



Fall 2019

The View from Foley Mountain *

News from the Friends of Foley Mountain

Box 5, Westport, ON, K0G 1X0

www.friendsoffoleymountain.ca

Message from the Chair:

Members of the Friends of Foley Mountain deserve to be proud of what has been accomplished this year with the funds you contributed through memberships and from supporting the 2019 Tapas dinner. As you can see from the financial statement our Tapas event was a great success. With these funds raised, we will be able to continue with our support for the educational programs offered by RVCA – especially the Forest School; will continue to subsidize busing to Foley Mountain and will continue to make a yearly donation to RVCA to pay for on call teaching staff and help purchase some necessary equipment. All this is possible due to your support and the support of the surrounding community, Westport business community and donors. Thank you very much.

While on the topic of donors, I would like to acknowledge Foodsmiths in Perth for their donation through their Bring Your Own Bag initiative, Choose the Blues Productions and the Cove for their donations as a result of the Blues on the Rideau shows and the Toronto Dominion Bank Friends of the Environment Foundation for its grant. All these are very much appreciated.

At our Annual General Meeting in May, RVCA spoke of its a review of the Foley Mountain Management Plan that was last approved in 2009. RVCA is now looking to the future and is seeking ideas and suggestions that could be incorporated into a new Foley Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan that will be developed over the next year. A public consultation phase has begun and includes meetings with local interest groups and stakeholders. This will also include visitor surveys and a social media campaign to seek public input. Please do take part in the surveys and express your views on the future plans for Foley Mountain Conservation Area.

We are currently undergoing a process of evaluating how we communicate with Friends members and the public, both online and in print. We have hired Leah Roberts to consult with us about how to use our Facebook page to reach more of our members and grow our community. By updating our page information and images, creating and inviting people to events we are hosting, and sharing more posts about what is happening 'on the mountain' and in the area, we are hoping to see more interactions and engagements on our Facebook page. Check out the page to see what's happening and stay tuned for more to come!

Winter will soon be on us but that is no reason not to enjoy or discover the park in the winter. The park has some of the best snowshoeing trails in the region. The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority is putting more emphasis on winter programs for children and adults and with their snowshoeing clinics and outdoor education programs. I encourage you to take advantage of them to enjoy our winter wonderland.

I would like to welcome Louise Pinard Taillon as a new Director on your Board of Directors. We still have vacancies on the Board so if you are willing to volunteer please get in touch with me.

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

Together we are making a difference at Foley Mountain by preserving this unique environment and enriching the programs enjoyed by thousands of visitors and school groups. Definitely something to be proud of!

Rob Struthers
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Friends of Foley Mountain
Statement of Operating Account

For the period January 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019

	Actual	Budget
Revenue:		
Memberships	\$3,975	\$10,000
Grants & Donations	398	3,000
Fund Raising (Tapas)	11,592	9,500
Total	\$15,965	\$22,500
Expenses:		
Office Supplies	\$402	450
Fundraising	4,786	4,500
Miscellaneous	51	100
RVCA Donations (1)	6,000	8,500
Special Projects		6,025
Total:	\$11,239	\$19,575

(1) This amount was carried over from 2018. \$6,000 will also be donated in December, 2019 as will funds for special projects at Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

When a donor contributes more than \$200 for a Patron's Membership, \$200 is allocated to Membership Revenue and the balance above \$200 is allocated to donations.

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

SANCTUARY

(Excerpted from *The View From Foley Mountain*, by Peri Phillips McQuay)

Once a stranger sought sanctuary at Foley Mountain. He came asking nothing, but in the scheme of things, nothing turned out to be too much.

I was returning with Morgan from nursery school late on an October day when I saw a man, stooped, blowing on a fire. It was queer that he apparently had no car and yet was lingering close to night-fall. People aren't allowed in the park after sunset. Still, he could have been one of the exceptions who was allowed a night's camping while hiking the Rideau Trail. Then, I forgot about him.

The next afternoon and the next, Morgan and I saw him again, nursing a fire or sitting on a picnic table gazing at the woods. The third day, a Friday, he stared at me in an odd, expressive way, quite unlike that of the usual park visitors. He looked with a mixture of defiance and pleading and then slipped off the table and walked towards the woods with the brittle steps of someone tremendously hurt.

I didn't see the stranger over the weekend, but Monday he was back in the clearing again and this time I became afraid. As I drove around the curve I saw him lunge after a squirrel with a hunting knife. More than the knife, it was the fierce gesture that made me afraid. Yet, when he saw me, he froze and once again his eyes tugged at me as if he and not the squirrel, were the prey.

I had to tell Barry. With two young children to protect I had no choice. Still, while I waited for him to return from questioning the stranger, I couldn't stop seeing the troubled eyes. "You're right. He is different," Barry said when he returned. "I wouldn't be surprised if he is a bit unbalanced. Harmless enough, though, I should think. He's working in town and he was camping. When I told him he couldn't camp here he said he would go to the campground across town. But he said he still wanted to come here after work until dark, and there's nothing I can do about that." Torn between the knife and the eyes, I said nothing. Unasked, a stranger was sharing my home ground. Was he ruthless and dangerous or just another loner like me who, if confronted with grief, would always head for the woods?

For some time, the man avoided us. Occasionally I saw him sitting staring into the woods, holding on hard, I should have imagined from his attitude. One day he moved slowly towards the car and motioned me to stop. I cranked the window down an inch. "I just wanted to know if you had a light," he said. For no good reason I was reminded of a stray dog casing a family for a home. Of course I had no light to give him and no words either. I had stopped, but I was afraid. It was too late now to push the door locks. Women can't afford to trust, I reminded myself, and I shook my head, smiled a tight smile, resealed the window and drove off.

