

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

SEPT 2012

Inside this issue:

Final Hazardous Waste Depots for the Season	2
Revised MicroFIT Guidelines	3
Take It Back Directory	4
Emma Gunn, REAL Summer Student	4
Community Garden Activities	5
REAL Deal Powers On	6
In Real Life	7
Corporate Membership	8

Planned Rideau Canal Budget Cuts Alarm Many



The federal government is planning a \$29.2 million budget cut for Parks Canada, of which \$6 million will be axed from the operation of its nine historic canals, and \$2 million of that from the Rideau Canal system. This has many alarmed, as it will be very difficult to maintain the heritage, social, cultural and economic values of the Rideau waterway, especially since some claim the locks and their heritage values are being inadequately maintained even now.

Gord Brown, M.P. for Leeds and Grenville, hosted a public meeting at Lombardy Hall on July 29. While the meeting was intended to discuss alternatives to reduced operating hours, it was clear that the almost 200 people in the audience saw the bigger picture. Cutbacks seem unwise when Parks Canada is mandated with protecting the environment, and when the Canal has just been granted World Heritage Status by UNESCO.

A group of mayors from 13 municipalities along the Rideau had an opportunity to express their concerns to the Environment Minister Peter Kent, who is responsible for Parks Canada, in early August. Reduced operating hours for the canal will mean many businesses will struggle or even fold, causing economic repercussions throughout Rideau communities.

A roundtable discussion on the Rideau Canal budget cuts with Federal Liberal leader, Bob Rae, was organized by the Leeds Grenville Federal Liberal Association. A range of people and groups from all along the Rideau took part in the open and non-partisan discussion in Portland on August 22.

Ken Watson, a local Rideau waterway expert, has set up a website on this issue, www.saveourRideau.ca. There you can see the text of the many letters being sent to Minister Peter Kent protesting the direction the government is taking, including letters from retired Parks Canada and Rideau Canal Managers, and submissions from groups such as the Rideau Roundtable. REAL will be writing to the Minister soon as well.

(continued inside)



Planned Rideau Canal Budget Cuts Alarm Many *(Cont'd)* slow, impossible or extremely costly.

The Rideau waterway is the major water system in the region. REAL is concerned about the long term implications of these cutbacks to water level controls in time of flooding or drought, and the potential effect on water quality, particularly in communities that take their water directly from the Rideau. There are also a handful of revenue-generating hydroelectric generation points along the system which depend on maintained water levels.

What would be the impact on vegetation and wildlife? The Rideau is home to 60 Species at Risk, including, for example, the Least Bittern that nests in the swale behind our Environment Centre. Parks Canada is also responsible for responding to spills and contamination issues along the waterway. With fewer dollars and less staff on the ground monitoring all these situations, serious issues could develop, and potentially, ones from which recovery would be

The Rideau is not just a facility for wealthy recreational boaters. Most boaters are average Canadians and the majority of visitors are land-based. The Rideau is the lifeblood of our region and our natural systems. The sweeping changes recently made in omnibus Bill C-38 reduced the effectiveness of environmental assessments, weakened environmental legislation, and closed research centres. Canada can't keep making giant steps backwards if we are to protect our natural resources.

Please take the time to read about the issue in the materials available at www.SaveOurRideau.ca. Make your concerns known to your MP and to Peter Kent, Minister of the Environment. Contact details are available on the site.

Final Hazardous Waste Depots for the Season

If you've been collecting your hazardous waste in your garage or basement, time to double check the dates of your municipality's household hazardous waste collection depot. Time is running out because most depots are seasonal. Here are some of them:



- **Lanark County** (participating municipalities: Beckwith, Carleton Place, Drummond-North Elmsley (new!), Mississippi Mills, Montague, Perth and Smiths Falls) – residents may use the depot on Patterson Crescent in Carleton Place, Saturdays 8 - noon, only until September 15
- **Lanark Highlands and Tay Valley Township** – the depot at the Lanark Highlands Middleville Waste Site is open until Thanksgiving, October 8
- **Rideau Lakes and Westport** – one more depot day, Saturday October 20, at the Portland Transfer Station
- **Leeds and Grenville**, including Gananoque and Prescott, but not Brockville: one more depot Saturday, September 29: South Grenville Patrol Garage in morning, North Grenville Patrol Garage in afternoon.
- **City of Brockville**: Saturday, September 8, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Please check your municipal website for exact location and hours, and for any restrictions. Most will want you to prove you are a resident, with a copy of your tax bill, for example.

Generally, these items will NOT be accepted at any depot: PCB contaminated wastes, radioactive wastes, and explosives. Some items you may have taken to hazardous waste depots in the past can be disposed of year round at participating businesses. For example, pharmaceuticals can be returned to most pharmacies. Most tire and auto supply establishments will take up to four automotive tires from you free of charge. Fluorescent bulbs can be taken to Canadian Tire stores year round. Check makethedrop.ca to see where you can take paints, single use batteries or automotive materials.

