

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

FEBRUARY 2023

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Good Reasons for Recycling Electronics Waste

If your family acquired new electronics over holidays, you may be looking to unload some unused devices. The REAL Deal store accepts electronics waste from households during store hours at no charge.

The rapid growth in electronics technology means that people are replacing their devices frequently. For example, Americans are replacing their phones on average every 21 months. E-waste is the fastest growing category of municipal waste. The EPRA (Extended Producer Responsibility Association) manages government programs set up in Canada to collect and responsibly recycle electronic waste. Recently Canadians have reached the milestone of 1 million tonnes of electronic waste recycled! There are lots of good reasons for taking the time to bring your e-waste to REAL or to other registered EPRA depots.

- Diverts these items from landfills, where the toxic materials such as mercury and lead can leach into the environment.
- Breaks the electronics into constituent parts so that any waste can be disposed of responsibly.
- Recovers valuable materials from the electronics like glass, plastic, gold, silver, copper and palladium.
- Many of these materials can be used over and over without losing their properties.
- Materials recovered can be put back into the manufacturing supply chain, conserving natural resources.
- This also reduces the need to mine virgin materials and the associated costs and environmental effects.
- Recycling recovers "rare earth" metals used in high tech devices that are sparse or hard to extract. Examples are neodymium and dysprosium.



Canadians have now recycled 1 million tonnes of electronic waste through EPRA programs.

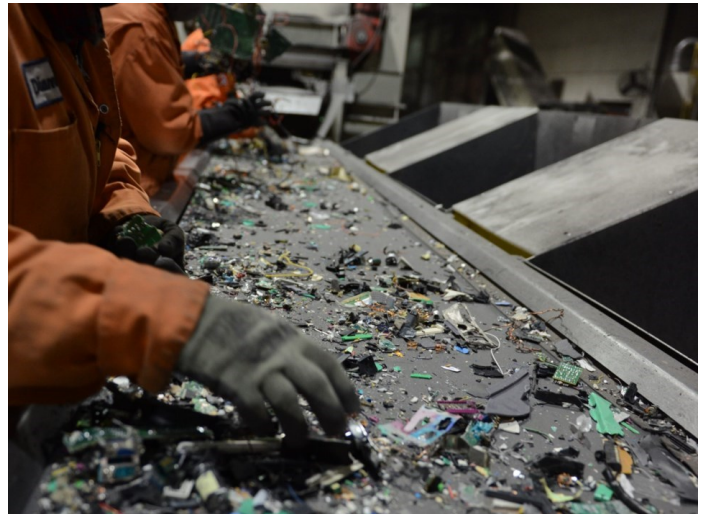
(continued inside...)



Good Reasons for Recycling Electronics (continued)

- In recycling facilities, strict protocols protect the health and safety of the workers. For example, exposure to cadmium, beryllium or arsenic can be dangerous.
- The facilities create jobs in Ontario and Canada.
- Using EPRA depots will prevent illegal export to irresponsible recyclers who put workers and the environment at risk by accepting lower standards.
- And finally, the electronic materials brought to the black bin at the REAL Deal earn our non-profit cash by its weight, which supports the REAL Deal Store and other REAL programs.

Please consult the list on the back cover for what is accepted, and contact us if you are not sure.



Electronics are dismantled at EPRA-approved facilities. Substances of concern are removed for proper disposal, and materials like glass, plastic and metals are separated so they can be processed into new products.

Dawn Quinn New Rep to REAL Board

We are thrilled to announce the appointment of Dawn Quinn, Town Councillor, as REAL's Town Council Liaison person. Dawn will participate on our Board and be an information conduit between our Board and Town Council. Council has once again voted to provide REAL with a \$7500 Community Grant to help maintain our programs in this community. Dawn is no stranger to REAL

and or to Council, as she has just been re-elected after a one term absence. We look forward to tapping into her enthusiasm for the Smiths Falls community and the local environment.

Past Town Council Liaison reps have been Ken Graham, Lorraine Allen and Niki Dwyer.



No Scavenging Permitted in our E-waste, Scrap Metal or Garbage

Sorry, we cannot permit customers to rummage or remove materials from our electronics waste bin or scrap metal bin. They are a source of revenue for us. Accessing those bins can be dangerous, and we would hate to see anyone injured. In the case of computers and personal devices, there are also privacy issues.

Please do not enter our garbage dumpster either. We only discard items as a last resort, there is often broken glass in there. Staff arrange the materials to maximize bin capacity and reduce our flat rate tip charge, so scattering it is not appreciated.

