



Fall 2021

## The View From Foley Mountain\*

News from the Friends of Foley Mountain

P.O. Box 5, Westport, ON K0G 1X0

[www.friendsoffoleymountain.com](http://www.friendsoffoleymountain.com)

### PRESIDENTS REPORT

It seems like just yesterday I was writing my report for the Spring Newsletter and now we are almost at winter's arrival. We certainly have been fortunate in the weather we have had over the summer – weather perfect for enjoying Foley Mountain.

Again this year we have curtailed our activities waiting for safer times. While we have not been fund raising we remain committed to our mission to support the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority in its programming at Foley Mountain. Rebecca's update has mentioned our contributions to the virtual program which was a highly successful program involving students in our area. That program was greatly appreciated.

The Board is planning to come out of pandemic hibernation this year and resume fund raising so that we can continue to contribute to the children's programs at Foley Mountain. We intend to support the Forest School by offering tuition subsidies again this year and to support RVCA and Rebecca in their new "story trail adventures" This initiative 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.

I would be remiss if I didn't encourage you to renew your membership if you haven't already done so – membership dues remain our main source of much needed income. I would like to thank those who have made donations at our donation box at Spy Rock parking area and those who have donated through CanadaHelps ([www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/friends-of-foley-mountain-inc/](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/friends-of-foley-mountain-inc/)).

I wish you and your family all the best for the upcoming season.

Rob Struthers  
[r.a.struthers@live.com](mailto:r.a.struthers@live.com)

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

## **Summer Fun and Fall Adventures at Foley Mountain**

**By: Rebecca Whitman, Foley Mountain Area Supervisor**

Happy fall to one and all from Foley Mountain and the staff of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority! There has been lots happening on the mountain since our last update. With the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions over the course of the summer, not only have we seen many visitors to the trails, lookouts, picnic areas, and swimming area, but we were also able to welcome children back for play, learning, and fun in the forest.

### **Virtual Programs**

Unfortunately, children were not able to visit Foley Mountain in person this spring with their schools. However, thanks to the Friends of Foley Mountain and TD Friends of the Environment Fund, we were able to bring Foley Mountain to them, free of charge! Outdoor education staff and classes met using a virtual platform and programs were broadcast live from the forest and pond. Programs offered included "Amazing Animals", "Beaver Pond Bonanza", "Pond Ecology", "A Bug's Life", and "Don't Treat Soil Like Dirt". We played games, explored under rocks and logs, dipped nets in the pond, evaluated water quality, dug in the dirt, and searched for signs of animals. Students had the opportunity to ask questions and interact directly with outdoor education staff. Through this initiative, we delivered programming to 701 students and 75 staff. We received great feedback from students and teachers and were so happy to be able to stay connected with our school friends!

### **Spring and Summer Outdoor Adventure Kits**

Foley Mountain staff were fortunate to have an opportunity to work with a large number of local partners (Rideau Lakes Public Library, the Township of Rideau Lakes, Westport Public Library, the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, Leeds and Thousand Islands Public Library, the Rideau Lakes Horticultural Society, the North Leeds Youth Organizing Committee, the United Way of Leeds and Grenville, and the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville) to be able to offer free outdoor adventure kits both in the spring and fall. These kits were distributed through the local libraries and encouraged families to get out and explore nature in their neighbourhoods! Children received materials and resources for lots of fun activities including shelter making, creature identification, walking sticks, campfire treats, books, art projects, and more.

### **Nature Day Camp**

In my last update, we were still uncertain as to whether we would be able to offer summer camp programming. Our original plan had been to run three weeks of programming but there was such high demand for spaces that we opened a fourth week to accommodate all the requests. Each week was run at full capacity (limited by COVID-19 protocols) with 16 children and two staff. The themes for the weeks included "Junior Naturalists", "Outdoor Adventurers", "Nature Explorers", and "Forest Fun". Children ages 6-12 attended daily from 9am-4pm and engaged in a mix of nature-based program, exploring, adventuring, games, play, crafts, and more. A huge thank you goes out to our amazing outdoor education instructors and operations staff who made this program run so smoothly!

