

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

APRIL 2024

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Garden Fundraiser

Rain Barrels and Native Plants

Sat., May 11, 2024
10 am - 2 pm

at the REAL Deal Store
85 William St. W., Smiths Falls

Preorder and pay online
at rainbarrel.ca/REAL Deal
for pickup May 11

For barrel details contact
Lauralee Merkley
(llmerkley64@gmail.com)
(613) 283-3069

Proceeds to REAL's
Monarch Gardens.
on REAL Deal site.

Native plants including
milkweed from Grow Wild in
Omeme.

Tree saplings from Ferguson
Forest Centre, Kemptville

Seeds from REAL's garden

Mushroom compost to benefit
Trinity United Church

Please bring cash.
For more info:
www.REALaction.ca



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REAL Deal by the Numbers

REAL's and the REAL Deal's fiscal and report year runs from Feb. 1 to Jan 31, so we now have some numbers to report for 2023-2024.

Overall sales held steady in the year 2023-2024 over the year before, but we did welcome more customers to the store. 9783 people made purchases, but this of course does not account for browsers!

The relative rankings of the municipalities for donations and purchase have not changed substantially. 41% of our donations come from Smiths Falls, and 17% from Rideau Lakes. Similar numbers were resulted from purchases: 39% from Smiths Falls and 17% from Rideau Lakes. Neighbouring municipalities account for most of the remainder: Drummond / North Elmsley, Montague, Merrickville Wolford and Perth. The proportion of purchasers coming from outside of Lanark Leeds and Grenville (LLG) continues to rise, and is now at 12%.

The percentage sales across departments has not changed a lot. We are now tracking "Antiques and Collectibles" as a distinct category, and have discovered it does very well. This past year the percentage of sales were Décor 13%, Antiques and Collectibles 11%, Housewares 11%, Yard and Garden 10%, Furniture 8.5% and Sports and Leisure 6.5%.

Saturdays continue to be our biggest sale day (29%). This is, understandably, the day that more people from outside LLG come to see what the REAL Deal has to offer.



Don't



Time for Everyone to Pitch In



The Pitch In team has been getting things rolling for this year's edition of Pitch-In Smiths Falls, a two week community litter cleanup, April 20 – May 4. We welcome Joanne Constantine to the team of Donna McKenna, Brenda King, Cathryn Davidson and Barb Hicks. Past participants are being contacted. A supply package, including bags, will be available at the store starting April 10. We won't be matching people to particular sites, but if you know where you are heading, please indicate when you pick up your bucket so others will know to head somewhere else. There is lots of garbage to go around!

Remember to leave your filled Pitch In bags in a visible, accessible location for pickup by Town staff and fill out the online Pitch In response form to let us know how you did.

We will wind up with a Shoreline Cleanup on Saturday May 4th. Join us at 10 a.m. at the Bascule Bridge or at 1 p.m. at the Jasper Road boat launch (or both if you are feeling energetic.) **This is a good option if you would prefer to work in a group.** We will bring the bags for this day! We would appreciate preregistration to PitchInSF@REALaction.ca so that we can assign some people to additional locations if we have enough bodies. Or call Joanne at (613) 447-6709. Get more details [on the webpage](#).

We love to see photos, so please pass any along and your name will be entered in a draw for a prize!

Katie Hoffman Says Goodbye

REAL President Katie Hoffman, has bid goodbye to the REAL Board as she leaves to pursue other volunteer opportunities and spend more time with her husband, David. Katie has been part of the REAL Board since June 2018, has served as President since July 2019. Katie was involved with the Tool Library, REAL Deal and Community Garden projects. Katie will be continuing to look after the radon meter rentals.

We wish her well, and are sure we will be running into her here and there around town as she is one busy lady! Her resignation took effect March 1. Karen Schecter, Vice President, will be in charge at least until our June AGM. Any other concerns, please get in touch and your inquiry will be directed.