Smiths Falls Fighting Climate Change with Biochar Project

By Nathaniel Morris

The Town of Smiths Falls is committed to fighting climate change through the production of biochar using municipal green waste. A nonprofit organization called The Rideau Roundtable will be leading the project. The project aims to produce carbon credits that can be sold to help fund the effort.

Biochar is a form of charcoal that is created by heating organic matter, such as wood or green waste, in the absence of oxygen. The result is a highly porous material that can be added to soil to improve its fertility and ability to retain water.

One of the key benefits of biochar is its ability to sequester carbon, which is a critical component in the fight against climate change. When organic matter is converted into biochar, the carbon it contains is effectively removed from the carbon cycle and stored in the soil for hundreds or even thousands of years. This can help to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and mitigate the effects of climate change.

The Town of Smiths Falls is well-suited for the production of biochar, as it has a large amount of green waste generated from the community's yard waste and park maintenance. Using this waste stream to produce biochar creates a valuable resource for improving soil health and sequestering carbon.

To achieve this goal, The Rideau Roundtable will work with local organizations and businesses to set up a biochar production facility. This facility will use ancient aboriginal technology to convert green waste into biochar in an efficient and sustainable manner. The biochar will then be made available to farmers and gardeners in the community, as well as for use in municipal landscaping projects. The production of biochar will also generate carbon credits which will be sold to help fund the effort.

In addition to the production of biochar, The Rideau Roundtable will also work to educate the community about the benefits of biochar and the importance of carbon sequestration in the fight against climate change. We will promote the use of biochar in local agriculture, horticulture and landscaping through workshops, demonstration projects, and by providing technical assistance.

We are committed to working with our partners to create a sustainable future for the Town of Smiths Falls, and believe that the production of biochar from green waste can play a significant role in achieving that goal. We will do our best to contribute to a healthier, more livable community and a more sustainable planet.



A potential site layout for the biochar operation at the Town of Smiths Falls Compost site, off of Hwy 43 just west of Town, just before Hillcrest Cemetery.

Biochar is created by burning brush, wood, leaves and other plant matter in a low oxygen environment and then quenching it with water to stop the process.

A main benefit of biochar is trapping carbon within the biomass.

Supporting Monarchs at Home

With vibrant orange and black wings that streak across the sky, the monarch butterfly is one of North America's most iconic species. In July 2022, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reclassified the migratory butterfly known for its spectacular annual journey of up to 4,000 kilometres across the Americas, as "endangered". It had previously been classified as "declining".

Threatened with widespread habitat loss, increased use of pesticides, and climate change impacts, monarchs have suffered a population decline of 90% in recent decades. For monarchs, the decline is linked to a decline in milkweed, the only plant that monarchs use for laying their eggs and the only food that monarch caterpillars eat. Without milkweed, monarchs can't complete their life cycle and populations plummet. The Canadian Wildlife Federation is restoring the monarch's habitat by engaging communities in recovery



A springtime view of one of REAL's monarch gardens on the REAL Deal site.

efforts and empowering people to grow native plants like milkweed in the places where they live, work and play. There are several milkweed species that do well locally.

REAL's four monarch gardens, two at the REAL DEAL store and two in the Town Square between the library and the Visitor Centre, are examples of what can be done on your own property to attract monarchs and other butterflies. Support from the Saumures and Rideau Home Hardware will ensure that the bandstand envisioned by Tom Foulkes will be installed this May. Once the paths and other features are added, REAL will be able to add the four native trees we had planned to go along with the two gardens.

If you would like to visit other pollinator gardens, this map [Pollinator habitat in action](https://wildpollinators-pollinisateurssauvages.ca) provides links to some great area gardens. The website itself <https://wildpollinators-pollinisateurssauvages.ca> is well worth a look for inspiration and resources.

Gardening in the REAL World

Seeds. A limited quantity of milkweed and other native wildflower seeds collected from REAL's gardens will be for sale once again this spring at the REAL DEAL Store.

Rain barrels. Plans are underway for another "truckload" rain barrel sale, tentatively Sat. May 27. Rain barrels collect rain from your roof and will help ensure your plants will have the water they need during dry periods. Place your order online, even pay in advance, for pickup on sale day.

Mushroom Compost. Trinity United Church will be selling mushroom compost, a great additive for your garden, from the REAL Deal parking lot starting the Victoria Day weekend. You will be able to pick up yours on the rain barrel sale day also.

Composters. If you didn't get a chance to purchase an Earth Machine composter last year, we still have some available for just \$50. Take a walk over to our Compost Demonstration Site to see various styles of composters in action.

