

Chair's Message

As I reread my message in the spring newsletter, I thought it was a bit gloomy but that was the prevailing sentiment at the time. Fortunately, things have turned out better, thanks to the efforts of my Board colleagues and five excellent employees: Caroline, Alyssa, Adam, Callum and Gillian.

Thanks to the financial support of the Township of Rideau Lakes, the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Program and several anonymous individuals, additional sections of boardwalk have been constructed in low and erosion prone areas of Rock Dunder. Management Plans are being updated, property monitoring is occurring, invasive species are being addressed and everyone pitches in for gate duty when the need arises.

Establishing one way hiking directions on the loop trails at Rock Dunder has helped ensure physical distancing and visitors have generally been cooperative. Trails have been open for the public, sunrise to sunset, since May 30; washrooms remain closed and amenities are un-sanitized. Demand for hiking opportunities has increased significantly and RWLT is pleased to have been able to facilitate this important need to get out and enjoy nature.

The RWLT autumn fundraising dinner has been postponed. Like charities everywhere RWLT has been affected by the perfect storm of Covid-19 lock downs, high unemployment and economic weakness. Imagine Canada estimates that donations to the charitable sector have been reduced by one third. Your support is welcomed (use the donation form insert!).

Safety is a key element of everything we do. Covid-19 protocols are foremost in everyone's mind at present but there are other aspects as well. Traffic congestion at the Rock Dunder entrance has always been a worry. RWLT has encouraged the MTO and OPP to help address this, and this summer constructed an off-highway turning area on Stanley Lash Lane as an additional mechanism to facilitate traffic flow in very busy times. In July, Rideau Lakes Fire and Rescue services undertook staff training on extraction techniques at Rock Dunder. The services of this dedicated group have, unfortunately, been deployed at Rock Dunder on numerous occasions. Some visitors still think that flip flops are suitable footwear for hiking!

Enjoy the rest of your summer and stay safe.
Peter Hannah



*Turn-around in laneway at
Rock Dunder*

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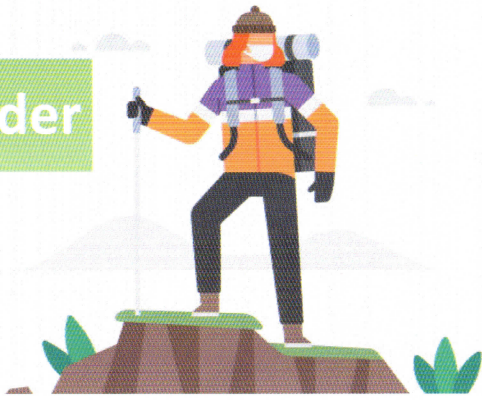
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Donate Today!

- Use Insert

Rock Dunder



Trail Improvements - This year RWLT began phase two of the trail improvements with the construction of a 45m long board walk that will cover a large portion of the trail with exposed roots. Along with aiding trail restoration and protecting vegetation, these boardwalks are also helpful for hikers during the wet season.

Heartfelt 'thanks' to *Rideau Lakes Township* and a few (anonymous) donors for supporting this project.



Boardwalk over exposed roots, part of trail improvements



Trail re-routed so damaged sections can rejuvenate.

Trail Rejuvenation - Visitation to Rock Dunder continues to increase. And with it, so does the wear and tear of our beloved hiking trails. Concerns include more tree roots exposed, some sections are muddier/entrenched, more vegetation along the edges trampled and loose stones on steep sections. In addition to the boardwalk project, RWLT has re-routed small sections of trail. Even these are showing 'wear and tear' after only a few weeks! Hopefully, though, by periodically shifting routes the essence of Rock Dunder will rejuvenate enough for another go.

Poison Parsnip

Please be cognizant of the presence of wild parsnip when going for a hike at the Rock Dunder and J H Fullard properties. As may be inferred from its name, poison parsnip has toxic chemicals in seeds and stems that deter animals from eating the plant and can also cause a burn-like rash (phytophotodermatitis) in people and pets. Due to the number of seeds produced by a single plant and their ability to remain in the soil for up to five years, eradication takes persistence!

Look out for and don't touch wild parsnip!



RWLT is a charity that has been conserving important natural lands and habitat in the Cataraqui and Rideau watersheds since 1966 to support our community into the future.

Dock - To address the expansion of vegetation loss and shore erosion a pipe dock, with canoe access in mind, has been installed at Covington Cottage on Bulls Eye Lake. Construction and installation went smoothly, and now both the people and plants at Covington can safely go about their day!

