

DEFENDING THE OTTAWA RIVER, PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES.



# 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



Ottawa RIVERKEEPER®  
SENTINELLE Outaouais

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## MESSAGE FROM THE RIVERKEEPER AND THE PRESIDENT

*Ottawa Riverkeeper* continues to lead the way in defending the Ottawa River and protecting the communities in its watershed. We are tackling critical issues such as combined sewer overflows, nuclear waste management, floodplain and shoreline development, stormwater management and contaminated sites. The consequences of these man-made alterations are significant – for health at an individual and community level.

We are very proud to present our 2008 annual report and to share with you the successes and progress we have made this year. Most notably this has been a year of taking action on sewage. For the past two years we have been conducting research to bring science-based information to the public and decision-makers regarding the quality and amount of sewage that is entering the Ottawa River. The results of this research will be presented in the next issue of Ottawa Riverkeeper's River Report – coming soon!

The significant sewage spill from the City of Ottawa in 2006 was unfortunate, yet served to help raise awareness about the issue. As a result many positive actions are being implemented to reduce the amount of untreated sewage spilling into the river. The City of Ottawa has a leadership role to play in the Ottawa River Watershed and Ottawa Riverkeeper is encouraging city staff to involve the public in their decision-making.

The sewage and water quality issue has also catalyzed information sharing across the municipalities of Ottawa and Gatineau – it is hard to believe that this has never happened before! Ottawa Riverkeeper is making progress on several fronts around collaboration across multiple layers of government. MPs are even talking in the House of Commons about the need to take a watershed approach in managing the Ottawa River. We are working with the National Capital Commission to facilitate a collaborative approach to information sharing and integrated development around the river within the National Capital Region.

It has been a challenging year for Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL), Canada's crown corporation that operates the nuclear facilities at Chalk River. Their leaky NRU reactor was eventually shut down and its future remains uncertain. Ottawa Riverkeeper was the first to bring information to the public that the leaking heavy water contaminated with tritium was eventually dumped into the Ottawa River.

Ottawa Riverkeeper is working on issues of national importance and we are needed more than ever now that critical legislation to protect our environment is being changed and weakened. This year we have seen changes to important pieces of Federal legislation (Navigable Waters Protection Act, Canadian Environmental Assessment Act), as well as pending changes to the Fisheries Act. We must be constantly diligent to maintain protection for our river.

Ottawa Riverkeeper continues to increase awareness of the river and the threats that it is facing. However, equally important is the work we are doing to promote and celebrate the incredibly rich and important river that flows through our communities. American Eels continue to defy all odds to make their journey up the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers, miraculously making it past the concrete dams that impede migration and navigation on the river. The Ottawa River is home to the globally threatened Sturgeon and many other species that are diminishing around the world. The Ottawa River is a world-class destination for white water paddling and wilderness trips.

The people of the Ottawa River Watershed continue to bring us hope. We work with individuals at all levels who have an honest concern for the health of our river. These people are working at wastewater treatment facilities, they are business leaders, nuclear engineers, First Nations, biologists, paddlers, sailors, cottagers, lawyers, fishermen/women, youth...and the list continues. The future of our river is in our collective hands and with strong leadership we can protect the health and integrity of the mighty Ottawa River.

*Enjoy the river!*



**Meredith Brown**



**David Spence**



## OUR MISSION

*We* take action to defend the Ottawa River, and to influence decisions that affect the health and future of the river. We work collaboratively, to enforce protective regulations and seek effective solutions. By providing clear science-based information, we aim to engage the public and empower citizens to become advocates for the protection of our river and our communities.

## KEY MESSAGES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*Science leads our thinking.*

The decisions we make regarding the river stem from good science produced by expert, independent sources.

*Responsibility must be taken.*

Polluting should have a price, just as stewardship should be rewarded.

*Participation is essential.*

All citizens should have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect the health and future of their river.

*Every effort counts.*

By taking small steps to save our river—both individually and collectively—we can achieve important positive change.

*Water is the thread connecting our communities and our actions.*

The choices we make and steps we take have consequences for our river, our region and our health.

*Rivers reflect the places through which they flow.*

Healthy rivers reveal well-informed, active and responsible communities.



# SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

*In* Ontario a new piece of provincial legislation called the Clean Water Act (Bill 43) requires municipalities and stakeholders to work together to develop watershed-based source protection plans. Source protection plans will identify potential threats to local sources of municipal drinking water and outline steps to reduce or eliminate those threats that pose a significant risk.

We are proud to have Mary Trudeau representing Ottawa Riverkeeper on the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee (MRSPC).



Mary is a professional engineer specializing in water resources with over twenty years experience in infrastructure management, aquatic ecosystem assessments and environment policy and program development.

One of the key messages we have brought to the table is the need for an inter-jurisdictional committee to properly address the threats to Ottawa's drinking water supply. As a result, the SPC put forward the following motion that is being considered and debated at high levels and has been endorsed by the City of Ottawa:

*That the MRSPC recommends the Government of Ontario initiate the creation of an inter-jurisdictional Committee empowered to protect the water quality, water quantity and ecological integrity of the Ottawa River through a watershed approach, including coordinated research, collaborative development of decision-making tools, and coherent and consistent policies, programs and public outreach initiatives for the river.*

*And be it further resolved that MRSPC recommends that the inter-jurisdictional committee includes representation of applicable ministries within the Government of Ontario, relevant Conservation Authorities, the Government of Canada, applicable ministries of the Province of Quebec, municipalities in both Ontario and Quebec with intakes or discharges to the river, Hydro authorities, and representatives from industrial sectors and non-governmental organizations with the first task being the development of Terms of Reference for the Committee.*



## SEWAGE

*We* believe every citizen has the right to know when sewage pollutes our river. For the past two years Ottawa Riverkeeper has been conducting in-depth research into the extent of the sewage problem in the Ottawa River. Municipalities on both sides of the river are using the river to dump and dilute their wastes and our wastewater treatment facilities are not equipped to remove the growing list of toxic substances that we are flushing down our drains. Further, municipalities have no requirements to bring this information to the public in a timely manner after sewage is spilled into our river.

In the City of Ottawa there have been many positive changes since the municipality was fined a total of \$562,500 for two infractions under the Ontario Water Resources Act: 1) illegally spilling the equivalent of 350 Olympic sized pools of raw sewage into the Ottawa River in 2006, and 2) failing to report the spill to the Ministry of Environment.

Our Federal government is working with the provinces to better regulate sewage. They are developing national regulations that will fall under the Federal Fisheries Act. Ottawa Riverkeeper is involved in the consultation process, constantly working to improve the strategies to manage municipal wastewater. Our critique of the national standards as well as detailed information about the extent of the sewage problem in the Ottawa River will be available in our upcoming River Report.

## NUCLEAR IMPACTS

*For* the past two years, Meredith Brown, Ottawa Riverkeeper, has met quarterly with scientists and managers from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited at Chalk River, as well as representatives from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and leaders from neighbouring communities. Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories and SRB Technologies are polluting our air, surface water and ground water with radioactive tritium. The leaking NRU reactor at Chalk River poses potential threats to our drinking water and Meredith has brought forward science-based information to the public as well as decision makers, in the form of reports to parliamentary standing committees. There is world-wide debate over tritium standards for drinking water quality. A new report from the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council recommends an Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard for tritium of 20 Bq/L, applied as a running annual average (our current standard is 7000 Bq/L). According to the expert council, this would meet the requirements for an appropriate level of risk and public safety, while remaining practicable and achievable by the nuclear power industry.

## NAVIGATION RIGHTS

*In* the last year we have witnessed rapid and ongoing deregulation of our environment, including a major overhaul of laws that protect our navigation rights and access to public waterways. The Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) was an important piece of federal legislation that ensured free and public access to navigable waters, and granted protection in the form of environmental assessments for development projects. In February 2009, the Harper government tabled a bill, within the budget act (C-10), that allowed for “classification” of our waterways, stripped Canadians of their rights to access some waterways, and removed important triggers for environmental assessments. Ottawa Riverkeeper, in partnership with [ispeakforcanadianrivers.ca](http://ispeakforcanadianrivers.ca), Lake Ontario Waterkeeper and the Sierra Club of Canada launched an aggressive campaign calling for non-confidence in the amendments proposed to NWPA in Bill C-10. In addition, Meredith provided ongoing support and science based information to House of Commons and Senate Standing Committees, and continues to act as an important advisor on the issue. Despite the passing of Bill C-10 by the federal government, the debate over Navigable Waters continues today, fuelled by environmentalists, lawyers, community groups, First Nations Communities, paddlers, anglers, concerned citizens and government representatives who believe that amendments to important federal environmental laws have no place in a budget bill. Ottawa Riverkeeper continues to bring attention to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, and encourages everyone to take a stand for their waterways.





