



Spring 2018

The View from Foley Mountain *

News from the Friends of Foley Mountain

Box 5, Westport, ON, K0G 1X0

www.friendsoffoleymountain.ca

info@friendsoffoleymountain.ca

What is happening in your backyard?

Foley Mountain - what a grand backyard it is. Spy Rock, hiking trails, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, kids' educational programs, fitness. It has everything.

So, once you have taken a few minutes to renew your membership why not pass this on to a friend, neighbour or family member who might also benefit from what Foley Mountain has to offer.

Memberships start as low as \$25 a year or, for a real bargain, go for the \$50 membership. It gives you free parking for two cars at any RVCA conservation area. A membership form can be found at: <http://friendsoffoley.ca/FOFM%20Blue%20Form.pdf>

And whether you are renewing or buying a new membership why not consider sitting on the FOFM board. We are looking for a couple of new board members. You will not only get to enjoy the park but will take part in planning some of the programs being offered.

In the past, Friends of Foley Mountain has provided an annual contribution to support the Outdoor Environmental Education Program which reaches more than 4000 children and families each year.

In addition, the Friends mount fundraising campaigns to raise money for specific projects which have included the development of a shoreline Mobility trail for those in wheelchairs or walkers; the development of the Children's Discovery Centre; the construction of a handicapped ramp to facilitate access to the Visitor Centre; the purchase of teaching aids and resources to support the environmental education programs; support for the development of the Silversides Outdoor Learning Centre including the installation of a solar energy system; and handicap accessible washrooms. This year we will be providing funds to support the Foley Mountain Forest School – what an exciting project!

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

Message from the Chair

I am writing this article during a mid-April snow storm. Our winter just doesn't want to seem to give up this year. I hope that during the real winter you had a chance to visit the Foley Mountain Conservation Area that we are all so proud of. Hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and birding are just some of the winter activities enjoyed at Foley Mountain by members in winter.

Since our Fall Newsletter the Board of Directors have reviewed and revised our 2018 budget. We are pleased that we have been able to provide funding for the purchase of 40 new pairs of snowshoes to be used by school children during their attendance at the educational programs at Foley Mountain. It is our hope that we can raise enough funds in the coming months to enable us to replace all the rest of the snowshoes that are wearing out.

One major barrier for local schools in visiting Foley Mountain to take part in outdoor education programming is the cost of transportation. The rural nature of the surrounding communities intensifies this barrier given the small size of many of the schools and the distance required to reach the conservation area. In order for RVCA to create more consistent programming for available to schools, capitalize on the shoulder seasons, and also allow lower income schools the opportunity to participate, when otherwise not possible, RVCA offers bus funding. FoFM has substantially increased our donation to the bus subsidy this year so that more children than ever can have outdoor education classes on the mountain.

We are really excited about this year's new funding project – the Forest Preschool Pilot Program for 2 ½ to 3 year old that RVCA is planning to implement (see Rebecca Whitman's article). The Friends of Foley Mountain are funding the costs of planning the implementation and development of this program. If the program is successful, we hope it will be appropriate for FoFM to continue to fund aspects of the program.

Preparations for this year's major fund raiser are under way. Once again we will be hosting a Tapas Dinner on July 13, 2018 at the Scheuermann Vineyard and Winery in Westport. There will be music, silent auction a 50/50 draw and good times. Mark your calendar with the date. Last year's dinner was SOLD OUT early so watch for the tickets and don't miss your opportunity for a very pleasant evening.

You may have seen notices on our FaceBook page concerning our membership drive. Membership dues are still the major source of our funds so we are always looking for more members. We have also approached our local high schools to see if any of the students would like to volunteer to be on our Board of Directors. It would be very useful to have a younger perspective on what we could be doing to help RVCA at Foley Mountain. I encourage everyone to renew their membership if they haven't already done so. Whether you are renewing or buying a new membership please consider sitting on the FOFM board - you will not only get to enjoy the park but will take part in planning some of the programs being offered.