This leaves our board with five members: Karen Schecter, Dave Thornley, Barb Hicks, Donna McKenna and Peter Au. We are always on the lookout for new board members. Please give some thought to becoming part of the team.



Katie with some of the paper straws REAL suggested that local restaurants use instead of plastic.

Time to Take Action—Join Our Board



If the state of the local environment concerns you, here's an opportunity to put your conviction into action. REAL is recruiting new board members to serve a minimum of a two-year term. Our board regroups each year at the time of our June AGM, so this is a good time of year to step up.

We need you! There is so much more that could be done to improve the environment, educate the public, and provide opportunities for environmental action in our community. It takes committed people and it does take time, but the progress we make can be very rewarding.

If you are new to REAL or to the community, we would love to have you join us. Take a look at [our website](#), and [our recent Annual Report](#). New perspectives are a valuable addition to our discussions. Working with REAL is a great way to meet new people and further understand our region. All it takes is an interest in the environment and a willingness to do something about it. [More information and a job description](#) are available on our website.

If you are ready to be involved, please send us a letter expressing your interest to Karen Schecter at schecter karen@gmail.com. Include a resume or short bio if you can. If you would like more information or to discuss the possibilities, please provide a phone number and the best time to reach you. We often start by having you attend one of our board meetings, which are currently the third Tuesday afternoon of the month by Zoom.

PITCH IN Smiths Falls



RIDEAU
ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE

APRIL 20TH - MAY 4TH, 2024

Lets keep our community clean!

SHORELINE CLEANUP

Sat. May 4th

10 am - Bascule Bridge

1 pm - Jasper Rd. Boat Launch
near Eric Hutchinson Rd.

*Please preregister with Joanne
at PitchInSf@REALaction.ca or
call (613) 447 6709.*



Contact

PitchInSF@REALAction.ca

The REAL Deal Store

(613) 283-7999

85 William St. W.,

Smiths Falls ON

www.realaction.ca

Volunteer as an individual or
as a group to collect garbage
within the two week cleanup
period.

Bags available from *The
REAL Deal Store* from April
10th (Open Wed-Sat,
10-5pm).

Participants names will be
entered in a draw for prizes.
Watch our Facebook page for
updates. #PitchInSF

Mini Forest Plans Progressing

The Mini Forest Committee is looking forward to Saturday, April 13 when the mini forest will begin to take shape. We can still use more volunteers for the teams at noon and 1:30 pm to assist with laying the forest floor. Please contact Dave at Thornley.j.d@gmail.com or (613) 205-0320 if you can help.

Headed up by REAL Board member Dave Thornley, this team has attracted many new REAL volunteers who are enthusiastic to see this addition to Corbett Park. There has been lots of behind the scenes activity to make sure the necessary components are ready for the soil preparation on April 13th.

April 13. The forest shape will be marked out the week before. Volunteers have been saving large sheets of cardboard to put down as the first layer. Thanks to Canadian Tire, The Vineyard, Lacey's, the Independent Grocer, and McMullan Appliance and Mattress for their help on that one. Gemmills Garden Centre will be bringing water to wet down the cardboard to keep it in place and kickstart the decomposition. The Town of Smiths Falls has agreed to provide the leaves, compost and wood chips from the Community Compost site. Volunteer truck drivers have been enlisted to transport the 120 bags of leaves. The Town of Smiths Falls will be delivering the truck loads of compost and woodchips.

Community. Fliers (see back page) have been delivered to homes in the area so people will know what is happening. Team members have also made contact with the Service Club presidents, Duncan J.

Schoular School, SFDCI and indigenous groups. Notices have appeared in the Hometown News as well as the Smiths Falls Record Journal.

Following April 13. Once the layers are placed, the forest will be ringed with some large boulders, which will be donated and placed by Campbell Trucking in the days following. This will prevent vehicle access, discourage people from walking on the forest site, and will look more natural than a fence. Duncan J. Schoular students will be decorating paint stir sticks (provided by Rideau Home Hardware) to place there as well to discourage foot traffic. There will be some temporary signs to explain to park-goers what is going on, as well as a banner on the fence for those passing by. We hope to create interest in the neighbourhood so there will be some ownership, and perhaps even attract some volunteers.