### **Forest School**

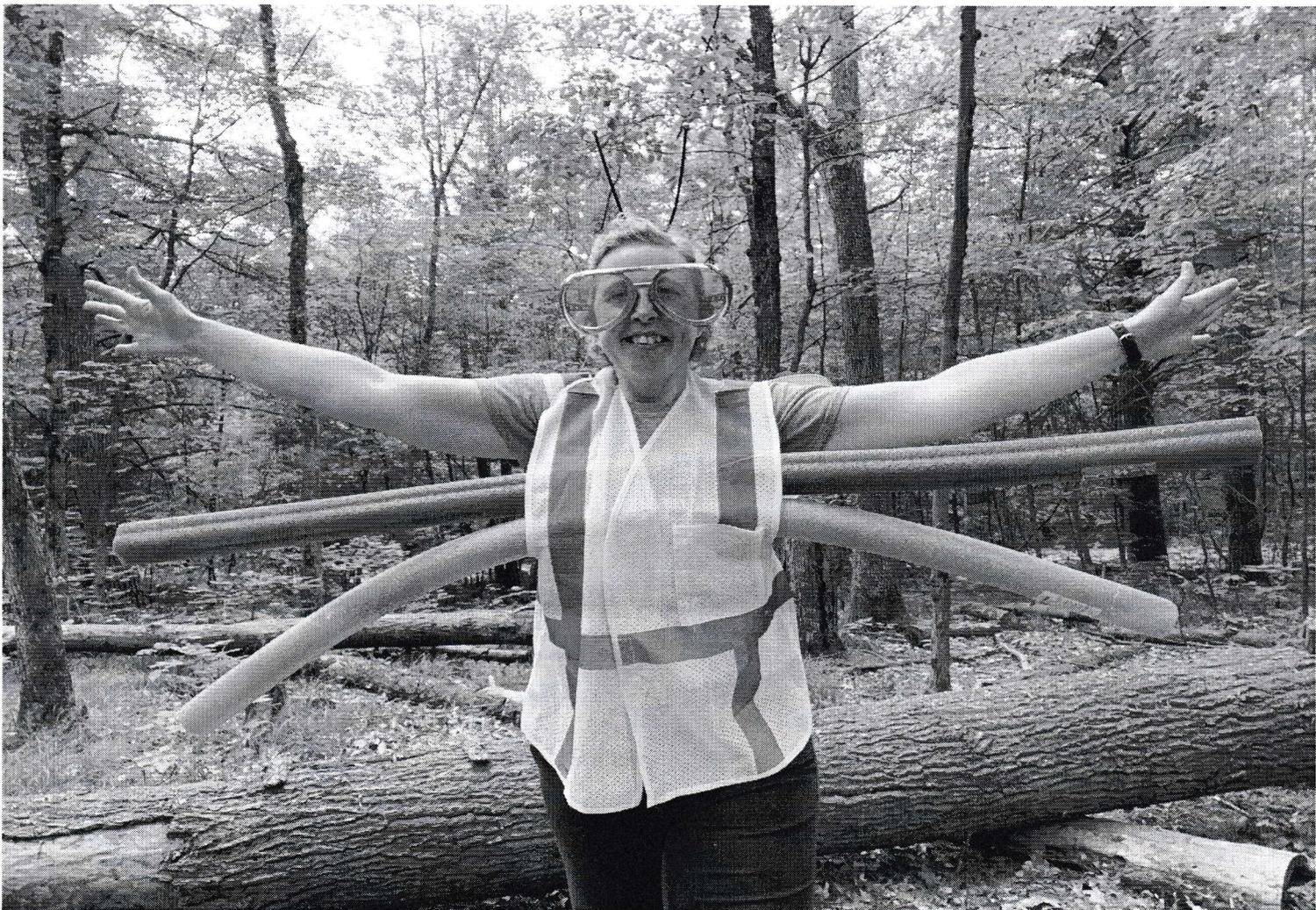
Forest school programming is back up and running this fall! We are again offering both school age and kindergarten programming. Programs happen on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday so don't be surprised to see children playing, exploring, and learning in the forests around the Education and Group Camping Area. We are grateful to the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation and TD Friends of the Environment Fund for providing an opportunity for tuition subsidies for families in need. As the fall progresses, we'll be releasing information about our winter session. Stay tuned!

It has also been a great opportunity to continue working with the Township of Rideau Lakes to offer free family forest school drop-in programs on the third Saturday of each month from 10-11:30am. Response for these programs has been great and we often have a waitlist! There are just two programs left for this year – November 20th and December 18th. Pre-registration is required and more information can be found at <https://www.rvca.ca/outdoor-education/foley-mountain-ca/foley-mountain-forest-school>.

