



Spring 2023

# The View from Foley Mountain \*

News from the Friends of Foley Mountain

Box 5, Westport, ON, K0G 1X0

[www.friendsoffoley.ca](http://www.friendsoffoley.ca)

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The year 2023 marks the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Foley Mountain Conservation Area. The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) has planned several activities over the year to celebrate this. Included in these activities are:

- posting every Friday on their social media sites a fact about Foley Mountain. Posts are entitled 50 Foley Facts
- a formal reception to be held at Foley Mountain tentatively scheduled for September; the reception will be designed to welcome the community to Foley Mountain and provide a venue to relate some fond memories of times at Foley;
- free drop ins for the Forest School held at Foley Mountain will be offered;
- RVCA will develop some human interest pieces – profiles of the Peri McQuay's (wife of the first Superintendent) time living at Foley and raising her family there – and a similar one on Rebecca Whitman's (current Superintendent) experience; and
- possibly developing a history exhibit and panels at the Interpretive Centre.

RVCA is collecting photos of Foley Mountain through the years to share with the community during the park's 50th anniversary celebrations. They are looking for historic photos pre-RVCA involvement, photos of visitors enjoying the park over the past 50 years, nature and landscape photos, and anything else Foley Mountain-related. Please note the RVCA may use your uncredited photos in public displays, online slideshows, videos and other communications products, social media and promotional materials. The photos may also be used as part of fundraising materials in support of Friends of Foley Mountain. When submitting, please include detailed captions and credit information as much as possible. In some instances, photos may be credited, but not always.

How to submit:

Digital or scanned photos can be sent by email to [info@rvca.ca](mailto:info@rvca.ca).

Print copies can be mailed to:

3889 Rideau Valley Dr.

PO Box 599

Manotick, ON

K4M 1A5

Include a stamped and addressed envelope to have your print copies returned. Thank you!

( continued )

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

The Friends of Foley Mountain have been supporting RVCA's programs since its inception in 1996. Our main activity is fundraising to support ongoing outdoor education programs and improved facilities at the park. With this funding, the Friends of Foley Mountain provide an annual contribution to the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority to support the Outdoor Environmental Education Program which is aimed at children and families. In our 27 years we have contributed in excess of \$400,000.

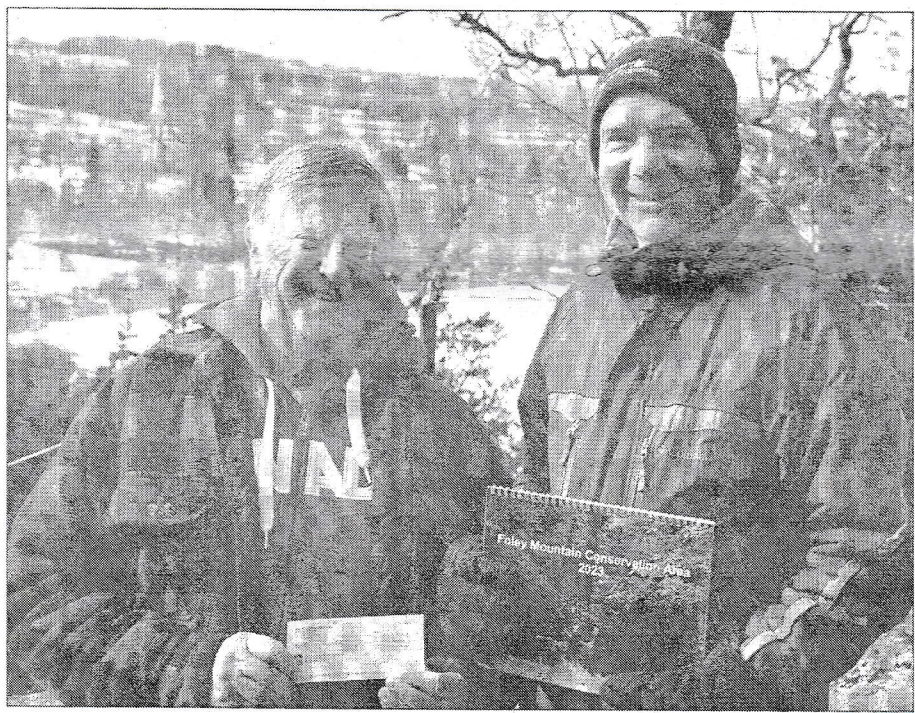
Although membership dues are our main source of funds, we are also fortunate enough to receive donations. I would like to thank recent donors – Mel Shaw, the Cove and Blues on the Rideau. Mel is a local photographer and last year he published a calendar of his photos taken at Foley Mountain and donated the entire profits to us. The Cove hosted The Blues on the Rideau and both made donations to us. Thanks also to those who have renewed their memberships.