REAL Deal and Reno Materials

When REAL's original Reuse Centre developed into the REAL Deal Store, a priority was to increase its capacity to accept and sell more and larger items, including furniture, lawn furniture, garden and sports equipment. A second stage was to move into the area of used building materials. Roughly a quarter of the solid waste in Canada's municipal waste streams is generated by construction, renovation and demolition activities. We knew then in 2005, from the emergence of reuse stores such as Habitat for Humanity's ReStore and informal exchange sites at various landfills, that much of those materials can be reused. People are looking for more eco-friendly and budget friendly options and are willing to put a little effort into sourcing materials.

Reno Materials Sell! The REAL Deal has been successful in diverting that type of material from landfill. In 2021 the combined revenue from doors and windows, lighting, hardware, yard and garden, and reno materials totalled 37% of the dollar value of REAL Deal sales. Accepting and reselling this type of material is what makes the REAL Deal unique amongst other area thrift and reuse stores.

Think Second Hand First. You can help by keeping the REAL Deal in mind when you are doing renovations, downsizing or cleaning out your garage or workshop. What was once useful for you is likely useful for someone else. If you are having a contractor do renovation work for you, talk to them about saving good reusable materials for REAL Deal.

Encourage them to remove materials such as cabinets, countertops and vanities carefully so they are in usable condition for donation. If you are about to embark on anything from a small fix-it project to larger home or cottage renovations, Think Second Hand First! You may be able to find just what you need, in the quantity you need, for a great price.

In the Yard. In the yard behind the store you will find materials like sinks, exterior doors, bricks, scrap lumber, metal pipes, eavestroughing, garden supplies and outdoor furniture that don't mind the weather. You can enter directly from the parking lot or from the centre garage door in the store. Windows are kept in a "cage" between the store

and the dome, just off the parking area.



Exterior doors and other materials like sinks, windows, lumber and garden furniture area out in the yard.

The Dome. In the dome you will find interior doors, outdoor lighting, tiles, sports equipment, luggage and occasionally flooring or carpets. Don't forget the other little odds and ends necessary for your projects. We have a variety of door knobs, hooks, handles, fasteners, floor registers, painting supplies and tools. We have electrical supplies like sockets, junction boxes and switch plate covers and plumbing materials. We accept all of these items by donation, so we have a little bit of everything, but only have what we have. Materials are probably about as scrupulously organized as your own hardware collection. Be prepared to hunt a bit, and ask for assistance if you can't find what you are looking for. We maintain a wish book inside the store where you can record your requests, so we will be able to contact you should the item be donated.

What We Accept. Please [consult our website realaction.ca](https://realaction.ca) for what we can and can't accept. If you are still unsure, please call ahead to 283-7999 and speak to Dan. We would also appreciate advance warning of large donations so we can be sure to arrange have enough help to unload, space to put your donations, and time to do it before closing time. The REAL Deal reserves the right to refuse any donation if we are overstocked or feel it would not sell. Staff have learned from experience that there are some things nobody wants and that will not sell and just take up space. REAL has to pay for garbage disposal just like everyone else.

Winter Fun

Winter can feel very long if you are intent on hibernating inside. Why not make an effort to spend some more time outside enjoying the natural world? The Canadian Wildlife Federation has a list of 50 ideas for winter fun. Here are just a few of them:

- Build a winter bonfire and make s'mores.
- Take a hike: with your family, with your dog! Just go for a walk.
- Download your free iNaturalist app at [iNaturalist.ca](https://www.inaturalist.ca) and record your observations and be a citizen scientist.
- Feed the birds or go birdwatching. With no leaves on many of the trees they're easy to spot.
- Make your own birdfeeders out of pinecones, peanut butter, and birdseed.
- Go on a winter picnic. Take blankets, sandwiches and hot soup in a thermos.
- Go on a photo expedition to take pictures of winter landscapes, black and white or colour.

The full list is available here: <https://cwfc-fcf.org/en/explore/below-zero/lets-play.html>



Available to Borrow from REAL

- ♦ **Killawatt Meter**—a device that allows you to measure the electrical consumption of plugged in appliances
- ♦ **Radon Meter**— radon is an odourless gas that seeps into homes from surrounding soil, and is the second leading cause of lung cancer next to smoking.
- ♦ **Air Quality Meter**— we have a meter you can use to measure particulate matter, carbon dioxide and formaldehyde in your home.
- ♦ **Food Cycler**—you can give our countertop electric composter a try for three weeks to see if it fits your lifestyle
- ♦ **Tools**—check out what is available in our [Tool Library](#) for your next project.



