

Public Open House to Introduce Hearts Desire Riparian Restoration Concept

Hearts Desire, Ottawa – November 7, 2011 — Built in early 1975, the need for the Hearts Desire Weir has been in question for many years. Located on the lower Jock River near Prince of Wales Drive, the weir was originally built by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) to provide higher summer flows, improve habitat for fish, ensure water for livestock and provide community ponds for fire protection and beautification.

However, over the last 36 years, a great deal about the watercourse and its neighbouring communities has changed, including:

- concepts on how rivers and watersheds are managed,
- occupational health and safety risks associated with the annual installation and removal of the weir,
- concerns from local community groups (Stonebridge Community Association and Friends of the Jock River) about slope failures and erosion upstream of the weir; and,
- indications from whitewater enthusiasts that the weir site is considered to be hazardous by canoeists and kayakers.

In February 2008, the RVCA Board of Directors approved the development of a plan to decommission the Hearts Desire Weir. In response to public input, a restoration plan for the Jock River and its riverbank was also initiated. The decommissioning plan and restoration plan is now in final draft form and ready for public input.

A public open house is being held Monday, November 21, 2011 from 3:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the RVCA headquarters at 3889 Rideau Valley Drive. This open house will provide local residents with technical information regarding the future need of the weir and the plan to restore and enhance the bed and banks of the Jock River as recommended in the *Hearts Desire Riparian Restoration Concept*.

“We would like to see the river returning to a more natural state,” said Michael Yee, RVCA Biology and Water Quality Manager. “With the removal of the weir, we can work to stabilize the shore, improve water quality and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.”

The RVCA is already working with landowners who live in the directly affected shoreline areas, but recognize the interest of the larger community.

“This is a chance for everyone to learn about the proposed work to take place along the River. Those living in the Hearts Desire Community and Stonebridge Community would have an interest in seeing what is recommended,” said Yee.

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