## POLLUTION HOTLINE

*Throughout* the year our pollution hotline continues to ring off the hook. To manage increased demand we now hire a student each summer to follow-up on our calls, investigate issues and get municipal, provincial and federal enforcement officers out of their offices and into the field. We are documenting all of the concerns that are being raised which is telling us a very interesting story as we continue to monitor the trends. Many people who come to us have tried their best to negotiate the multiple and confusing layers of authority and become frustrated by being “bounced around agencies” or being told very politely that there is nothing that can be done for them. Ottawa Riverkeeper follows up and does not close a file until we are satisfied that every possible action has been taken. Not only are we helping to solve problems to make our river healthier, we are also empowering individuals to take action within their own communities. In the end, we all benefit.

## EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS TO ACT

*At* Ottawa Riverkeeper we understand the power of people. Problems get solved and laws get enforced when it is the people’s will. Our volunteer base is deep and their skills, experiences and dedication impressive. In 2008, 331 people offered their skills and time to help us achieve our mission. Our total number of volunteers has doubled in two years, now representing the equivalent of 5 full-time employees!



We have built a network of River Watchers who work in their communities along the Ottawa River (from Kipawa to Montreal) to improve the health of our river. We meet with, train and inspire these community leaders to take action, hence expanding our team and our geographical reach around the watershed. Our River Watchers keep the Riverkeeper informed about local issues and are keen observers on the river throughout the seasons.

School and youth groups are constantly looking to Ottawa Riverkeeper to bring classroom curriculum to life with real world problems and solutions. With the help of a dynamic team of volunteer environmental educators we have developed a new youth education program called River Friends. River Friends aims to educate, inspire and engage youth by helping them to create meaningful connections to their river and their communities. Creating a network of young stewards is a cornerstone to protecting the future to the Ottawa River, and preserving our heritage for generations to come. In 2008 we reached over 1500 youth through presentations, workshops and hands-on activities.



## WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE

*Ottawa Riverkeeper* has been a licensed member of the Waterkeeper Alliance since 2001. The Alliance continues to grow and now has 188 Waterkeepers on six continents, working to defend their local waterbodies. Our staff participated in the annual Waterkeeper Alliance conference in Seattle in June and in November we hosted the annual meeting for all Canadian Waterkeepers in beautiful Wakefield, Quebec.

Our Riverkeeper, Meredith Brown was recently recognized for her work in the winter issue of Waterkeeper magazine.



## BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

*In* April 2008 we moved our office from MEC to our new sunny headquarters on Danforth Avenue. Despite the exceptionally good treatment we received at MEC, we were getting too busy and needed more space. Our new office space has allowed us to grow and thrive. We were able to bring on a third employee as well as accommodate summer students and volunteers. Thanks to the new office environment and workspaces we now have regular volunteers who work on-site with us on a daily and weekly basis!

With an office and staff come the need for systems and so we invested in a server to allow us to work efficiently and effectively, and facilitate the future growth of the organization.

In addition, we've invested time and resources to improve our membership, as well as our Board of Directors. Our new "Community Support Circle" is a great example of how we work to bring people together, to help build upon Ottawa Riverkeepers organizational foundations for the benefit of our shared river.

## ON THE RIVER

*In* 2008 we had a record number of people out on the river, making connections and celebrating the river and how it improves the quality of our lives.

Events are a great way for us to engage individuals within our communities, bring people together, and inspire others to get involved. Our events calendar grows year-over-year, thanks to the success of some of our core annual events: Ottawa Riverkeeper Triathlon (700 participants + spectators), Rivers Day (300 participants), Annual Kettle Island Cleanup, and more.

Our River Watchers regularly act as our eyes and ears on the river, reporting back with important information about the Ottawa River and watershed. Every year, Ottawa Riverkeeper staff join River Watchers out on the water, to gain a better understanding of some of the issues facing communities in the watershed and to exchange important information about our collective actions.



