



Spring 2022

The View from Foley Mountain *

News from the Friends of Foley Mountain

Box 5, Westport, ON, K0G 1X0

www.friendsoffoleymountain.ca

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It would appear that Spring is finally here! Time to re-visit our Foley Mountain Conservation Area and enjoy its spectacular offerings - the conservation area is a lot of things - a protected greenspace that is home to species at risk, a haven for outdoor recreation enthusiasts for all seasons, an outdoor classroom for educating tomorrow's environmental stewards, and a refuge with gorgeous scenery and views. We couldn't have it any better.

Traditionally, funding for programs and projects that the Friends of Foley Mountain support has been generated from the sale of memberships, individual donations and an annual fund-raising event. Although we haven't done any of the latter since the pandemic measures were imposed, we still have been able to continue to support the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) in providing educational programs for children, in once again offering subsidies for the Forest School and subsidies for busing students from local schools for outdoor education. Rebecca is now busy in the park running these programs.

Your membership in the Friends of Foley Mountain is important to us and to the many families who enjoy and explore Foley Mountain Conservation Area each year. Through your donation to FOFM you are contributing to improving the activities and programs offered to the public. A big thank - you to all those of you who have purchased your 2022 Friends of Foley Mountain memberships. Funds raised through membership sales account for about 60% of our revenues in most years and in the past 2 years have been absolutely critical to our ability to support programs and improvements at Foley Mountain.

I would also like to thank the Lion's Club of Westport for a very substantial donation. With this donation we will be supporting RVCA in their new "story trail adventures" initiative. As explained in the last newsletter this involves posting the pages of nature themed stories along a trail for families to read as well as nature-based activities they can do without any special equipment. RVCA is installing permanent signs to feature various stories throughout the year as well as purchasing books for the installation.

Thanks are also due to Mary Bowlby – Mary recently retired from the Board of Directors after many years of service which included the positions of Secretary and President.

Last but certainly not least – mark your calendars for this year's Annual General Meeting. Once again it will be held virtually on the zoom platform. I have scheduled it for May 25th at 7 p.m. If you wish to participate, please email me at r.a.struthers@live.com so that I can add you to the list of invitees.

Rob Struthers
President

* "The View From Foley Mountain" is used with permission of Peri McQuay, the author of the original book: "The View From Foley Mountain".

The Death of a Deer

(Excerpted from *The View From Foley Mountain*, celebrating our wonderful Foley Mountain Conservation Area, by Peri Phillips McQuay}

It was on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter that I saw him. I was just beginning to work on the three braids of the special bread I always make for Easter. As I rolled out the dough I listened to the liquid song of the red-winged blackbirds through windows open for the first time since they were sealed last fall. I heard the blackbirds' song and enjoyed it, but my mind was still lingering on Good Friday as I reworked old and hopeless thoughts of how cruelty and injustice flourish as greenly as ever around the world. My fingers formed the braids and secured them, and I brushed the egg mixture gently over the beautiful loaf, but I scarcely knew what I was doing. Absent-mindedly I tucked the bread away for a last rising and glanced out the window over the rocks. And there he stood, a large deer poised on the granite, not five feet from my window.

Slowly, carefully, I knelt on the couch in front of the window, staring in disbelief and delight at a deer who would approach so close to our house in the broad morning light. Often deer came around, but generally by stealth and at night. Also, I knew many of the deer had already left the park for the lonelier places where they would summer.

And still he held his ground, his coat greyed with its winter tones, but velvet and glowing against the mist rising off the fields. Perhaps he had come to visit the compost pile as the night visitors do, I thought. But why did he just stand quivering and staring at me, so close to the house? Most deer I encountered at such a distance would have given me a sound stamp and strode or leapt away from me.

I leaned forward on the couch, beginning to realize that there was something wrong with the trembling stillness I was seeing. This was a deer that was lean but yet not as gaunt as some I have watched. It could not be that he was starving, surely. Then a car went by on the road and he jerked his head and moved as slowly as a ghost off in the direction of the barn. As I saw the gait of this shadowy deer, I felt tugged by a gust of pity and awe and something more. Almost before my eyes, as he drifted over the lawn, he was fading. I was in on a death.

Everywhere around me the red-wings caroled. The sun that came in the window was warm and full of strength. Somewhere nearby in the woods a grouse was drumming with vitality. Oh life: to survive the winter and leave in spring. I stared at the deer who was too numb even to be aware of the force I put into my look, urging him to revive. And still he moved on with unspeakable grace, with a queer certainty, until his grey-gold blended with the faded grass in the field and he was gone from my sight.

Always there's the longing to make things come right in the end. I sorted through my possibilities: perhaps the fine days ahead would restore him; I could place a pile of special food out on the granite; if all else failed, should there not be a bullet to end...? I was still staring off across the field so fixedly that the withered grasses were beginning to dance and mingle before my eyes. By what right did I think to intervene? In the tree outside the window the red-wings' song was strong with life and so was beautiful. But, I had to ask myself, was there anything less compelling, less right, about the slow dignity of the failing deer?

Peri McQuay
www.perimcquay.ca

Benefits of an Annual Pass

Did you know that the purchase of an annual membership of \$50.00 or above is not only an important contribution towards a variety of programs at Foley Mountain, but also gives you unlimited access to the following Rideau Valley Conservation Areas!