Check REAL's Take it Back Recyclopedia at www.recyclopedia.net for more ideas of materials that can be returned to retailers for reuse or recycling.

Revised MicroFIT Guidelines

By Chris Weissflogg

Ontario's Feed-In-Tariff (FIT) for micro scale power generation is back, following a program review that began last October. On July 12, the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) released the final rules for the MicroFIT 2.0 program and reopened its website. It is once again possible for individuals, churches, schools, social housing and other organizations to get into the business of selling green energy to the grid and to make money.



The MicroFIT program review considered many inputs when crafting the revised program. A primary objective was to manage demand for the program. This was achieved by adjusting the tariff rates so that program participants would still obtain a reasonable level of profitability. The new MicroFIT tariff rate for rooftop solar is 54.9¢ /kWh, down 32% from 80.2¢. Ground mount solar is now 44.5¢ /kWh - 31% lower than it was at 64.2¢ - and small wind is now at 11.5¢/kWh, a reduction of 15%.

Other notable program changes include:

- Adjust the eligibility criteria to sharpen the program's focus on homeowners and community groups and away from commercial interests.
- Allow only one microFIT project per person.
- MicroFIT applicants who applied on or after September 1, 2011 but had their applications frozen by the program review, will be subject to the MicroFIT Program 2.0 rules and pricing. They needed to resubmit their applications by August 10, 2012 or have them terminated.
- New MicroFIT applicants will need to be patient, as their applications will not be processed until all resubmitted applications have been processed.
- Ground mount solar and wind turbines over 3kW will be restricted from residential lands or lands abutting them.
- Elongated MicroFIT process timelines. Applicants will be required to seek an Offer to Connect from their local distribution company (LDC) within 30 days of the OPA confirming that their application is complete, followed by a 90-day period during which the applicant must receive an Offer to Connect from their LDC or the OPA will terminate their application.
- Redefined Nameplate Capacity rule for solar PV systems (the maximum rate of system output) restricts all system elements to under 10 kW. The new rule ultimately inhibits full cost-optimization of the installation. By buying up to 30% more PV capacity (13 kW) than the inverter (10 kW) the investment quality could be improved by a few percent after taxes. This definition change will have a subtle but broad impact across the industry and will make some products far less attractive than they have been.

Despite significant program changes, MicroFIT projects can still be economically viable because supply pricing has dropped in tandem. In fact, with reduced product price, there is still the opportunity to make an after-tax return on investment of up to 10% and even more if your organization doesn't pay taxes on income. The optimal MicroFIT investments will be full 10kW rooftop systems. After-tax Return On Investment decreases with system size to the point where they may not be economically viable below 2 or 3 kW.

For more information about the MicroFIT program, to download official program documents or to apply, go to <http://microfit.powerauthority.on.ca/>. If you are interested in learning more about the program, you can contact me at [EcoGen Energy](#) or let REAL know if you would be interested in attending an information seminar on these developments.

REAL Prepares to Launch New Service – Regional Take It Back Directory

“Where can I take this?”

That’s one of the most common questions we get at the REAL Deal Reuse Store. Conscientious people, who want to ensure that their waste item is reused, recycled or properly disposed of, regularly bring in items that we can’t take, but we want to provide them with answers.



There has been a rather quiet revolution in Ontario in how we handle much of our waste. Rather than all waste going to a municipality, some waste is now going directly back to retailers, manufacturers and to other organizations. This is called Producer Responsibility and means the producer bears the cost of reusing, recycling or disposing of the waste, instead of the taxpayer. Ideally, it will mean that the producer uses their creativity to figure out how to manufacture products that are easy to reuse or recycle, closing the loop on waste.

REAL has been working to bring together all the available information on local retailers and other organizations that take back such waste, and to provide an easy to access online directory for people to use. We have had the support of the municipalities of North Grenville, Smiths Falls, Perth, and Mississippi Mills to do this. And, we have the long-term partnership and support of iWasteNot in providing their online Recyclopedica system.

We are close to formally launching the system, and invite people to start to use it, and to provide feedback to us. You can access the site two ways: go to www.REALaction.ca, under the WASTE tab, click on Take it Back Recyclopedica or go directly to Recyclopedica www.recyclopedica.net. Choose your community, then choose the item you want to dispose. You will find listings of retailers and non-profit organizations that take those items in the communities in which you shop, making it easy for you to take the item back.

The number and variety of items that you can now take back is impressive. Because of the support from the four particular municipalities, we have focused on the communities there. If your municipality is not involved, please encourage them to do so, or contact us. And, if you know of any changes, additions or deletions, please get in touch at 613-283-9500 or sbrandum@cogeco.ca.