In closing, I would like to invite you all to our Annual General Meeting. It will be held at 7 pm on May 16, 2018 in the Silversides building in Foley Mountain Conservation Area.

Rob Struthers
Chair
(r.a.struthers@live.com)

Foley Mountain Forest School
Prepared by: Rebecca Whitman

What if someone told you that you could have spent your school day in the forest?

Foley Mountain has a long history of offering outdoor environmental education programs with a focus on hands-on learning, but our newest initiative is something a little different. With the help of the Friends of Foley Mountain and community partners such as the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation, Country Roads Community Health Centre, and the Healthy Kids Community Challenge of Leeds and Grenville, the Rideau Valley Conservation is developing the new Foley Mountain Forest School program that is based on the "Forest School" model. Forest school is a concept that has existed around the world since the late 1950s with many well-established programs in existence. The model is based on the following:

- Child-centered learning environment that is active, experiential, challenging, and authentic.
- Allows children to develop ways of understanding concepts with respect to their previous knowledge and experiences in a natural area.
- Repeated and regular visits to a natural area where they direct their learning through active outdoor play.
- Use emergent curriculum: a child-directed and teacher-facilitated approach to planning the curriculum, where learning occurs naturally and presents itself through a child's interest. This may be influenced by factors such as the weather conditions, loose parts and materials made available to the students, and experiences they had on a previous visit.

Why is providing this type of experience for children important?

There is a growing body of evidence suggesting the benefits of outdoor active play for the physical, emotional, and intellectual health of children. The term "Nature Deficit Disorder" (the growing trend of people becoming disconnected from the natural world) was coined by author Richard Louv in his important book "Last Child in the Woods" and helped to bring this information to the forefront in recent years. The "Children and Nature Network" has compiled a collection of studies and literature supporting these links. For example: McCurdy, L. E., Winterbottom, K. E., Mehta, S. S., & Roberts, J. R. (2010). Using nature and outdoor activity to improve children's health. *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care*, 40(5), 102-117. This study suggests that students get more exercise when they are outdoors and are healthier and happier.

In addition to the health benefits for children, forest school learning also helps to overcome perceived risk in outdoor play and encourages families to explore natural areas in their community. This will also be the first forest school program in the immediate area making it more accessible for families. Further, opportunities for children to learn about and connect with the natural world are an important component of building a society that cares about and protects the environment.

The Friends of Foley Mountain have generously provided funding to the RVCA for the most important part of the Forest School – policy and program planning and development. This stage will allow us to get all the pieces needed to implement the "on the ground" programs. Although final details about program roll-out are still being confirmed, details will be available soon. Be sure to check back in the near future with both the Friends of Foley Mountain and Foley Mountain Conservation Area on Facebook and Twitter for more exciting updates!

The funding from the Friends of Foley Mountain has really provided the RVCA with the resources to kick start the development of this program and seek funding from other organizations. Thank you!

For more, contact Rebecca Whitman at rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca or 613-273-3255, visit www.rvca.ca or look for Foley Mountain Conservation Area on Facebook and Twitter.

Friends of Foley Mountain

Statement of Operating Account

For the period Jan. 1, 2018 to March 31, 2018

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Revenue:		
Memberships	\$1,200	\$10,000
Grants & Donations	772	2,000
Fund Raising		<u>8,000</u>
Total	<u>\$1,972</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>
Expenses:		
Advertising	368	500
Office Supplies	139	550
Fundraising	59	3,500
Miscellaneous	68	100
RVCA Donations		8,500
Special Projects		<u>7,700</u>
Total	<u>\$634</u>	<u>\$20,850</u>

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. Please renew your membership when your current membership expires in 2018. Thank you.

The Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network has been awarded a community grant by the Township of Rideau Lakes to create and install signs directing visitors to the Amazing Places within the Township. These funds will help us get the word out to locals and visitors that there are truly some Amazing Places in FAB. Signs will be developed and installed over the summer, so watch for them on the roads near Jones Falls, The Old Stone Mill and Spy Rock.