



Fall 2020

The View from Foley Mountain *

News from the Friends of Foley Mountain

Box 5, Westport, ON, K0G 1X0

www.friendsoffoleymountain.ca

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The past few months have been very hard on all of us. I hope that you and your loved ones have fared well during this very traumatic time.

On September 16 the Friends of Foley Mountain held its Annual General Meeting outside at the Silversides location in the Foley Mountain Conservation Area. It was a lovely afternoon and it was very pleasant to be able to meet on the mountain. Mary Bowlby, Carole Pickett, Louise Pinard Taillon, Don Goodfellow, Pete Stothart, Sandy Cameron, Mike Fay, and I were re-elected as returning Directors. Additionally, I would like to welcome Anna Chadwick and Paul Clasby who also joined the board and were elected at the AGM. I will remain as President for the coming year and Louise has assumed the role of Vice President, Sandy will continue as Treasurer and Mary has volunteered to be the Recording Secretary. Rebecca Whitman, Foley Mountain Area Supervisor, is also a member of the board.

The Board of Directors would like to thank Marion Watkins for her many years of service on the FOFM Board. We wish her good health and success in her future endeavors.

The current pandemic has drastically curtailed the Friends activities. We have had to cancel the Spring newsletter and stopped our fund - raising activities – unfortunately this meant cancelling our major fund raiser, the Tapas Dinner, which has been very successful in the past. We are planning to hold the dinner again next summer if the public health rules permit it. We will be installing a donation box at Spy Rock parking lot and will add a donate button to our Face Book page – hopefully we will be able to raise some money by these two methods.

Although we haven't had any recent fund raisers, existing funds have enabled us to continue to support RVCA as we have done in the past. Last Fall we were successful in obtaining a grant from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation which was to be used to subsidize busing for classes to take outdoor education at Foley Mountain. The grant was scheduled to expire in June 2020 but has been extended until June 2021 so we shall be able to continue to offer bus subsidies once school outdoor education trips to Foley Mountain resume. We have also continued our financial support of the Forest School by offering four full subsidies to needy families.

(Continued)

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

Membership fees are now our only source of funds and membership sales are the cornerstone of fundraising. The Friends of Foley Mountain needs to maintain its current membership and to increase it in order to continue our commitments made in support of the activities at Foley Mountain Conservation Area. Our treasurer will be sending notification to you indicating when your current membership is up for renewal and we would appreciate your timely renewal. Each membership of \$50 or more entitles you to free parking for 2 vehicles at any RVCA location. Also please canvass any of your friends who you may think might be interested in supporting our cause. A Membership form is enclosed with this newsletter and if more are needed, they can be found on our Face Book page and website (www.friendsoffoley.ca).

Thank you for your continued support of the Friends of Foley Mountain.

My best wishes that you and yours keep safe.

Rob Struthers,
President

r.a.struthers@live.com

The Force That Through The Green Fuse

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

It was an acorn that started me thinking. I was walking along the rocky path of the Wildflower Trail when my toe raised an acorn. This was not one of the glossy, solid nuts of late autumn, though. This was an acorn that had felt Dylan Thomas' "force that through the green fuse drives the flower". For when I picked it up I found that the husk had softened and a shoot had thrust through its wooden case and reached out towards the soil. In my hand I held the makings of a tree. I looked at my feet and saw more split acorns and shoots. I had come upon an oak nursery.

Now I heard a cat-like squalling and a scrambling in the trees overhead and I looked up. Powered by the same force that drove the root out of the acorn shell, no less than five kittenish squirrels dashed round and round through the surrounding trees. It was likely that some of the rubble that lay at my feet could be traced to their relatives. But someday even these acorn husks would serve to nourish the meagre soil on the forest floor.

I laid down my acorn and softened the fragrant forest earth around its shoot, hoping to make an easier passage for it. It was white oak territory here, and while I scratched in the rubble of shells and twigs I thought of our deer and how the rich, oily acorns in fall provided them with fat layers to survive the winter.