Plant Selection. A smaller group have taken considerable time taken to select the plants required. The goal is a Keystone forest, which will provide food (fruit, nuts and berries) and shelter for birds, pollinators, caterpillars of Lepidoptera, and other wildlife. It will involve using plant species common to this area. It was quite challenging to get the appropriate proportions for each layer: trees, canopy, understory and shrubs, but also get the right mix of dominant, supporting and rare plants. The team has also established which suppliers we will be able to use for the fall delivery.

Website. We have started a [website page](#) for the mini forest and will be adding to it along the way.

Donations Appreciated.

If you are interested in supporting this project with a financial contribution, you may do so at CanadaHelps.org. When donating to REAL through that site you can use the drop down menu to specify where you would like your money directed.

Tree and shrub layers in a densely planted urban mini forest planted using the Miyawaki Method.



Climate Protection Working Group

by Peter Au

The Smiths Falls Climate Prevention Working Group, CPWG, was formed by the Town of Smiths Falls in early 2023 and held its inaugural meeting in June.

The group is committed to minimizing the harmful impacts of climate change at a local level and helping the Town and community become leaders in creating awareness, fostering the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing our tree canopy, and building resilience to adapt to a changing climate.

Its current membership includes: Joanne Desourmeaux (Chair) Councillor, Peter McKenna (Vice Chair), Mayor Shawn Pankow, Susan Brandum, Peter Au, Steve Gauthier, and Nate Morris. There is also room for two 17-year old youths.

A Communication Plan was identified early in our meetings as necessary for public engagement and participation within the Climate Action Plan. This will focus on a) identify and articulate the main message, and b) identify and connect with the recipients of the message. A detailed strategy has also be developed.

We are working on a Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) Program aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adopting climate change mitigation strategies. The PCP program provides a 5-step Milestone Framework. Creating a Baseline Emission Inventory and Forecast as the first milestone. Data in 2021 was chosen as the base line. Town staff has carefully completed the corporate emissions inventory from its buildings and facilities, fleet vehicles, street lights and traffic signals , solid waste and wastewater infrastructure.

The group has also reviewed the Draft Downtown Core Design Guidelines, particularly for energy-efficiency and environmentally friendliness, plus the existing Tree Canopy and Vegetation Preservation and Enhancement Policy. We were also presented with the Climate Lens assessment tool by its author Bob Argue. Through the spreadsheet various fuels and materials are assigned a value of GHG emissions. For example, using a gas mower for 10 hours would produce 48 kg of GHG whereas using an electric mower for the same time produces 0.26 GHG.

Staff are now getting to work on Milestone 2, Emission Target Reduction.

Dates to Keep in Mind

Saturday, April 13, 9:00 – 3:00 p.m
Mini Forest Site Preparation
 Corbett Park, Empress Ave, Smiths Falls

Saturday, Apr. 20 – Saturday, May 4
Pitch In Smiths Falls
 Various locations

Saturday, April 20, 11 am – 3 pm
2nd Annual EarthFEST
 Market Square, Beckwith St, Carleton Place

Saturday, May 4
Shoreline Cleanup
 Bascule 10 a.m, Jasper Rd 1 p.m.

Sunday, May 5, 10 am – 3 pm
Sustainable North Grenville Sustainability Fair and EV Show, North Grenville
 Municipal Centre, Kemptville

Saturday, May 11, 10 am – 2 pm
Rain Barrel Sale and Garden Fundraiser
 REAL Deal Store, 85 William St. W.