## Fall Colours

Visitation at Foley Mountain has continued to be higher than ever over the course of the summer. Although the fall colours have been slow coming, they still put on a great show for a lovely Thanksgiving weekend which saw hundreds of visitors taking in the views, exploring on the trails, and enjoying time with their friends and families. In addition to lots of great support from the RVCA communications department in helping to prepare folks for the visit, staff were onsite during busy weekend days to help manage crowds and line ups.

Thank you to the Friends of Foley Mountain for your continued support through this difficult time! Now, more than ever, people need spaces like Foley Mountain for their physical and mental health and we are so grateful to be working with such great partners to make this possible.



A Bug's Life

## WILD HARVEST

In October it is hard to escape the idea of harvest and storage. In the fall my urge to gather is so strong that I suspect it goes back to a primitive consciousness. Even long after the last of the tomatoes are put away, I cannot walk here without seeing harvest everywhere, from the mushroom caps of chipmunks and the pin-cone midden heaps of the red squirrels to my own more frivolous gatherings.

I have only to hear the rustle of cattails and I'm away. "Green grow the rushes, ho". It would be enough just to watch their waving and think of ancestors slashing armloads to mat their floors. Indigenous peoples, I've read, used cattail down in blankets, and once, just to see what would happen, I plucked and carded and spun the fluff. The little skeing I finished with, cottony to feel, held a surprising warmth.

I would never have gone on, though, as a friend once did, to capture milkweed down in a blanket. It was an act of extravagance, I thought, and yet... She watched the first, silken seed carriers take to the air, she stretched grey woollen warp strings on her loom and she went out in the fields to husk the pods, and winnow the seeds and tuff the remaining silk in her bags. Sometimes I caught holding the parachutes up for the sun to catch. I heard and saw her rustling her way among wiry milkweed stalks, surrounded by airborne seeds. On rainy nights although not a spinner, she took the silk between her hands, rolling and stretching it to a ragged rope, and then coiling it in baskets by her loom. When the first snow fell, she sat at her loom and threaded yarn through her warp threads. The clash of her treadles sounded as true as it would have for a more likely yarn. At Christmas she cut her harvest from the loom and shook it out for both of us to see, a supple, ash-coloured blanket that rippled in firelight. This is what harvest time can lead to.

I pass wild grapes on my walk along the road. Do my boys know they are here, I wonder? The fox whose scats I see farther down the road might find them useful. Grapes and jelly and wine, even purple dye—I search for a purpose for them, know full well that they are too few for my plans. I try to remember too, that they are fine to admire with no purpose in mind. The pinning of use to things is irresistible in fall, however, and I move on to the grapes/vines. A few of these could be twined to make a basket, a stout, rough basket. I might even put them to a less practical use. I'd seen geese statues I'd like, shaped of vines bound together.

Also beautiful are the freshly opened orange bittersweet berries I find next, and I make a note to cut some for the house. It was time, too, to gather big bunches of dried weeds to stand in crocks at home against the season when all outdoor weeds were snowbound. And is this the year to collect the fragrant, freshly fallen pine needles and stuff them in a pillow? If I do, will they keep their scent like the pillows you find in old cottages labelled, "I pine for you and balsam too"?

I cut back through the deer management area where last summer's thinning to provide this winter's food had left piles of brush and poles. One fall when she was a girl, my sister had made a teepee out of similar poles. It had worked well and had still been standing when we left home. I remember sitting in its shelter watching early snowfalls. You couldn't have anything more useful than poles. I could use them for beans, a summer house, a raft—or the boys might—and I start picking them up, and piling them together, want to make a teepee too.

Fall harvest. With gardens over and chores lighter, now is the time to move freely and far before the confining snow comes. On the way to winter, it's hard not to look at what's around you with a calculating eye.

