

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

SEPTEMBER 2026

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Light Bulbs Now Accepted for Recycling!

We are happy to report that you can now bring your light bulbs to the REAL Deal for recycling. ProductCare Recycling is expanding its program in Ontario, and we couldn't resist their offer. You can bring us pretty much any type of lightbulb. Their representatives will come pick them up from the store free of charge and take them to their centres for recycling. REAL will earn a small amount per bulb collected. We have been on the lookout for other "hard to recycle" materials that people cannot put in their municipal recycling bins, so this fits the bill nicely.

Please deposit your bulbs in the blue bin near the customer entrance. This is the same location where people have been depositing their batteries, print and toner cartridges, milk bags and writing instruments. If you have fluorescent

tubes, please bring them to our attention for storage until pickup time. (We will have a smaller container for crayons and glue sticks now as they don't need a whole bin.)

The Ontario Lights Recycling Program accepts end of life CFLs, LEDs, fluorescent tubes, incandescent, halogen, miniature, UV and germicidal bulbs, projector lamps and special purpose bulbs. We cannot take smoke alarms, ballasts or streetlights. String lights are not accepted, but we will still take them in our ewaste. Do not put light fixtures in the lightbulb bin. Give them to our staff who will separate them into cords, fixtures, shades and bulbs and deal with them appropriately. See page 5 for more.

Once collected, the bulbs are sorted by type and broken into their components. The metal goes to smelters and the glass goes to dedicated glass recyclers,

REAL will continue to offer free lightbulbs in the dome. Generally these are packaged so you will know exactly what type and intensity you are getting.

SPENT BULBS PILE UP FAST.

Drop them off in-store.

We'll recycle them for you.



Welcome Celeste to our Team!

We are very pleased to announce the addition of a new board member, Celeste Lacroix. Celeste was voted onto the REAL Board at our June AGM. Celeste retired from a career in IT in Victoria BC and moved to Smiths Falls area with her husband in 2018 to setup a sheep farm. She can be seen at sheepdog herding competitions across Canada. Her farm, Kitley Corners Farm in Jasper, hosts a sheepdog trial in October every year. Her farm life in Ontario is very busy in the warmer seasons and very quiet in colder seasons. She also sits on the board of directors of the Canadian Border Collie Association, the Ontario Border Collie Club, and is an active member of the Friends of the Smiths Falls library. She looks forward to joining the REAL team and contributing to the best of her ability.

This brings our total number of board members to six. If you are passionate about the local environment and motivated to act on it, please get in touch. Our board members agree to two year terms, and the current board can appoint new board members at any time throughout the year.

For brief bios of our board members, [see this page](#).

Online Auction—Nov 12 to 21, 2026

Our annual online auction is returning this fall. (See poster on the back page for key details.) This is our big fundraiser for the year, and there are many ways to show your support.

Auction Items. We have some great gently used items we've been setting aside all year from REAL Deal donations. But we would also like to add to the variety with home made things (food, birdhouses, crafts), eco-friendly gifts, tickets and gift certificates for goods or services. Please [contact Donna](#) by October 20 if you have something to offer and to confirm it is suitable.

Sponsors. We will be approaching past sponsors in a separate letter to request a \$50, \$100, \$150 or \$250 sponsorship, but would love to add you to the list.

Bid and Have Fun. This online auctions is very affordable. There is a good chance you will end up with a treasure that doesn't break the bank. Christmas is coming, maybe you will find something that would make a nice gift! Don't see anything you need? Monetary donations are welcome also.

Tell Your Friends. The more people who know about our auction the better. It really increases the bidding, increases the final purchase prices, and contributes to a general interest in REAL. Share a post, put up a poster or tell you friends. If you are on our MailChimp list, you will be receiving an email, pass that on, too!

More Details.

The link to the auction site will not be active until some time in October. You can browse ahead of time but bids are only accepted starting at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 12.

We hope to display a selection of auction items in the store, too.



Compliance to New Recycling Guidelines in Smiths Falls

Ontario's Common Collections System (CCS) for recycling came into effect January 1, 2026. Most people seem to be adapting pretty well, but there are still a few areas that could stand improvement.

Miller Waste Systems is the company responsible for the recycling collection in many of the area municipalities, including Smiths Falls. They said the biggest problem was residents' adherence to the schedule: knowing which days were fibre (blue box) and containers (yellow box). If the operator notices materials in a bin that should not be there, a little form is left with the box indicating the problem, and the contents of the bin are not collected. If you have questions about the schedule or what is accepted, do not call your municipality. It is no longer their responsibility. However, you will find the contact information on their websites.

The Town of Smiths Falls recently completed a waste audit of 400 homes for a week this past July, looking at the contents of the recycling bins and of the garbage. Their report is not public yet, but here are some of its findings.

Recyclable materials being incorrectly included with household garbage was lower than in previous years.