Rentals - Rental of the off-grid Covington Cottage is 'fully booked' for this year – thank you renters. Adjustments for Covid measures reduced the number of rentals that could be offered. And, this situation may well carry over into 2021. So, if you're looking for a getaway, then don't wait to 'contact us' via the RWLT website about renting next year.



Covington Cottage

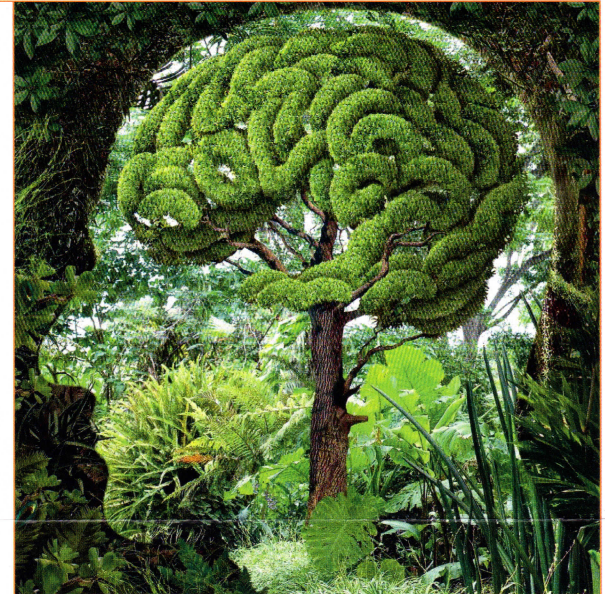
Dock installed to reduce shore erosion.

Nature-Covid Relationship

We have learned how crucially important community is, and how small actions matter to the health and well-being of others. As we look ahead to resuming our personal connections with family, friends and colleagues, let's take

this moment to build better, more resilient communities and economies, and recognize that our interconnectedness extends to our relationship with nature. We live in a heavily globalized economy — we need to reflect on how nature supports us, and think: viable, protected, restored and sustainable.

But it is about more than just the environment, for all things are connected, and we're all in this together. We need to think also about jobs, dignity and our community relationships. We can emerge stronger and better equipped to care for, hand-in-hand, each other and the planet's life support system. As identified jointly by *the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Health Organization and World Wide Fund for Nature*: As we begin to consider what our new normal will look like in a post COVID-19 world, remember "We must embrace a just, healthy and green recovery and kickstart a wider transformation towards a model that values nature as the foundation for a healthy society. Not doing so and instead attempting to save money by neglecting environmental protection, health systems, and social safety nets, has already proven to be a false economy. The bill will be paid many times over."



Build back better: hand in hand care for each other and nature

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Summer staff supported by CEWS funding

This summer RWLT has been able to hire five (5) students with assistance from the *Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy*. High school graduate Adam Seabrook, a returning student, is our Lead Hand and grade 12 student Callum Diak is the Maintenance Operations Assistant. The friendly face you will most often be seeing at the Dunder gate is university student Gillian Lackie, our Gate and Administrative Operations Assistant. On the property side of things we have Caroline Spang and Alyssa Fiedler; both are university biology graduates. As Conservation Interpreters they will be conducting species surveys and monitoring the ecologically significant properties owned by the RWLT. Thanks to CEWS and many donors like you for providing job experiences for young conservationists.

Participate



Sample 'Oh Canada' photo from RWLT; submit yours to AFCC

Photos Please - Oh Canada! Photography Contest

The closed boarder has prevented our US friends from coming to Canada. Lockdowns and safety concerns have kept some Canadians away from the area, too. That has disrupted many cherished traditions, kept families and friends apart, and separated many of you from a place you love. *American Friends of Canadian Conservation* is hosting a photography contest to celebrate our connections to both Canada's diverse landscapes and each other. This is a great opportunity to select your best pictures of the Rideau Waterway watersheds, show them off and potentially win a prize for you and RWLT.

To get started, go to www.conservecanada.org/american-friends-photo-contest/. You will find the rules, categories, description of prizes and instructions on how to enter. Submit photos between August 15 and September 15; vote between September 15 and 30, 2020. Forward this information to anyone who is passionate about Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and likes to take pictures. Then give it your best shot! Oh, and don't forget to let RWLT know of your entry taken in the Rideau Waterway area.



Host a Ratsnake Nest Box

Have you seen gray ratsnake, a species at risk, on your property? Do you want to help increase their population? RWLT is looking for landowners primarily in the Frontenac Arch area who are willing to have a nest box located on their property. Send RWLT a note with your contact information and address using 'contact us' on the RWLT website.

Let RWLT know of interest to have a ratsnake nest box on your property