About me everything from earth to air had the electric quickness of spring. The stream ahead of me tumbled over itself in a foaming rush to reach the lake. On both sides of the trail were a froth of wildflowers hurrying to fulfil their cycle. Soon the trees would leaf out and the forest canopy would close off their light.

Getting Back to Nature During a Global Pandemic

By: Rebecca Whitman

Hello Friends of Foley Mountain! It has been awhile and so much has changed in the world since the last time I put pen to paper to update you on the happenings here at Foley Mountain Conservation Area. The staff of Rideau Valley Conservation Authority hopes this update finds you all healthy, safe, and happy.

Spring on the mountain is usually one of our busiest times with hundreds of children exploring, playing, and learning in the forest. With the first COVID-19 restrictions put in place, we saw the cancellation of both our spring forest school and education programs. Although we were saddened and disappointed to not welcome students, we were happy to be able to keep Foley Mountain open for passive use, with fees waived, despite having to close certain amenities like picnic areas, washrooms, gathering areas like Spy Rock, and buildings. We received a great deal of positive feedback from folks who were grateful to at least have the trails open for both their mental and physical health. During this time, education staff were still able to reach out and connect with families through the "Fresh Air Fun" series where we encouraged them to get outdoors with their children and connect with nature.

As the sunny days of summer set in, we made the difficult decision to cancel our summer day camp and public programs but we were able to re-open our washrooms and other amenities in the park such as picnic areas and the natural swimming area. With fees re-instated, we were better able to measure how many people were visiting our conservation areas and are pleased to announce an approximate 30% increase in visitation over the previous year in July and August. On the education front, staff installed the very first "story trail adventure" at Foley Mountain along the Jack Herbert Mobility Trail. This self-directed activity placed the pages of the children's story "The Gruffalo", written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler, along the 350m trail with fun activity suggestions for families to read the story and explore in the forest. The Jack Herbert Mobility trail, funded by the Friends of Foley Mountain a number of years ago, provided the perfect backdrop for this program. The wide and even stone dust path is perfect for little feet, strollers, and wagons with easy access to parking and washrooms.

Our plans for the fall season include the re-opening of the forest school program as well as drop-in programs in partnership with the Township of Rideau Lakes as the situation with COVID-19 allows. We also expect there to be a large influx of visitors hoping to take in the fall colours and vistas from Foley Mountain. Rideau Valley Conservation Authority staff will be putting additional safety measures in place to ensure that our visitors are able to safely enjoy this beautiful time of year. For example, staff will be onsite on weekends to limit the number of visitors in the park and those gathering on viewing platforms. Spy Rock will be limited to 25 people at a time and masks are strongly recommended. We will also be actively promoting the following guidelines:

- Practice physical distancing rules.
- Wear a mask when physical distancing is not possible (i.e. at popular locations in the park like Spy Rock).
- Follow directional signs on trails.
- Yield to oncoming trail users when necessary.
- Come equipped with water and hand sanitizer (outhouses and washrooms are open).
- Purchase your \$7 day pass at the pay machine using coin or credit card or online using the PayByPhone App (visit www.rvca.ca/foley-mountain for details).
- Be prepared to make the necessary decision to turn around if the parking lots look busy or full or come another time! You may also want to have alternate plans in place if the site reaches capacity and cannot accept any more visitors. Consider a mid-week visit to avoid large weekend crowds.

As we all know, things can change quickly and unexpectedly in these uncertain times. We are ready to adapt and problem solve to try and do our best to continue working towards our ultimate goal of providing a place for people of all ages to connect with the natural world and we hope you will join us! The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority wishes to express how grateful we are for our ongoing partnership with the Friends of Foley Mountain through these difficult times. **Thank you all for your support!**

But after seeing the acorn nursery I was thinking of seeds. In the woods, if I looked closely, there were seeds in a wild generosity. It was this abundance of possibility that fascinated me.

I thought first of the winged seeds, the maple keys beloved of children. Whirled by a rudder, on severing from its tree, each pair of seeds floated down to spread upon the ground. Dandelion and goatsbeard travelled far with their parachutes. Perhaps loveliest of all these dispersals was a field dreamy with milkweed down after the weathered grey pods had split open. Even deep in the woods I sometimes found a seed and its carrier, wind-driven into an unlikely landing bed.