Emma Gunn, REAL Summer Student

I am a third-year geography student currently studying at Queen’s University. I am interested in learning about current issues relating to the environment and enjoy participating as much as possible in activities with primary goals to keep the environment clean. I have taken many classes at Queen’s that address environmental issues, such as climate change, the impacts of climate change on arctic environments and changing wildlife issues. As well, I volunteered at the Earth Centre, an environmental store on campus. While volunteering there, I promoted the purchasing of biodegradable products as well as on campus events, including environmental lectures.

This summer, I was offered a two-month position with REAL. As the summer student, I worked one day in the REAL environmental office and three days in the REAL DEAL store. I spent a lot of time adding useful information to REAL’s Take It Back Directory for the Smiths Falls area, as well as raising public awareness about important environmental issues by creating posters and other educational advertising for the store. These posters included practical information such as water conservation tips. During my time in the store, I promoted the donation and purchase of used items to divert waste from landfills. I had a rewarding experience working for REAL. The knowledge that I have gained will assist me as I continue in my studies.

Community Garden Activities

Despite the drought, most of the plots in the REAL Community Garden continue to do well, especially those that were intensively watered during the drought. Thanks to Canada World Youth participants Kirah and Odilila for helping to keep the five water barrels topped up. Unfortunately, more animal scavenging was an issue this year, as groundhogs and rabbits were snacking on whatever they fancied, particularly lettuce, beans and the cruciferous vegetables.

Cooking with Vegetables



The garden participants were invited to a Cooking from the Garden session planned by Megan Burns, dietetic intern with

the Community Health Centre. On August 28 they gathered in the Community Centre kitchen to learn to prepare dishes using produce they had grown: beet bundt cake, tzatziki, lacto fermented dilly beans and vegetarian chili. Thanks to Cheryl Nash of ecoPerth and Lanark Slow Food, and Sarah Mackenzie of Hollyhock Grange, for filling in the holes on the produce shopping list.

Mid-summer planting

Some plants are done producing for the year and a few didn't work out or dried out, but that leaves some space in the gardens to fill! Cheryl Nash talked to the gardeners on August 23 about things that can be started now and grown over the next few months. Spinach, lettuce, kale, beans, turnip and radish are some of the possibilities for a late, second crop. Ever hopeful, Kirah and Odilila also planted some pea seeds. Cheryl also touched on the importance of saving seed from this year's plants, as they will have adapted to the drought conditions and will be more resilient if grown out in another dry season.



Stone Soup Sharing Garden

We took advantage of the gathering of gardeners to announce the availability of the Stone Soup Sharing Garden. Both last year and this year, we have had one or more mystery harvesters, people who have helped themselves to some of the produce just as it was ready to harvest. This was particularly disappointing to the Youth Club last year, looking forward to trying their eggplant for the first time, and to Skills Link this year, only a day away from harvesting their two watermelons when they were taken.

Consequently, the Steering Committee decided to build a Sharing Garden this year – the public is free to help themselves to whatever is produced in that



bed – it is clearly marked - and you are requested to leave the other beds for the plot holders. Tomatoes are coming on, some spinach is ready, and there will be peppers and brussel sprouts soon. Lettuce and kale have just been planted. Sweet potatoes will be ready for harvesting later in the fall. Please help yourself, but as in the Stone Soup story, think of sharing.

Seed Saving Workshop

Additional workshops on seed saving for the public are being planned. Carol and Robert Mouck, founders of the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary in Kingston, will be presenting the first session on Sunday, September 30. Contact Cheryl 613-268-2907 or cheryl@ecoperth.on.ca if you'd like to know more.

REAL Deal Powers On



We are very pleased to have full power back in the store. In December it was determined there was a break in an underground cable, but it was decided to wait for the ground to thaw so the entire aging cable could be replaced. In the meantime we did not have sufficient electrical power for all needed appliances, including fans to beat the heat. Thanks to Crosbie Electric and the Town of Smiths Falls for seeing that the job got done.

REAL Deal staff were very pleased with the results of the "Big Summer Sale", when everything in the store was 50% off. Many items were flying out the door that Friday and Saturday, July 20 and 21, and the sale brought many new customers to the store as well. Look for the sale to be repeated! The store has also had visitors from all over the area who saw us on Regional Contact, and have dropped in on their summer rambles.

The rearranging in the REAL Deal Store continues thanks to the efforts of the dynamic duo Nancy Berthiaume and Bill Hamilton. The hardware and renovation supply area has been expanded and display options improved. Several renovation items that had not moved in a long time finally sold as a result. Next on the list of renovations is to make better use of the oil tank room, which is not required since our conversion to propane heat last winter. The room is on the right as you enter the store and extends the length of the kitchenware/smalls area. One major outcome of these changes is that we will be able to display more furniture, including what is being stored in the trailer.

