



Fall 2022

The View from Foley Mountain *

News from the Friends of Foley Mountain

Box 5, Westport, ON, K0G 1X0

www.friendsoffoley.ca

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a beautiful autumn we are having – the colours of the turning leaves are spectacular this year. I hope you have the opportunity to enjoy them.

At the Annual General Meeting held in August, the following volunteers were elected to the Board of Directors for the coming year:

President: Rob Struthers

Vice President: Louise Taillon

Treasurer: Sandy Cameron

Secretary: Anna Chadwick

Directors: Paul Clasby, Mike Fay, Don Goodfellow, Carole Pickett, Laurel Rudd and Pete Stothart.

I would like to thank them for once again contributing their time to our organization. I would also like to thank Laurel for joining the Board. We are always appreciative of new members.

Over the last two years there was not much activity at Foley Mountain because of the various restrictions imposed due to the pandemic. Your Board was not very active during that period but, as the restrictions have been lifted, that will change. We are developing a five year plan to clearly state our goals and objectives and to itemize those projects which we feel we can undertake. Examples of possible projects are: supporting updating the content of mobility trail signs, updating and re-design of the beaver pond booklet, developing initiatives to increase the use of the park by all ages, planning and organizing special events, maintenance of a butterfly/pollinator garden of native plants. We will be meeting with the management of RVCA to co-ordinate our planned activities. We would appreciate input with regard to our 5 year plan: what things would you like us to consider as we work towards increased visitor participation in and enjoyment of activities at Foley Mountain. Please forward any suggestions to me at r.a.struthers@live.com.

We will continue to support the Forest School, outdoor education educators' salaries and bus subsidies for school children to partake in outdoor education as we have done in the past.

I would like to thank those of you who have supported our work by renewing your membership. Do you have family members, friends or neighbours that you think may be interested in becoming a member of Friends of Foley Mountain? If you do, please encourage them to complete a membership application which can be downloaded from our website (friendsoffoley.ca). (Continued next page)

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

Most of our revenue comes from membership dues and allows us to continue supporting RVCA's activities at the park. We will be developing some different fund raising methods in the coming months and hope that you will also support these.

While on the subject of fund raising, I would personally like to thank Mel Shaw for his initiative in developing and selling a Foley Mountain calendar with the proceeds being donated to the Friends of Foley Mountain. When you see it, I am sure that you will agree that the calendar has some spectacular photographs (see the article on page 5).

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish you all joy and happiness for the upcoming holiday season and beyond.

Rob Struthers

Friends of Foley Mountain

Statement of Operating Account

For the period January 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget (Annual)</u>
<u>Revenue:</u>		
Memberships	\$5,825	\$9,000
Grants & Donations	1,373	500
Bank Interest		100
Fundraising	Cancelled due to COVID.	
Total	\$7,198	\$9,600
<u>Expenses:</u>		
Advertising	\$286	350
Office Supplies	143	250
Fundraising	Cancelled due to COVID	
Miscellaneous		100
RVCA Donations		6,000
Special Projects		6,000
Total	\$429	\$12,700

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.

Pond Succession

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

When I reached the long, broad pond at the back of the property I stopped in surprise, for half the pond was nearly gone. Where deep water had stretched for many more than the eight years during which we had visited it, there was now only a pond of green reeds and rushes that had grown up to hide and absorb the water. To my casual eyes the pond had always been much the same. Animals, plants and birds changed somewhat from season to season, but always the pond looked about the way it had when I first saw it. Now, though, half of it was choked with cattails and no longer had enough open water to reflect the sky. Once again I was faced with the mutability of nature.

I sat down on a rounded, bare lookout rock. Over the brief years that I had been coming here the pond had become a marsh and I had not noticed the signs that it was happening. If I looked at my memories of it, perhaps I could piece together the transition.

Five years ago the bleached trunks of many drowned trees had stretched up out of the water. In winter the wind used to hit those trees and pile blowing snow in drifts. The last few years, though, most often they had fallen below the surface, leaving a long, smooth stretch of openness where the wind packed the snow, making a fine, fast surface for cross country skiing. The pond must have been old for them to have fallen in. During the process their decaying debris must have built good mud on the bottom to encourage the growth of the plants that had now choked its water.

Over the water that remained at the far end of the pond came shivers of wind, a rain-laden wind that I knew would bring a change to the uncommonly sultry weather of the past week. Down at this end I saw three black ducks swimming. The leader, teased by a red-bodied dragonfly, turned his head. He caught sight of me on my rock and splashed into flight, taking the other two with him. At the rate things were going, after a few more summers there would not be enough water here for ducks.