Sunday, June 2, 2 pm – 4 pm
Evergreen Dedication
 Legion Br 95, Smiths Falls

Saturday, June 8
Ecofest Westport
 Lockwood Park, Westport

Saturday, June 15
Rideau Roundtable's Paddlefest
 Lower Reach Park, Smiths Falls

Wednesday, June 19, 7 p.m.
REAL Annual General Meeting
 Zoom or in person TBD

Saturday, August 17, 8 am – 1 pm (yes)
Friends of the Tay Watershed Discovery Day, Crystal Palace, Perth

In REAL Life

GCC Award. John Appleby, one of REAL's Registered Energy Advisors (REAs) was recognized by Green Communities Canada (GCC) for achieving the Single Deepest Energy Retrofit. The award was one of the Advisor Recognition Awards presented in late February 2023. For the home John assessed under the Greener Homes program, the home-owner chose to install a heat pump lowering their energy requirements and then added 14kW of solar capacity to a very energy efficient building envelope creating a Net-Zero home. Congratulations, John! Advisors from Sustainable Kingston, EcoSuperior (Thunder Bay) and REEP Green Solutions (Kitchener) were also recognized.



Batteries. Thanks for bringing us your used household batteries. Valuable metals are recovered from the batteries, and hazardous materials will not be leaching into our water from a landfill site. Place your batteries in the blue recycling bin (bottom right) to the right inside our customer entrance. If you include a quantity of batteries in with other household donations, please try to indicate that the batteries are used and intended for recycling – it will save us some time testing them all!



End of Successful Incentive Program. The Canada Greener Homes Grant has been helping homeowners make energy efficiency upgrades. The grant has been shut down with no replacement in sight. Successful climate-resilience programs should be improved and expanded, not closed. If you haven't already, please write the federal government or sign a petition to prompt the federal government to continue the rebates for energy efficiency upgrades. Here is one from [the GCC website](#).



Membership Renewal. Thanks everyone for getting those membership renewals in. If you haven't already responded to our email request, we're waiting to hear from you! Not a current member? Renewal season is a good time to join, but we welcome new members anytime. Your support is especially important this year as we are facing reduced municipal contributions, increasing expenses and no end to ideas for worthwhile local environmental projects. Individual membership are just \$15, family memberships \$20 and student members \$5. [See the website for payment options..](#)

Resist the Urge to Clean Up Your Garden

It has been especially tempting to many of us, since the snow cover disappeared so early, to get out doing some garden cleanup. But we really should resist the urge to rake until daytime temperatures are consistently (like maybe 10 days or more) over 10°C or 50° F. Many beneficial insects, butterflies and pollinators are sheltering in the leaves (either as adults or eggs or pupae), in the ground, or in the hollowed out stems of last years plants. Leaf litter also provides shelter for overwintering queen bumblebees and many other invertebrates like lace bugs, snails, worms and beetles. They are all best left undisturbed until they are ready to emerge. Wait as long as possible to rake leaves out of your garden beds and remove old stalks.



Here are some details about specific species by the [Peterborough Master Gardeners](#). If you prefer a video, see this one from [Pollination Guelph](#).

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 Tool Library

For Home Energy Audits, contact Alan Leonard at: alanleonard9@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook and Instagram

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

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment



MINI FOREST
Coming to Corbett Park

A mini forest is a community of native trees and shrubs planted tightly together in an urban or suburban site based on the Miyawaki method

What Will be Happening

Saturday April 13

Volunteers are need to help prepare the site with layers of cardboard, leaves, compost and wood chips. Site will be fenced off.

Summer

Layers are left to develop into good forest soil, and temporary signage will be in place to let everyone know what is happening .

A Saturday in October

The site will be marked off in a grid and a mix of canopy, subcanopy, understory and shrubs/groundcovers will be planted in each square by volunteers.

One - three years after planting

Large weeds will be removed . The site will be monitored and and watered 2-3 times a season .

100 sq m

300 plants

20-30 years to maturity

Besides creating a green space for people to enjoy, benefits include increased biodiversity, improved air quality, cooling, reduced runoff, carbon sequestration and increased wildlife habitat.



RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION LEAGUE

www.REALaction.ca

Contact Dave at (613) 205-0320 or thornley.j.d@gmail.com with questions or to volunteer.

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