Sales have remained strong in the summer, although donations declined somewhat. This is likely a result of the heat, and also because fewer people were holding their own garage sales and passing on the remainders. We fully expect donations to bounce back with the cooler weather. We took advantage of that lull to do some culling and rearranging.

If you have students in the family setting up new households in September, send them over to the REAL Deal. We have lots of appliances, dishes, housewares, furniture and small appliances that might be just what they need. Until September 1, students will receive a 50% discount on those purchases if they present a valid student card. We also have a good supply of glasses, plates and mugs in our outdoor free section.



The REAL Deal would not be possible without our terrific volunteers. But some of our finest have moved on, and we have an urgent need for additional volunteers to sort, price, test appliances, and generally help out. Just a few hours commitment per week is necessary. Please contact Tracy, the Store Manager, to discuss the possibilities. We would appreciate a complete Volunteer Application form to help us get to know you. Pick one up at the store or print it out from our website.



In REAL Life

Thanks to community members who donated their empties to REAL at our third annual bottle drive at The Beer Store, Smiths Falls on August 10 and 11. \$450 was raised. Thanks, too, to our volunteers, and especially to Cathryn and Dan Davidson for pulling the event together.



Our Canada World Youth team have been with us since late July: Kirah Corfe, from Langley, B.C., and Odilila Pineda from Honduras. The pair are working in the REAL Deal Store and will be taking on an additional project that we will report on next issue.

REAL volunteers were treated to a day of fun in the sun at Brenda King's cottage on August 21. If you missed this day out, we'll be doing it again the third Tuesday in August next year. Thanks, Brenda, for your hospitality and for feeding us so well.



REAL will be participating in the third annual Volunteer Fair this October 10, 2012 at the Smiths Falls Memorial Arena. Come browse the various organizations to find a match for your interests and talents. It's also a great opportunity to network and find out about the great work that these organizations do in our community.



We regret to announce that due to unforeseen volunteer issues, the Golf Tournament scheduled for September 15 at Lombard Glen has been cancelled.



Mark your calendars for our 14th concert by the Central Band of the Canadian Forces. "Prelude to Christmas" will take place Wednesday December 5. If you have time to contribute to organizing this fundraising event, please contact Peter Au at peter00au@gmail.com or 284-8338. Tickets will be available sometime in October – check the website for outlets.



Just a reminder that the Smiths Falls community compost site is open every Saturday from the first Saturday in May to the last Saturday in November 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The site is located along Highway 43 (east of Hillcrest Cemetery). It accepts leaves, grass clippings and brush from Smiths Falls residents only.

- Traditional air conditioners are energy guzzlers, is there any other way? <http://www.emagazine.com/earth-talk/airconditioning-alternatives>
- What are you prepared to do about climate change? Hear what other Canadians are saying from CBC's August 19 edition of Cross Country Checkup. <http://www.cbc.ca/checkup/main-blog/2012/08/19/what-are-you-prepared-to-do-about-climate-change/>
- The Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas is a database that allows managers to assess the Quantity, Quality and Regulatory and Reputational Risks of water supplies around the world. <http://insights.wri.org/aqueduct/atlas>
- Another great source of website references on "all over the map" environmental topics is REAL's own Facebook page. If you are a Facebook user, please join "Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)" to see references other members have found interesting. If you are specifically interested in gardening references, see the group "Smiths Falls, REAL Community Garden".

<http://www>

Box 1061
Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
613-283-9500
info@REALaction.ca

We're on the Web
www.REALaction.ca

**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, Energy Audits,
RAIN or other programs
Phone: 613-283-9500

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

**Corporate
Membership**

REAL sincerely appreciates the support of its corporate members. If your business or organization would like to become a member of REAL, please contact Carolyn Fraser at (613) 283-6858 or fraser@superaje.com.

Andress' Independent Grocer
Civitan Club
Cogeco Cable Inc.
Denny K's Care Care
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley
The Garden Market
Healey Transportation Ltd.
Dr. David Hicks
Kilmarnock Enterprises
Evelyn Lee
RANA International Inc.
Renewable Energy of Plum Hollow

Rideau Home Hardware Building Centre
Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
Rotary Club of Smiths Falls
Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 95
Royal LePage Pauline Aunger Real Estate
Scotiabank Smiths Falls
Smiths Falls Lions Club
Sun Life Insurance
Tim Hortons of Smiths Falls
Top Drawer Temporary Services
Town of Smiths Falls



"World Heritage at our Door Steps" fundraising event for the Rideau Roundtable, Wednesday Sept 19 at Hotel Kenney, Jones Falls. Dinner, voyageur canoe tour and guest speaker Doug Stewart, former Superintendent of the Rideau Canal. \$60 per person. Contact Stew Hamill for reservations: (613) 269-3415.

**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