How could it be that this pond of living water was changing to a pond of grass? I remembered now that some of the tree stumps had supported a few ferns and tufts of grass, good holding places for soil, and, yes, that stand of cattails had always been on the far side of the pond, only now it stretched across to my side too.

The wind rose again and a scattering of leaves blew across the marsh from the nearby woods. For years these leaves and dying water vegetation had nourished and filled in the pond floor to quicken a new kind of life that was coming. In time the ducks would be leaving and so would the beaver whose channel cut through the pickerel weeds near the shore. But other life would fill the marsh. Already, secure among the cattails, I could see conical muskrat houses.

As the plants took up more water and as their decay made the depths shallow, the pond would become a lush meadow, and then would come the first saplings, and then... As always, the chain goes on without end.

I looked at the arrowhead leaves swaying in the slight currents close to my shore, and further back to the solid mass of cattails and bur reeds. I didn't want to see the pond end, and with it the fascinating world it supported, yet how right it was that it had gathered its richness together to bring forth another state.

Now, though, I was faced with more immediate changes. For some time I had heard thunder in the distance. A sudden peal shook the rock on which I sat and the cold rain, which had been heavy in the air all afternoon, poured over me in sheets. I headed home cold but exhilarated. After all, change was the guarantee that life itself would continue.

Peri McQuay
www.perimcquay.ca

Foley Mountain Fall Update – 2022

By: Rebecca Whitman

It has been a busy spring, summer, and fall here at Foley Mountain! We have welcomed many park visitors to our trails and park amenities, children to our education programs, and community groups to our facilities. **Here are some of the highlights:**

- We continued to see high levels of visitation to Foley Mountain for recreational use, including a very busy Thanksgiving weekend for taking in the beautiful fall colours.
- School groups made a return to Foley Mountain for a busy spring season of education programs. Close to 1100 children engaged in hands-on outdoor learning!
- The spring forest school program provided children with an opportunity to play, explore and learn in the forests of Foley Mountain.
- Our 2022 day camp season was the busiest on record with six cohorts of campers at Foley Mountain and two cohorts of campers at the Mill of Kintail in Almonte in partnership with the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority.
- The facility rentals program officially re-opened and community groups such as Girl Guides and Scouts made great use of the Interpretive Centre and Group Camping areas for their spring and fall camps.

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

- Enjoy the last of the fall colours from Spy Rock or check out some of the lesser used lookout points along the Red Oak, White Pine, and Orange Maple trails.
- Listen for the crunch of leaves, wind in the trees, and the calls of feathered friends. Black capped chickadees, blue jays, crows, owls, and other birds are all still very active!
- Watch for small mammals and overwintering birds as they forage for food and prepare for winter.
- Look for animal tracks after a good fall rain or snow!
- Fall is a great time to look for mushrooms. We have been noticing many different shapes, colours and sizes on our forest school adventures. Please note that foraging is not permitted in any RVCA conservation areas!
- Keep an eye out for white tailed deer as they camouflage with the trees in their new fluffy winter coats.

Coming up this winter:

- Registration for the winter session of the Foley Mountain Forest School will open soon! Stay tuned for dates and more information.
- Check out free Forest School Family Drop-in Programs thanks to the Township of Rideau Lakes on November 19 and December 17 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.
- Education programs are available year-round! Schools and groups can book programs like Snowshoeing, Winter Wonderland, Outdoor Survival Skills, and more for a winter forest adventure.
- We still have availability for winter facility rentals at both the Interpretive Centre and group camping areas. For more information, availability, and booking information, visit <https://www.rvca.ca/conservation-areas/rent-a-facility/foley-mountain-ca>.
- Foley Mountain Conservation Area is open year round! The trails are well travelled and great for walking and snowshoeing. Although outhouses are closed for winter, washrooms are available at the Education and Group Camping area and Interpretive Centre throughout the winter months. There is no better way to beat the winter blues than to get out and enjoy the outdoors!

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 Friends of Foley Mountain for sponsoring forest school tuition subsidies to help make our programs more accessible for all families!
- The Township of Rideau Lakes for sponsoring forest school drop-in 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.

2023 Calendar

Local photographer, Mel Shaw, has produced a 2023 calendar featuring pictures that he has taken of the flora and fauna of the Foley Mountain Conservation Area throughout the seasons. Mel is generously donating a portion of the proceeds from the sales of the calendar to the Friends of Foley Mountain. They can be purchased at the Village Green for \$20.00 (cash). Information about the calendar is posted on Facebook Westport and one can also private message (PM) Mel with any questions and to order online. See the last page of this newsletter to view the front cover of the calendar.

**Foley Mountain Conservation Area
2023**