I didn't see the stranger again. Soon after, Barry, out on a night patrol, saw the glow of a fire. As it happened, two police officers were parked up the road doing paper work. He asked them to come with him and evict the man. As a routine, they put his name through the computer and found out: the man standing in mute misery by his fire was on parole from B.C., where he had been doing time for wounding an officer with a knife. It was over then, Barry told me later. The police had driven him to the public campground and warned him to stay away from Foley Mountain. Before he got in the car he had cast Barry a look of despair at the betrayal.

In town, people told us how our stranger stayed on alone at the campground until the deep snow came. Then he disappeared. They laughed at his foolishness in camping out in our winter. But I knew that because of prudence and duty we had failed him. He had come here, deeply wounded, to seek sanctuary, clinging to a pitiful dream of self-reliance. Perhaps he had hoped that somewhere, someone wouldn't turn him down, but prudence and duty had left him without hope.

Summer Fun at Foley Mountain

It was another summer full of adventure at Foley Mountain! Not only did we welcome thousands of tourists, seasonal residents, and local outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy our trails, swimming area, picnic areas and more, we also had a successful season of education programming.

We are happy to report one of our best day camp seasons on record! All three of our full weeks of day camp were either at or very close to capacity. Children aged 6 – 12 participated in hands-on, nature-based programming that focused on getting outdoors, connecting with nature, being active, and having fun! Our experienced staff are certified teachers with many years of experience in outdoor education and FOFM helps to make this possible. Planning is already underway for the 2020 season and we encourage you to look for dates and registration information early in the new year.

In addition to day camp programming, FOFM also sponsored a series of four FREE family forest school drop-in programs throughout July and August. Over the course of summer, 190 people joined our educators and played, explored, and learned in the wilds of Foley Mountain. Thank you to FOFM for supporting these programs! We received so much positive feedback from participants and hope to be able to offer a similar program next season.

For more information about education programming, visit <https://www.rvca.ca/outdoor-education/foley-mountain-ca> or contact Rebecca at rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca or 613-273-3255.

Things to do at Foley Mountain This Fall!

Join us this fall for a few more FREE family forest school drop-in programs being offered in conjunction with our friends and partners at Country Roads Community Health Centre. All programs are drop-in (no pre-registration required) and, although geared towards age birth to 6, all ages of children are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Meet RVCA staff at the Education and Group Camping Area November 7th and December 5th from 10-11:30am. Hope to see you there!

Playing and Learning in the Forest

With the generous support for the Friends of Foley Mountain, RVCA is pleased to report that our Forest Kindergarten program is up and running again this fall! This new program is being offered this fall for 12 weeks for children aged 3-6, Monday and Wednesdays from 9am-12pm. This program provides a unique opportunity for children to play and learn while being immersed in nature. As educators, we focus on creating a child centered learning environment where we take the lead from our students in guiding their learning. We spend as much of our time outdoors as possible, learning through hands-on opportunities and creating connections with nature.

With help from this year's FOFM fundraising efforts we have been able to purchase additional resources to support the program (for example, more story books and hand tools), provide the opportunity for two families who might not otherwise have access to the program to send their child at no cost, and run free drop-in programs – thank you! Registration for the winter session will be available soon! For more information about the forest kindergarten program, visit our website at www.rvca.ca/foley-forest-school or contact Rebecca at rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca or 613-273-3255.

Let's Get Those Kids to the Mountain!

As you all well know, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) has been offering outdoor environmental education programs at Foley Mountain for the better part of 40 years! In that time, things have changed a lot for local schools with things like bussing costs becoming barriers to participating in our programs. Teachers and Principals would love to travel for outdoor education but quite often fall short when it comes to paying for the program as well as transportation. One of the projects that the Friends of Foley Mountain have supported over the last few years has been providing subsidies to help cover the cost for transportation. This year, FOFM has again provided \$3000 towards which has, so far, allowed for just under 650 students to more easily access outdoor learning with fall programming still underway! Thank you FOFM for helping to get more children outdoors, being active, connecting with nature, learning, and having fun! This goes a long way to building a generation of future stewards of the natural world.

For more information about transportation subsidies, contact Rebecca at rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca or 613-273-3255.

News from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority - Foley Mountain Management Plan Update

It has been 10 years since the management plan for Foley Mountain Conservation Area has had an update. With support from the Friends of Foley Mountain, we have been able to accomplish a lot of great work in the last decade including the installation of the Silversides Outdoor Learning Centre, construction of accessible washrooms at the group camp and education area, and improving our education staffing model. After reflecting on the past 10 years, we are turning our focus on where we go from here. After a great brainstorming session held in conjunction with the FOFM annual general meeting back in May, we are looking forward to collecting more public input around what people like about Foley Mountain and what things they would like to see improved or changed. A public survey (check it out here – <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FoleyMountain>) along with further stakeholder consultations are our next steps. Thank you again for your continued support and the RVCA is looking forward to another great 10 years “on the mountain”!

For more information about the Foley Mountain Management Plan, contact Rebecca at rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca or 613-273-3255.



Day Camp – Mixing filling for mason jar bird feeders

Forest School





Student beneficiaries of Friends Of Foley Mountain Bus Subsidy Program

Summer Drop-in Program





Dressing a bug to find out what makes Insects who they are

Creating art with nature as our inspiration