Baxter Mills Kars, Ontario

Situated on 80 hectares along the shores of the Rideau River, Baxter is a beautiful example of river flood plain. Explore, year round the mixed hardwood forests, meadows and wetlands and visit the unique Filmore Park Nut Grove with many species of nut and bean trees and shrubs.

Foley Mountain Westport Ontario

High atop a granite ridge overlooking the historic Upper Rideau waterway and the Village of Westport. Foley is well know for its dynamic hands-on education programs for school children and youth while providing excellent hiking opportunities for all ages.

Perth Wildlife Preserve

Located on the Tay Marsh, this 257 hectare reserve is a watery environment that nurtures a variety of diverse plant and wildlife species, including deer, duck, Canada geese, rabbits, bluebirds and wild turkeys .

Rideau Ferry Yacht Club Conservation Area

The former Rideau Ferry Yacht Club donated this 10 acre shoreline property at Rideau Ferry to the RVCA. A popular summer park with a public beach, boat launch, and picnic area.

W.A. Taylor

Set along the beautiful Rideau River and great spot to launch your boat or enjoy a quiet picnic.

Anna Chadwick

Foley Mountain Spring Update – 2022

By: Rebecca Whitman

On behalf of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA), I hope this finds you all keeping well! Although we had a quiet winter in terms of education programs, the arrival of spring and easing pandemic restrictions have brought about the return of bustling activity here at Foley Mountain Conservation Authority. Not only are we well into our spring session of Forest School with programs running Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays until mid-June but school groups are also back for outdoor education field trips! We've been busy teaching groups, hiring and training more staff to meet the demand for programs, taking bookings for and preparing facilities for rentals, and starting the task of getting the park ready for the upcoming busy season. The RVCA main office and all Interpretive Centres will also re-open as of May 2nd as part of our COVID-19 re-opening plan.

Things to keep your eyes and ears open for this spring at Foley Mountain:

- Listen for a pair of barred owls calling around the Education and Group Camping Area as well as along the ridge on the north side of the Interpretive Centre.

- Check out the spring ephemeral wildflowers! Don't miss out seeing the fleeting blooms of Dutchman's breeches, blood root, trout lily, hepatica, trilliums, and more.
- Watch for beavers swimming in the pond along the beaver pond trail. We have noticed freshly chewed branches on the main lodge!
- Listen for nesting pairs of pileated woodpeckers around the Education and Group Camping Area.
- Keep an eye out for turtles sunning on logs and travelling around the park to nesting sites.
- Flip over a log or two along the Orange Maple trail near the Interpretive Centre to see if you can spot a salamander! Please place the logs back in their original location when you are finished.
- While driving in the park, please be aware of snakes that may be soaking up the sun on the warm road!
- Installation of new story trail signs will be happening along the mobility trail thanks to the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation, the Westport Lion's Club, and Friends of Foley Mountain. Stay tuned for new stories to explore this summer!

Coming up this summer:

- Foley Mountain Nature Day Camps are back! We will be offering four weeks of day camp on July 11-15, July 25-29, August 8-12, and August 22-26. These programs are currently fully booked but we are accepting names for the waitlist.
- Check out free Forest School Family Drop-in Programs thanks to the Township of Rideau Lakes on May 21, June 18, July 16 and August 20 from 10-11:30am. Come play, explore, and learn in the forest! Children of all ages are welcome accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver. Pre-registration is required. Please visit <https://www.rvca.ca/outdoor-education/foley-mountain-ca/foley-mountain-forest-school> for registration information.

Thank you!

RVCA would like to say a big thank you to the following groups and people for their generous support of Foley Mountain Conservation Area:

- The Westport Lion's Club for sponsoring forest school tuition for those in need as well as contributing to the story trail sign project.
- The Township of Rideau Lakes for sponsoring forest school drop-in programs.
- The Rideau Lakes and Westport Public Libraries for working with us to create and distribute outdoor adventure kits when we were unable to offer in-person programs.
- The Friends of Foley Mountain board of directors for their continued hard work and dedication.
- YOU! By purchasing a membership to the Friends of Foley Mountain, you are supporting outdoor education programs and projects that both connect and teach people about the natural world.

For more information about Foley Mountain Conservation Area, feel free to contact rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca or 613-273-3255. You can also visit us on Facebook for park updates.

Friends of Foley Mountain
Statement of Operating Account

For the period January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021

	Actual	Budget
Revenue:		
Memberships	\$7,639	\$8,500
Grants & Donations	3,883	500
Bank Interest	66	100
Fund Raiser	(cancelled due to COVID)	
Total	\$11,588	\$9,100

Expenses:

Donations to RVCA	\$13,691(*)	\$6,000
Fund Raising	0	0
Advertising	254	200
Bank charges	30	0
Office Supplies	419	225
Miscellaneous	0	0
Special Projects	5,970	2,000
Total:	\$20,364	\$8,525

(*) Cheque for \$7,691 issued to RVCA on December 16, 2020 but not cashed until January 8, 2021.

Memberships are the cornerstone for fund raising. It's through your support that we can continue to fund the programs and projects at Foley Mountain Park. We are hopeful that you will renew your membership when it expires. Thank you for your support.