Problems included:

- Poly-coated beverage and food cartons being placed in the wrong bin.
- Styrofoam meat trays in garbage, while they are now accepted in the current recycling program.
- Food containers that could have been cleaned and recycled
- Households exceeding the two-bag garbage limit without the required bag tags.

About 13% of the materials in the garbage could have been recycled according to the new program, or recycled if they had been cleaned. Here are some items not everyone realizes are accepted: Plastic bags, bubble wrap, takeout containers, hot/cold coffee cups and plastic plant pots.

Contamination of the fibre bins was low, and residents demonstrated strong understanding of fibre recycling requirements.

The container part of the study found contaminants in the yellow boxes, commonly:

- Alcoholic beverage containers, which should be returned through the Beer Store deposit-return program.
- Unwashed containers, including glass, cans, take-out container and Styrofoam trays.

At the REAL Deal store we do get a lot of contaminants as well. Fortunately, someone has to sort through it in gathering it up to take home to our municipal programs and those things get removed. Some common errors: pizza boxes with the dirty liner (or even a knife still in there!), tissues and paper towels, plastic cassette, music or video cases, and other random bits of hard plastic, like toys. Some forms of plastic are recyclable but not all! There are also many things landing in the garbage that could have been recycled.

There is a helpful series of Facebook posts on the Smiths Falls site called Recycle Tip Tuesday which give brief but important rules to remember about recycling. A few of them are included here.



Movies and Music

The REAL Deal accepts most formats of music and movies. Some of course sell better than others! We will take CDs, DVDs, VHS tapes, LPs, cassettes and 8 track tapes. We cannot, however, sell home-recordings, as we cannot guarantee their quality or what was actually recorded, so they will be discarded.

You'd be surprised at the number of people leaving with handfuls of VHS movies, as not many people have working VCRs anymore. (We get them occasionally at the store – best to get your name on our wish list if you want one.) We will not be able to sell VHS fitness tapes or instructional videos. People like their movies, so DVDs sell well.

We don't get many books on cassette tapes or discs anymore, and they don't sell well as people are downloading them, but we will take them. Very few people come looking for eight-track tapes, and the ones we get lean towards country, with the occasional pop recording. Rock music on vinyl or on CDs sell well, as well as easy listening. We tend to get more country and classical music and 78s than we can sell, so we put them out on the free table if we end up with too

many. We get the occasional CD tower, CD sleeves or racks, and cassette "briefcases" as well.

Unfortunately, we have no way of recycling these used items if they do not sell. So if you have something we can't use as mentioned above, please just put it in your own garbage.

Entertainment Price List

Movies

VHS Tapes	1.00
DVDs	2.00
Blue Ray	3.00

Music

Compact Discs	1.00
Rock CD	2.00
Vinyl Records	1.00
Rock LPs	2.00
Cassette Tapes	.50
8 Track Tapes	.50

Other

Video Games	2.00
Audio Books	1.00



The Mini Forest at Corbett-Hyland Park is doing really well. This photo is from August 2026, only 22 months after planting! Three pocket forests are being planted at the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario Mon. Oct. 19 using the same principles. There will be two 7 square foot forests and one 10 square foot forest, each with a different theme. Three eight foot trees will be planted on either side of the pocket forests also.

REAL Deal News

New Faces. It's been a hot busy summer at the REAL Deal, but we have benefitted from some extra help!

The young person we hired through the Canada Summer Jobs grant had to step back for family reasons, so we hired Owyn Tetrault. Owyn did his high school community service hours with us a couple of years ago, primarily in smalls on Saturdays. This summer he was working alongside our other yard staff. We wish him well as he starts his first year at Queen's University.

Two other students getting a jump on their community service hours are twins Chloe and Phoebe Titus. They have been working very diligently on cleaning shelves as well as the merchandise on those shelves. Much appreciated! They will be attending SFDCl in the fall, having moved here from another community.

Some others joined the mix as well. Ben Duhamel is helping out on Saturday afternoons in the Tool Library, fixing things (two lawnmowers in one day!),

testing appliances, computer support and so on. New volunteer Robert Mears is available to help answer any Tool Library questions on Thursday mornings. He has been helping Manager Dan Cunningham with various projects. Mike Johnson has been using his renovation experience to do some culling of items not likely to sell in the dome and yard with his sister, Barb Hicks. Thanks to Diane Pearen for acting as our volunteer Volunteer Coordinator, meeting with the new applicants and getting them oriented.

Regulars. Thanks as always to our dedicated smalls volunteers who make sense of the vast array of things that come in through the back door: Barb, Brenda, Christine, Donna, Edwige, Julia, Lori, Margot, Nancy and Una. Outdoor staff Arnold, Joel, Marshall, and Wolfe, as well as Chester, toughed it out through some very hot days, and had extra mowing, trimming and watering duties thrown in. Cashiers Bev and Heather did what cashiers do as well as directing inquiries and looking after the jewellery and movies. Manager Dan Cunningham is the only person who is there every day!