Peri McQuay  
[www.perimcquay.ca](http://www.perimcquay.ca)

## Statement of Operating Account

For the period January 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget (Annual)</u>
<b><u>Revenue:</u></b>		
Memberships	\$3,045	\$8,500
Grants & Donations	425	500
Bank Interest		100
Fund Raising	Fund Raiser (Tapas) cancelled due to COVID	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,470</b>	<b>\$9,100</b>
<b><u>Expenses:</u></b>		
Advertising	\$118	\$200
Office Supplies	104	225
Fundraising	Fund Raiser cancelled	
Miscellaneous		100
RVCA Donations		6,000
Special Projects		2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$222</b>	<b>\$8,525</b>

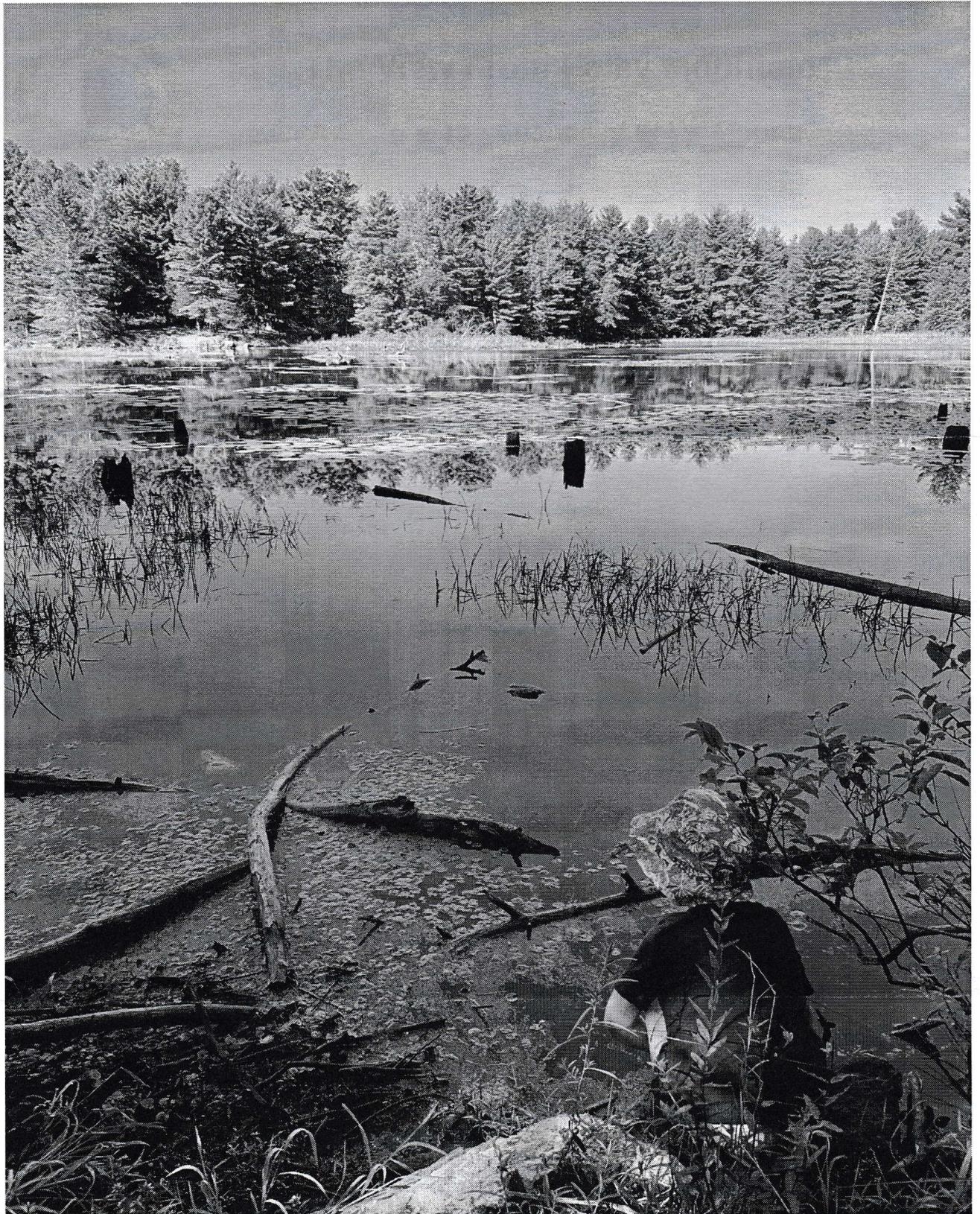
Memberships are the cornerstone for fund raising. It's through your support that we can continue to fund the programs and projects at Foley Mountain Park. We are hopeful that you will renew your membership when it expires. Thank you for your support.



Summer Camp Fun and Games



## Outdoor Adventure Kits



Exploring the Pond at Fall Forest School



Flashback to 2018 B.C.