To find out more:

- ♦ See our website www.REALaction.ca
- ♦ Email info@realaction.ca
- ♦ Phone store: (613) 283-7999

In REAL Life

Trees for Schools. REAL is determined that this is the year we get thirty trees in the ground. We set this goal at the time of our 30th anniversary in 2019, but various hiccups have delayed our project. We are in discussions with eight local schools to plant four or five trees in each location this spring. These will not be seedlings but substantial trees, approximately 8 feet high. Spearheading the project for REAL are Peter Au and Donna McKenna. Beth Sinclair, who with her husband Craig Sinclair made headline news for the bylaw issue over their naturalized front yard, has volunteered to coordinate with the schools. The schools themselves will be involved in selecting the native trees they would like to see on their schoolgrounds, based on the tree's characteristics and what they may already be planted there. If you are a parent or a student at a local school, there may be an opportunity to volunteer on planting day. Contact the principal or School Council if you are interested.



EcolceGrip a Safer Alternative to Road Salt. You will be impressed at how effective these locally-made, treated wood chips are for increasing traction on your driveway and walkways. Ecolce is non-corrosive, does not contaminate water, is safe for pet paws, and can be used as compost or mulch in the spring. Get your 20 litre bags for \$15 (\$1.327 plus tax) at the store. A bag weighs just 7 kg. and so is easy to transport and handle. The product is in the yard in front of the dome, but please remember that all payments must be made inside at the cash.



**RIDEAU
ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE**

Membership Renewal. If you are not already a member of REAL, this is a good time to join. In February we ask our members to renew their commitment to our organization, and we are always happy to add people to our list! Individual membership are just \$15, family memberships \$20 and student memberships \$5. Members receive our newsletter five times a year, notices of environmental events or volunteer opportunities, and have the right to vote at our Annual General Meeting. Our annual report is made available at this time as well, and provides a snap shot of what we have been up to over the year. We sincerely appreciate everyone's support of environmental action in our community. Together we can do even more! Members and those on our Mail-Chimp list will receive renewal information and an annual report by the end of February. But if you want to get started now, [click here](#).

**Journey to Sustainability Presents:
PAN-CANADIAN FRAMEWORK ON CLEAN GROWTH
AND CLIMATE CHANGE & HEAT PUMP INITIATIVE
Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.**



Presenter Dann Farcsiu, B.Eng. C.E.T., is well-versed in government plans and targets related to climate change. She will share her insight into what is happening today for a better tomorrow.

The international community has agreed that tackling climate change is an urgent priority and has set targets for 2030. Review with Dana how Canada is addressing the framework of change.

Please preregister using [this link](#).

**RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE**

Box 1061
Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
info@REALaction.ca

www.REALaction.ca

**REAL Deal Store &
Environment Centre**

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

Open Wednesday
through Saturdays
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Ask about our
new Tool Library**

For Home Energy Audits, contact
John Appleby at:
jappleby@realaction.ca

**Find us on
Facebook and
Instagram**

Send contributions to the
April issue by March 15 to
dhicks11@cogeco.ca
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Accepted Materials for Electronic Recycling

Householders are welcome to drop off end-of-life electronics by the black bin at the REAL Deal Store during store hours. They will be recycled responsibly in Ontario through the EPRA (Extended Producer Responsibility Association) Program.



Display Devices



Drones



Home Audio/Video Systems



Desktop Computers



Home Theatre In-A-Box (HTB)
Systems



Cameras & Security Cameras



Vehicle Audio/Video Systems
(aftermarket)



Portable Computers



Personal/Portable
Audio/Video Systems



Musical Instruments &
Recording Equipment



Floor Standing Printers &
Printer Cartridges



Video Gaming Systems &
Peripherals



Computer Peripherals
routers, Cables, Chargers, USB



IT & Telecom Equipment
Hard Drives, Servers, Microfilm
Readers, Binding Machines,
Postage Franking Machines &
Check Filler Machines



Desktop Printing/ Multi-
Function Devices, 3D Printers
& Printer Cartridges



Phones
Telephones, Cellular & Smart
Phone Devices, Pagers

REMINDERS Do not place in front of bin doors | Do not enter the bin | Do not
remove items from bin | Cords and cables OK | No tapes, CDs, DVDs, or VHS
Ask inside or phone 283-7999 if you need clarification

**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

Join our Email List

Use the green signup button on the
bottom of our homepage.

Contact Information

Name

Street/RR Address

Town, Province

Postal Code

Home Phone

Work Phone

Best time to reach me

Email address