There is a new Director now on your Board - Peter Minelli recently moved to Westport and wants to be active in the community. In addition to joining the Westport Lions Club, he agreed to join our Board. Peter's background will certainly prove an asset to our work– he spent most of his career in Parks Canada in various positions and is keen to contribute to what we do.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that Laurel Rudd had joined our Board but didn't really introduce her. Laurel is an avid outdoors person and amateur photographer who considers Westport her hometown having lived in the area for 35 years. She has hiked in Foley Mountain for all these years and her children loved attending the Forest School. With retirement around the corner, she wants to give back to her community and being a member of the Board for FOFM was the perfect fit.

Members are invited to attend our Annual General Meeting scheduled for 7 pm May 24, 2023 at the Interpretive Centre at Foley Mountain.

Rob Struthers  
r.a.struthers@live.com



Mel Shaw gives a cheque to Robert Struthers, left, of the Friends of Foley Mountain.

## Note from Peri McQuay:

In celebration of Foley Mountain's 50th anniversary I am offering the story of how my husband Barry and I discovered the brand new conservation area overlooking Westport. In the beginning we came to live for five or six years, and ended up staying almost forty. Looking back, we were incredibly blessed to live daily in the park's 800 acres, much of which is still relatively wild. We raised our sons, found meaningful careers, Barry teaching and I writing, and learned more than I will be able to express in my lifetime.

Living at Foley Mountain was the best of both worlds, close to nature, but also close to the wonderful, caring community of Westport and area. Having been given these gifts, I urge you to join me in cherishing and supporting our precious park.

## The Land That Still Has Tall Trees

"Do you know of any land in this area that still has tall trees?" I asked a conservation-minded friend. During the two years we had lived in eastern Ontario my husband Barry and I had looked often for a woods like the ones I remembered from childhood. What we wanted was a wood with trees leafy enough to cast a heavy shade in summer, with hollow old trunks to attract woodpeckers, a woods with a few trees broad enough to hide behind. To our disappointment what we had found so far were only thickets of wrist-thick, characterless saplings.

"You might try the conservation area near Westport," my friend suggested. "There's a large stand of big pine there –the same tall trees they used to cut for ship masts in the eighteen hundreds, actually. That's the only place I can think of. Everywhere else gets logged over pretty regularly. I hear the Conservation Authority is thinking of hiring a supervisor for the place next year, someone to look after it and teach a few classes," he added.

It wasn't until late afternoon on a March day too early for spring and too late for winter that we saw Foley Mountain for the first time. As yet unspoken was the real reason we had come to look at the park: if we liked we might think of trying for the supervisor's job.

The pines of our search were bending under a raw wind as we approached the entrance gate to the park. In spite of the bleak day we felt at home seeing them. Because the road into the park was still crusted with snow and unrutted by cars, we decided to park at the gate and go in on foot. And so, for the first time, we set out along the road through the deep forest, trudging over the gritty snow and admiring the look of the white birches that grew among the huge pines.

At the first turn in the lonely road, we came upon a cleft where the melting snow had cut a broad channel in the softening earth of the road. No wonder no cars had been in before us. We forded the washout and continued until the dense woods ended and rough fields began. Over a hill some distance from the road we could see the small white farmhouse that would become the supervisor's residence. There was far more land here to explore than we had thought. Although we hadn't looked at the house yet, the road curved on ahead of us invitingly. We must come back soon and spend a day, we said, but for now we would just walk down to the bend in the road to see if we could get an idea of how far the park extended.

Crossing an open field now, the road was bare of snow and soft to our feet as we hurried down the slope to the curve. There we stopped in surprise. Ahead of us, the road plunged down a long, steep hill, but what caught our breath was the cascade that tumbled and pounded down the rocky hillside, shaking the ground beneath our feet.

I crouched beside the waterfall, letting the spray touch my face and watching the water's force tearing at loose rocks, "We've never seen anything like this," I exulted.

"It's amazingly wild here," Barry said. "We're only a mile or so from Westport, but I doubt if many people have seen this."

The fading light told us that we would have to hurry back to the car, but as we were walking back Barry said, "I should phone the Authority about that washout," and as we got into the car he added, "The job here would certainly be worth seeing about." ...

