken, emu, eggs, vegetables, apples, other fruits, preserves, baked goods and even some processed foods directly from local suppliers.
- Buy at the “farm gate”. You can find a list of local Lanark farms from the ecoPerth website at [ecoperth.on.ca](http://ecoperth.on.ca) or by calling 267-1128.
- Buy organic and at the farm gate. The Canadian Organic Growers offer a directory of organic growers and store outlets by area. Call (613) 984-0480 or go to [www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca).
- Shop at farmers markets. Contact Farmers’ Markets Ontario at 1-800-387-FARM or [www.farmersmarketsontario.com](http://www.farmersmarketsontario.com).
- Choose local produce from your grocery store.
- Join a food buying club. You order from a list of dried, packaged, and frozen foods, which are generally organic. Available year round. Call Ontario Natural Food Co-op for a list of buyers’ groups in this region or information on how to start your own at 1-800-387-0354 or go to [onfc.on.ca](http://onfc.on.ca).
- Join a food box program. If you are in the Perth area, you can arrange with ecoPerth for a box of local, organic produce every week during growing season. The Lanark

Community Food Box program sells food boxes year round from food purchased in bulk through Quattrocchi’s at the Ontario Food Terminal in Toronto. Local produce is used when in season. Prices are \$15 for a family box, \$10 for singles or seniors, and boxes are available to anyone. Call 1-888-284-2204. In each case you receive a standardized selection of produce.

- Grow your own.

Buying local will support small farms who may, given sufficient demand, go organic. In our next issue we will explore further the many benefits of organic food. Then we will look at genetically modified foods - are they really that bad, and how to avoid them. In the meantime, this is a great time of the year to enjoy more local produce.



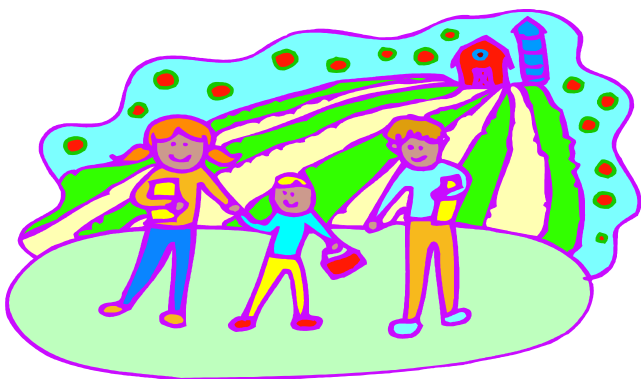
## ***Ten Reasons to Buy Locally Grown Food***

1. Locally grown food tastes better. One study estimated that a basic North American meal travels 2,400 km from field to table. Locally grown food is fresher!
2. Local produce is better for you. Avoiding the shipping and storage time ensures the food is at its peak nutrient value. Shipping food long distances requires chemical treatments to prevent rotting and over-ripening, and may use waxes, irradiation, gases and synthetic chemicals, such as fungicides and sprout inhibitors.
3. Local food preserves genetic diversity. Only a few hybrid varieties are used in an industrial agriculture system. Local farms grow a number of varieties, many of which are heirlooms.
4. Local food from small growers is likely GMO free. Biotechnology companies license genetically modified fruits and vegetables to large factory-style farmers. Local farms do not have access to genetically modified seed.



5. Local food supports local farm families. Local farmers can sell direct to consumers, thus eliminating the middleman and getting full retail price for their food, permitting more farmers to continue farming.
6. Local food builds community. Buying from a farmer develops a connection with nature and a greater awareness by urban dwellers of the agricultural community.
7. Local food preserves open space. Buying local helps ensure the viability of farms, so that selling of land for development is less likely.
8. Local food keeps your taxes in check. Farms contribute more in taxes than they require in services.
9. Local food supports a clean environment and benefits wildlife. Well-managed farms practice good soil and water stewardship, and provide habitat for many wildlife species.
10. Local food is about the future. "By supporting local farmers today, you can help ensure that there will be farms in your community tomorrow, and that future generations will have access to nourishing, flavourful, and abundant food."

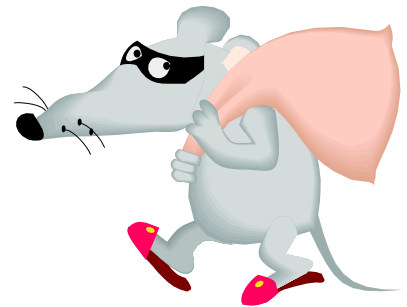
From the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, adapted from 2001 Growing for Market, and David Suzuki Foundation.



## ***Vandalism an Issue for Evergreen Avenue***

A big thank you to the hardworking committee members who maintain Evergreen Avenue. This season replacements shrubs were planted, the vegetation was kept watered, the paver lights cleaned, and cameras installed to discourage vandalism. Engraved plates will soon be installed.

Vandalism continues to be a problem in the park and elsewhere in town. Let's take action together against the very small minority causing the problem. We can reduce this problem if we all report suspicious situations to either Crime Stoppers , 284-CASH (284-2274) or the Smiths Falls Police, 283-4141.



## ***REAL Award Nominations***

From it's inception, one of REAL's goals has been to honour environmental achievement. Do you know of an individual or organization has done something beneficial for the environment this past year? We are now seeking nominations for awards in four categories:

- Individuals - from within REAL's membership
- Individuals - broader public
- Corporations, groups and institutions - from within REAL's membership
- Corporations, groups and institutions -broader public

You do not need to be a member to make a nomination. Nominations should be made to Brenda King, 283-4116 or [aking16@recorder.ca](mailto:aking16@recorder.ca) no later than November 1, 2002. The awards will be presented at our Annual General Meeting this Wednesday, November 19 in Smiths Falls.