Then there were the fruit-encased seeds. Near me I saw the rounded twin leaves of clintonia and reminded myself to look for the indigo berries this fall. I passed the nondescript flower of white baneberry, remembering its large white berries like china dolls' eyes in the fall. Against a log I found a wintergreen plant with one remaining, bright red berry. I slit it open with my thumbnail and looked at the tiny seeds before I ate it. Back on the rocky path I saw the flowers of the woods strawberry and thought of its berries with seeds sunk in little pits on the outside. There are so many variations on the theme, each subtly adapted to its individual need to repeat itself.

I passed the hollow where there is a stand of cockleburs in fall. Burrs must be one of the least likeable methods of transference of seeds. Still, these seeds travel as effectively as those that fly or appeal to taste.

Last of all, across the bridge I came to a solitary pine, out of place in a forest where hardwoods predominate. For the pine, the cone is the seeds' case in a complicated process that can sometimes take two years to complete. Hidden within the cone seeds and wings develop to be spread, sometimes by the same squirrels who shift acorns.

With my thoughts back to acorns again, it occurred to me that seeds fascinated me because they are at the pivotal point between what has been and what will be. Around me I can, at the same time, see wildflowers hurrying to end their cycles by producing seeds and an acorn (the seed itself) thrusting forth to being its cycle.



Friends of Foley Mountain

Operating Statement - January 1, 2020 - September 16, 2020

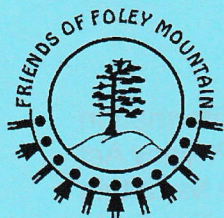
| <u>Revenue:</u> | <u>2020</u> | <u>2019</u> |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Memberships | \$3,275 | \$3,975 |
| Grants & Donations | 0 | \$398 |
| Fund Raising | 0 | \$11,592 |
| Total | \$3,275 | \$15,965 |
| <u>Expenses:</u> | | |
| Office supplies | \$102 | \$402 |
| Fund Raising (TAPAS) | \$280 | \$4,786 |
| Miscellaneous | \$50 | \$51 |
| RVCA Donations | 0 | \$6,000 (1) |
| Special Projects | | |
| Total | \$432 | \$11,239 |

(1) This amount was carried over from 2018. RVCA donations and special projects are invoice toward the end of each year.

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. The annual TAPAS at the Winery was cancelled due to COVID 19. As a result we are even more dependent on membership sales. We are most hopeful that you will renew your membership when it expires.

Thank you for your support.





FRIENDS OF FOLEY MOUNTAIN MEMBERSHIP FORM

| | | |
|--|----------|--|
| Name | | Phone Number |
| Address | | |
| City | Province | Postal Code |
| Email Address | | |
| Would you like to receive information about Foley Mountain related events? | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Would you like to receive this information by | | Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Membership in the Friends of Foley Mountain does not include free entrance to Foley Mountain Conservation Area. However, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority will issue a complimentary annual pass to each member of the Friends of Foley Mountain who purchases a membership with a value of \$50 or more.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| → | <u>SIGNIFICANT & IMPORTANT CHANGE:</u> | ← |
| <u>The pass will be valid for one year starting at the date membership becomes effective.</u> | | |
| <u>Each pass will cover up to 2 licence plates. PLEASE FILL IN 1 or 2 NUMBERS HERE:</u> | | |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> | |

- Patron's names (unless otherwise requested) are placed on our Patron's Board at the Spy Rock Parking Lot.
- All members receive tax receipts and at least two newsletters each year.
- Cheques or Money Orders are made payable to: **Friends of Foley Mountain.**

Please select membership level:

- | | | | |
|---|---------|---|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Member: | (\$25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Member: | (\$50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Member: | (\$50) | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Sponsor: | (\$100) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Member: | (\$100) | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Patron: | (\$200) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron: | (\$200) | | |

Please send your form and payment to: **Friends of Foley Mountain**
P.O. Box 5
Westport, ON. K0G 1X0