## ABOUT OTTAWA RIVERKEEPER

*Ottawa Riverkeeper* is a citizen-based action group that brings people together to protect and promote the ecological health and diversity of the Ottawa River and its tributaries. Expert and independent, our organization advocates for responsible decision-making, public education, participation, access to information, and compliance with protective regulations, for the benefit of our river and our communities.

*Ottawa Riverkeeper is licensed member of Waterkeeper Alliance, an international grass roots advocacy organization, founded by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. <http://www.waterkeeper.org>*

### OUR TEAM

#### **Staff:**

**Meredith Brown**, Riverkeeper and Executive Director

**Delphine Hasle**, Director of Outreach

**Natasha Wilson**, Communications Coordinator

**Jessie Corey**, Pollution Hotline (*summer student*)

#### **Board of Directors:**

David Spence – President

John Bouza – Past President

John G. Booth

Gordon Clifford

Geoff Green

Dr. Ole Hendrickson

Regan Morris

Mark Patry

Laurel Rosene

Barry Stemshorn



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS : APRIL 1, 2008 - MARCH 31, 2009

*As a non-governmental organization and a registered charity, Ottawa Riverkeeper relies heavily on support from individual donors, members, businesses and foundations. Becoming a member of Ottawa Riverkeeper isn't just about making a financial contribution – it's a way to show your support for the health and future of your river. All donations, small-to-large, help us travel the distance towards reaching our collective goals. Every dollar counts and we sincerely and appreciate your support.*

## Stewards (\$50,000 and above)

The Ontario Trillium Foundation  
City of Ottawa

## Benefactors ( \$10,000 – \$49,999 )

Adobe Corporation  
Community Foundation of Ottawa  
Environment Canada  
Harold Crabtree  
HIVA Environmental Fund

## Protectors ( \$1,000 – \$9,999 )

Mattamy Homes  
Mountain Equipment Co-op  
Shell Environmental Fund  
Students and Staff of Ashbury College  
Telus Corporation  
Ville de Gatineau

## Defenders ( \$500 – \$999 )

Bell Canada (Employee Giving)  
Bell High School (Earth Care Club)  
Ken and Debbie Rubin Public Interest Fund  
The Nature Conservancy

## A special Thank You to our Patrons:

John Geoffrey Booth  
John Bouza  
Mark Kepkay and Jimena Eyzaguirre  
Paul Kruyne  
Alain Riel, City of Gatineau  
Christopher J. Paci  
David Spence  
Frank Therien, City of Gatineau  
Helen Hirsh Spence  
Quantum Murray LP  
Susan Kilburn

## And our Guardians:

Barry Sims  
Daniel Brunton  
Kathleen Willis  
Kenneth Abraham  
Mark Scriver  
Ole Hendrickson