## ***Summer on the Green***

by Rachel Lomas

Hello to all the wonderful folks at REAL and LLGREEN! This is none other than your devoted summer student, Rachel Lomas. My summer with your organization has been an invaluable opportunity to learn about local environmental issues, get the background on launching an information campaign and get numerous paper-cuts on Well Aware envelopes. It was worth every second.

I was the little gnome in Rideau Ferry furiously churning out the “Well Aware” kits and updating those classic “Pesticide Free – Naturally” kits at break neck speed. The folks at Impression Printing came to think of me as one of the family. My own family was concerned that they’d never see the living room floor again. A thousand kits were much more expansive than I was first bargaining for.

I was also responsible for wading through the mysteries of Microsoft Access to create a database and enter all the information thereof. Good thing we went to all those events to get information to enter; a database just isn’t the same without it.

I am going into my second year at Queen’s University (Oil Thigh!) and even now, at the end of August I’m feeling a chill in the air, which means its time for back to school. It’s back to the Life Sciences degree and late nights of frantic reading before exams. Hopefully I’ll complete enough frantic reading to enter medical school once my undergrad degree is over. That’s the dream anyway.

Regardless of what the future holds, I’ll never forget all the little nuggets of truth passed down



by Susan Brandum (the world’s greatest boss!!!) and everything I learned about keeping the earth green. Thanks for the great summer; it was the experience of a lifetime!

## ***Just a Few Garden/Shoreline Visits Left***

LL Green and its various partners have delivered more than 70 Green Garden and Shoreline Visits in the region. Call now to book yours before the program ends. If you’re not sure that you’re on the right rack in terms of greening your property or your shoreline, book a visit. Our expert advisors (horticulturalists, shoreline experts, and lawn care professionals) can give you the tips you need to proceed, plus all sorts of gifts to get you going. It’s up to each of us to protect our little piece of paradise to ensure that the Rideau and the Tay rivers and the whole of the environment stays healthy.



Check [www.REALaction.ca](http://www.REALaction.ca) for a list of the locations or contact LL Green directly for a kit.

## ***Reducing Garbage Burning Campaign***

REAL/LLGreen is about to sign a contract with Environment Canada to deliver a public education campaign to raise awareness of the health hazards of garbage burning. Home garbage fires smoulder and burn at temperatures that create dioxins and furans and many other pollutants. In fact, backyard burning is the fourth largest source of dioxin pollution in Ontario. With 24% of rural and small-city Ontario admitting to burning their garbage, this has become a major health concern.

REAL/LLGreen will be getting the message out to rural residents and educating them on the alternatives. We hope to adapt and learn from the program delivered by our colleague Green Community in Thunder Bay, ecoSuperior. Watch for the program to be launched during Waste Reduction Week, this October 20 - 26, 2003.

## Announcements

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



1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month, 9:00 - 12:00  
**Plastics (#2 through #7) Recycling Depot**  
open to Drummond-North Elmsley and Perth  
residents, at Town Yard , Perth.

Saturday, September 13, 9:00 - 12:00. **Shoreline  
cleanup at Baccus Island and Lower Rideau  
Lake.** Call Stephen Haggart 284-0186.

Saturday, September 20, 9:00 - 12:00. **Shoreline  
cleanup at lower basin (between Old Slys and  
Comfort Inn).** Public, call Corey Turnbull 275-  
4132 or residents, Dawn Quinn 284-4160.

Sunday, September 21, 2:00 - 5:00. **Diver  
cleanup of Rideau River** near Comfort Inn.  
Non-divers needed too. Call Dan 283-9819.

Wednesday, September 17 - Sunday, September  
21. REAL/LLGreen partnering with other  
groups to host a booth in the **Conservation Zone  
at the IPM/Rural Expo** near Carleton Place.  
Volunteers required to staff the booth on Sunday,  
September 21. Call Sue 267-2257.

Wednesday, September 24, 6:30 p.m., Legion at  
7 Main St., Smiths Falls. Stopping the Slide:  
Challenging our Wasteful Ways **public  
consultation on REAL's strategic plan.** Call  
Sue 283-3482 or Tom 283-3706.

Saturday, September 27, 8 a.m. until noon. Last  
**Household Hazardous Waste Depot** of the  
season in Carleton Place on Patterson Cres., just  
off McNeeley Ave., for residents of Lanark  
County and Smiths Falls.

October 20 - 26. **Waste Reduction Week.**  
Watch for the launch of our Reducing Garbage  
Burning campaign.

Wednesday, November 19. **REAL Annual  
General Meeting.** Details to be announced.

**Reminder to Rideau Lakes residents.** The  
township has recently requested that you flatten  
all metal containers and plastic before depositing  
it in the recycling bins.

### Membership Rates

Annual rates are: Individuals - \$15, Family -  
\$20, Partners in Future (schools) - \$15, Students  
- \$5, Corporate - \$50.

### Has Your E-mail Address Changed?

If the e-mail address we have on file was  
rejected, you are receiving this via snail mail.  
Let Barb know your correct  
e-mail address by sending a  
message to  
dhicks11@cogeco.ca.



### Next Issue

Expect the next REAL Update in late November.  
Submissions, particularly those of a local nature  
or tips for environmentally friendly living, are  
welcome. Please send them to  
dhicks11@cogeco.ca by November 1  
or call Barb at 283-9966.

### How to Contact REAL

Phone: (613) 284-8338

LLGreen: 283-3482 or  
1-877-366-6656

E-mail:

info@rideauenvironmentalactionleague.org

llgreen@superaje.com

Mail: Box 1061, Smiths Falls, ON K7A 5A5

Web: www.REALaction.ca