We've lived in the supervisor's house "up on the Mountain" for more than a dozen years, yet the pines still wave as alluringly as they did that first day and any time now the ice will shatter, releasing the waterfall once more.

Peri McQuay  
www.perimcquay.ca

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## Friends of Foley Mountain

### Statement of Operating Account

For the period January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<b>Revenue:</b>		
Memberships	\$11,275	\$9,000
Donations	1,524	500
Fund Raising	Cancelled to due COVID	
<b>Total:</b>	\$12,799	\$9,500
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Donations to RVCA	\$6,000	\$6,000
Special Projects	9,743	6,000
Advertising	585	350
Bank Charges	71	0
Miscellaneous		100
Office Supplies	208	250
Fund Raising	Cancelled due to COVID	
<b>Total:</b>	\$16,607	\$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. Thankyou for your support.**



## Butterfly/Pollinator Garden

As you know many plants depend on pollinators for their existence. According to the Cambridge Butterfly Conservancy...1/3 of the food that we eat exists because of the daily action of pollinators smaller than the size of your thumbnail.

We are all aware that pollinators are under threat due to habitat loss...the clearings of wild flowers and flowering plants that once offered habitats have been replaced by buildings and other human structures.

Planting a garden for butterflies and other pollinators such as bees is a win-win, not only are we helping by recreating their habitat but we also get to enjoy the beauty of flowers and the tiny animals that they attract.

**An interesting question:** Are butterflies better pollinators than bees?

Although butterflies are very active during the day and visit a wide variety of wildflowers they are less efficient than bees at moving pollen between plants. Highly perched on their long, thin legs they don't pick up much pollen on their bodies and lack specialized structures for collecting it.

Thankfully, butterflies and bees coexist quite happily so that one garden provides both beauty and benefit!

## Volunteers Needed

To that end, we are looking for volunteers to help rejuvenate a butterfly/pollinator garden at Foley Mountain.

To ensure that we choose both our location and our plantings correctly we will be working in late May/early June with stewardship staff from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

If you are interested in volunteering, whether it be on a one time basis or from time to time please let us know, including your name and contact information (phone or email) at [rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca](mailto:rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca) or **613-273-3255**.

## What's Up at Foley Mountain!

Prepared by: Rebecca Whitman

Hello Friends of Foley Mountain! With the buds pushing, the frogs singing, and the wildflowers blooming, we are saying goodbye to winter and hello to spring on the mountain.

To wrap up 2022, we thought you might like to hear some of our statistics!

- 2671 students, 136 teachers, and 226 adult volunteers participated in education programs
- 126 children participated in day camp programming
- 579 people enjoyed renting on our facilities

This winter was very busy and packed full of school education programs, forest school, and weekend rentals! This was the first winter since 2020 that we were able to offer programs and it sure felt good. Staff and students alike enjoyed strapping on snowshoes, exploring winter ecology, building shelters and fires, and more in the snow-covered forest. Many of the winter visits were made possible by funding that the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation secured before the pandemic from Bogs, the North Face Explore Fund, and Starbucks. This funding helped to offset the costs for both transportation and program fees enabling more students to get out into nature.

Spring program is well now well underway with two jam packed forest school classes and many school groups booked for forest adventures. In addition, RVCA is looking forward to celebrating Foley Mountain 50th anniversary! You can check out our social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for Foley Fun Fact Fridays. If you have any great photos of Foley Mountain, we also want to see them! Send us digital or scanned photos to [info@rvca.ca](mailto:info@rvca.ca) or mail print copies to PO Box 599, Manotick, ON, K4M 1A5. Be sure to include a stamped and addressed envelope to have your print returned. Stay tuned for more details about our celebration event this fall!

### Upcoming Programs:

- Don't forget that there is a FREE Forest School Family Drop-in program on the third Saturday of each month from 10-11:30am. Thanks to our friend at the Township of Rideau Lakes for sponsoring these programs! Pre-registration is required and more details can be found on our website at [www.rvca.ca](http://www.rvca.ca) under the Outdoor Education tab.
- Summer Camp registration is well under way with only a few spaces left! We are excited to welcome campers the weeks of July 10-14, July 24-28, Aug 14-18 and Aug 28-Sept 1.
- Registration for fall forest school will be here before we know it! We'll be working on our fall schedule as we move through May and June.

As always, a big thanks go out to the Friends of Foley Mountain for your continued support in helping us meet our goal of getting more folks outside and connected with nature!