Light Bulb Collection at the REAL Deal

Accepted Products

✓ Compact fluorescent lights (CFLs)



✓ Fluorescent tubes (straight, curved, U, circular, square etc)



✓ Incandescent and halogen bulbs



✓ Light emitting diodes (LEDs)



✓ High-intensity discharge (HIDs) and special purpose bulbs



✓ UV and germicidal bulbs



Not Accepted Products

✗ Streetlights

✗ Ballasts

✗ Light fixtures

Lights integrated into a product

✗ String Lights

Wetland Awareness Tours 2026



The annual Wetlands Awareness Tours organized by the Rideau Roundtable with sponsorship from REAL took place Saturday, August 22. Participants met in the parking lot next to the Bascule Bridge and were outfitted with paddles and lifejackets for their paddling expedition. Two 34' Montreal canoes were used to tour the provincially significant Class I wetland, also known as "The Swale", on the west side of Smiths Falls. Andrea Howard, the Merrickville Bug Lady and Max Finkelstein, one of Canada's 100 living explorers, were the guest interpreters. See more photos on [Kathy Botham's Facebook page](#) and on the [Hometown Lanark, North Leeds & Grenville](#) page.



In REAL Life

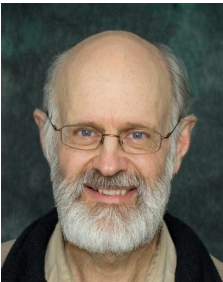
Seeds for Sale. The prepackaged seeds donated by Your Independent Grocer have been selling well, but as sales are slowing down we may be putting them away soon. So please ask if you don't see them. They are still \$1 a packet or 3 for \$2 and for now are in display racks under the third window in the store.



Tool Library. We have a few new additions to the Tool Library which may interest you: a plumbing snake, a Ryobi rotary tool and a sliding compound mitre saw. They will be added to the online catalogue shortly, but they are available to borrow now. Memberships are \$25 for 6 months and \$45 for a year. With that fee you can borrow whatever you need for a week at a time. We have over 100 tools that can be used for your home repair or renovation projects.



Craft Cycle. The Craft Cycle Creative Reuse Centre in Carleton Place is a new enterprise that gives new life to gently used arts and craft supplies. They also offer a variety of workshops for kids and adults at their space within a Touch of Whimsy at 142 Bridge Street. The mother-daughter team visited our store earlier in the summer, and we sent them home with some surplus craft supplies. They made some purchases also! Check their [Facebook page](#) to learn more.



"Have More Fun, Less Stuff". The next Journey to Sustainability (J2S) presentation will be "Have More Fun, Less stuff" with local environmentalist, author and educator Mike Nickerson. It will be on a Wednesday October 14 at 7 p.m. Watch our website and Facebook pages for details. If you are on our mailing list you will hear that way also.



Mystery Gala. The Rotary Club Smiths Falls is hosting a Mystery Gala Sat. Sept 19 to raise funds for the successful Rideau Roundtable EcoLiteracy Program. A performance by Outerbridge Magic will be the entertainment for this cabaret-style mystery evening. at the Smiths Falls Legion 6 – 9 p.m. Tickets available at Tickets Please or through the Smiths Falls book store The Book is Better.



REAL Executive. At their July meeting, the Board agreed on the following roles for the upcoming year: President – Karen Scheceter, Vice-President – Donna McKenna, and Secretary – Barb Hicks. Dave Thornley will remain Treasurer for now, but Celeste Lacroix will be shadowing him to learn the Treasurer's duties, as Dave and his wife Joni will be moving to Brockville this fall.



Thanks, Shawn! Thanks for Mayor Shawn Pankow for his shout out to REAL in his [Facebook post](#): "Today, on Day 19 of my 100 Days of Gratitude, I want to recognize the Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL) and the outstanding work this organization has been doing for the environment, and our community for the past 37 years."

RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE

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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**

**Find us on
Facebook and
Instagram**

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

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

REAL's Annual Fall
**ONLINE
AUCTION**



**Thurs., Nov 12 to
Sat. Nov. 21, 2026**

*Support environmental action
in our community!*

**200 items to bid on:
Collectibles | Christmas |
Local Services |
Art and Entertainment |
Home and Garden |
and other gently used
items donated to the
REAL Deal Store.**

**Bid from your
phone or computer.**

**Collect your treasures
starting Nov. 25
at the REAL Deal Store.**

**Additional auction
donations gratefully
accepted. Contact
andisondj@gmail.com**

32Auctions.com/REAL2026

www.REALAction.ca

**Make a
REAL
Difference**

Please return this form to:
REAL
Box 1061
Smiths Falls, ON
K7A 5A5

Or bring to
The REAL Deal

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☐ 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.

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