## And all of our individual members and donors.

## And our Stellar Volunteers:

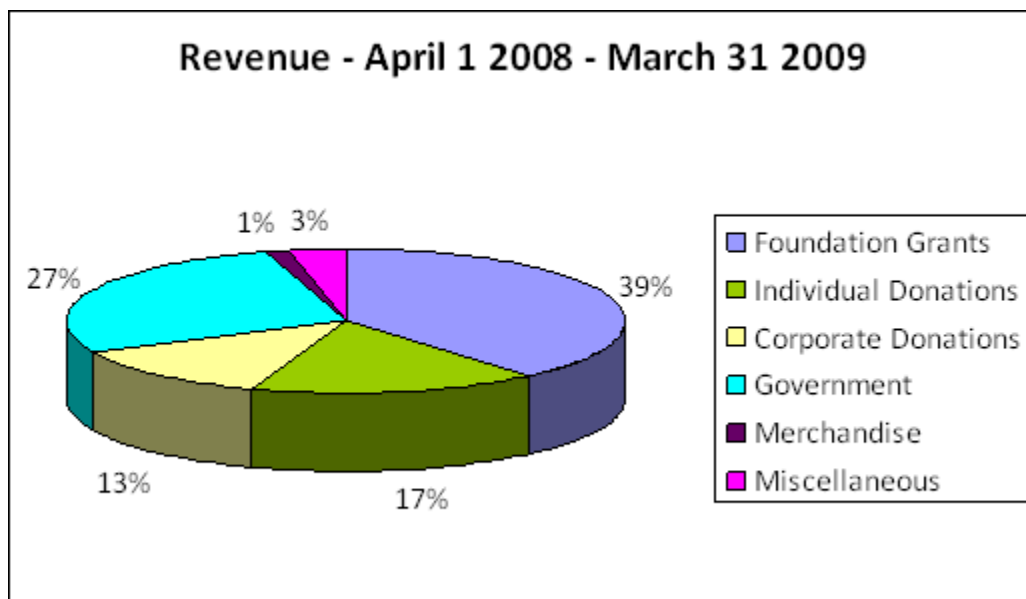
John Almstedt, Jon Andrews, Diane Ashby-Noel, Katherine Balpataky, Andree Bazinet, Elisa Bernier, Emilie Bernier, Madison Bingley, John Booth, Sophie Brisebois, John Bouza, Phillippe Brennan, Alex Brett, Jenny Brown, Andrew Buzzell, Hope Cadieux-Ledoux, Catherine Calligan, Gordon Clifford, Judith Cooney, Veen Cooper, Jessie Corey, Bertrand Daoust, Amanda Doiron, Barc Dowden, Peter Dudley, Louise Dumoulin, Nathalie Ferron, Max Finkelstein, Katharine Fletcher, Jennifer Gallant, Ceo Gaudet, Jennifer Goldstone, Nicole Gouret, Chris Goyer, Chris Graham, Geoff Green, Phil Green, Don Haines, Mary Halliwell-Cyr, Donna Harris, Jennifer Haughton, Peter Haughton, Ole Hendrickson, Jamie Herring, Sharon Holzman, Rob Huntley, Jane Inch, Homa Iraei, Jinny Jobin, Lea Kane, Abby Karos, Peter Karwacki, Brad Latta, Richard Lavictoire, Bing Lei, Ben Leglise, Sharon Locke, Beth Lorimer, Dan Lussier, Pauline Lynch-Steward, Virginia Maclatchy, Sarah MacLeod, Kim Mann, Duncan Marshall, Janet Mason, Karen Maw, Joann McCann, John Meadows, Regan Morris, David Nogas, Reid Parker, Don Paskovich, Mark Patry, Alec Pavelich, John Pavelich, Jan Phillips, Alain Piche, Andrea Prazmowski, Allison Prindiville, Peter Ranson, Nic Rasiulis, Colin Rennie, Andy Roach, Laurel Rosene, Sarah Rosolen, Mike Ryan, Dan Smith, Marc Smith, David Spence, Helen Hirsh Spence, Ev St. Amour, Heather Stairs, Natalie St-Denis, Barry Stemshorn, Cathy Stewart, Rob Stewart, Emma Stinson, Chris Stone, Connie Sung, Pat Tait, Melinda Tan, Nathalie Taylor, Ryan & Cleo Thompson, Alan Todd, Al Twedde, James Valcke, Tom Whillans, Rachel Witherspoon, Dave Wilson, Gina Zein-Sabbah, Lisa Zimmerling

# FINANCIAL REPORT

(April 1 2008 - March 31 2009)

Revenue	Amount (\$)
Foundation Grants	\$104,018
Corporate Donations	\$33,711
Individual Donations	\$45,846
Government	\$73,089
Merchandise	\$3,573
Miscellaneous	\$9,250
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$269,487</b>

Expenses	Amount (\$)
Wages, Benefits and Professional fees	\$155,822
Office & Administration	\$25,193
Outreach materials and promotion	\$20,862
Communications	\$3,647
Travel	\$3,270
Meetings, Workshops & Conferences	\$3,362
Bank charges & Interest	\$1,543
Amortization of Capital Assets	\$3,010
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$216,709</b>



Hard copies of our complete audited statements are available upon request.  
Please make your request to Delphine Hasle: [outreach@ottawariverkeeper.ca](mailto:outreach@ottawariverkeeper.ca)  
613-321-1120



**Ottawa Riverkeeper**

2-379 Danforth Avenue  
Ottawa, ON  
K2A 0E1

t: 613.321.1120  
t: 1-888.9KEEPER

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