



Ottawa RIVERKEEPER®
GARDE-RIVIÈRE des Outaouais

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

www.ottawariverkeeper.ca



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR RIVERKEEPER

Dear friends,

It is with great pleasure and honour that I continue to serve as your Ottawa Riverkeeper. It was thirteen years ago that I accepted the challenge to become a voice for river protection and a leader to grow a Waterkeeper organization in the Ottawa River Watershed. It is without a doubt that Ottawa Riverkeeper has become a leading advocate for freshwater protection in Canada and our organization is stronger than ever. I am thrilled to welcome Patrick Nadeau to our team this year, Patrick is a strong leader and strategist, and also an impressive swimmer!

The river is gaining attention and well-deserved recognition, however there are significant threats to the ecological integrity of the many rivers and lakes within our watershed. These issues are complex and can rarely be solved by one organization or one municipality acting alone. It takes a watershed to protect a river and that is why we are investing our time and efforts to build a diverse river constituency that will stand up when necessary and consistently act in the best interest of our shared river. Together we can co-create solutions or projects to address our water protection challenges. Together we are stronger. Thank you for all you do for our river, I could never do it alone.

Your Riverkeeper,

Meredith Brown
The Riverkeeper, Ottawa Riverkeeper



A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Dear friends and supporters,

What an exciting and momentous time for watershed stewardship! On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to thank everyone who has contributed to Ottawa Riverkeeper this year. In 2016, we have had many wonderful successes, including the Ottawa River being awarded Heritage designation; plastic microbeads being labelled as a toxic substance; the growth of our Riverwatcher Program; important strides made towards eliminating sewage overflows in the Ottawa River; and much more. It has been an incredible year for Ottawa Riverkeeper and we are pleased to share and celebrate this progress with you.

This year, the Ottawa Riverkeeper Board of Directors approved a new Strategic Plan to help guide us into the next five years, and that we hope will become a model for watershed stewardship in Canada and beyond. We have been growing the organization this year and I am very pleased to welcome Patrick Nadeau as Ottawa Riverkeeper's new Executive Director. I am also delighted to welcome Madame Sophie Grégoire Trudeau as our 2016 Honorary Riverkeeper. Her leadership and advocacy for clean waterways and a healthy environment serve as an inspiration, and we are proud to have her among our circle of river stewards. Mayor Jim Watson became our 2016 Water Leader for his commitment and support of the Ottawa River and Ottawa Riverkeeper. And, of course, we are thrilled that Meredith Brown remains as our outstanding, determined and respected Riverkeeper!

This year I was honoured to host our first ever Chairman's Reception as part of the hugely successful fourth annual Riverkeeper Gala on Lemieux Island. I had the chance to personally thank many of our important sponsors, such as EY Canada, CN Rail, Telus, RBC, Canada Goose, Forest Products Association of Canada, Insurance Bureau of Canada, Dentons, and the Caisse Desjardins de Hull-Aylmer, for their generous financial support. We are proud to have so many great supporters from around the watershed helping to find solutions to the complex problems faced by our shared rivers and lakes. It takes a watershed to protect a river. Together, we can ensure ours is safe to swim, drink, and fish. With your continued support, I look forward to building on our momentum and making 2017 another very successful year – starting with highlighting the important role the river and Ottawa Riverkeeper will play in Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations!

In the River Spirit,
Geoff Green C.M.
Chair, Ottawa Riverkeeper Board of Directors



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear river lovers,

It is my privilege to lead Ottawa Riverkeeper towards the vision and mission outlined in our ambitious new Strategic Plan. Our organization has seen incredible growth this year across every sector – from our finances and our level of community engagement to our number of volunteers, subscribers, supporters, and social media followers. Every year, we are doing more. Throughout the watershed, you will find us delivering results for the river.

The challenges we face are many: from harmful sewage entering our waterways, to eroding biodiversity, to ever-increasing industrial projects posing risks to the integrity of our watershed. If you appreciate what you read in the following pages, I invite you to join our vibrant community of river stewards. Get involved in river initiatives in your local community, volunteer your time, or simply pick up the phone and give us a call.

Please also consider investing in our mission. As a monthly donor myself, I am personally committed to growing our base of individual donors – the pillars of our work.

With gratitude,

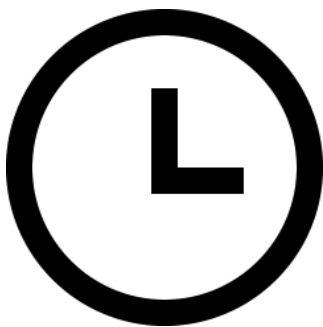
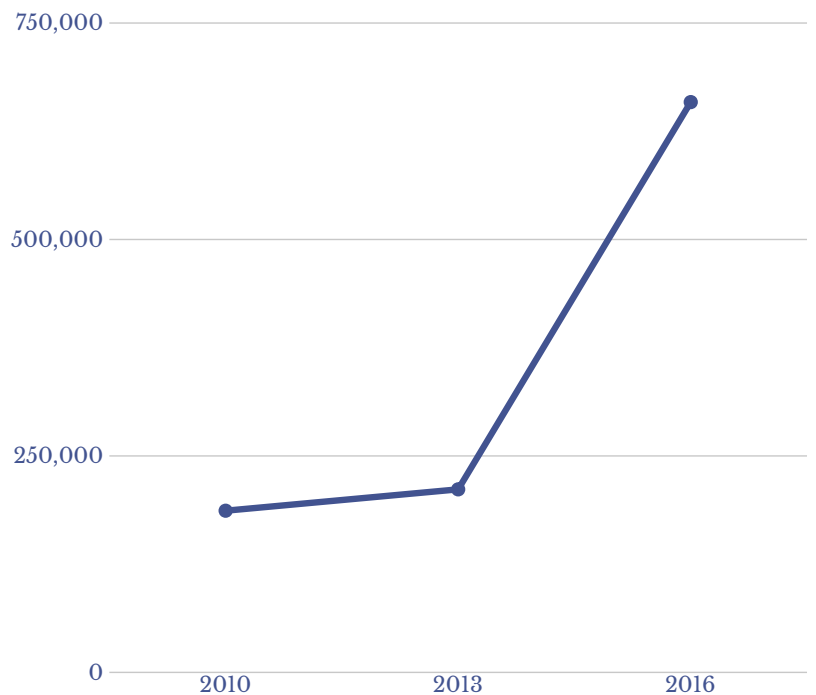
Patrick Nadeau

Executive Director, Ottawa Riverkeeper

THE FIGURES

\$658,686

TOTAL REVENUE



4782
VOLUNTEER
HOURS



98 PER CENT OF
COMMUNICATIONS
IS BILINGUAL



8275 SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS

With your help

this year was

incredible

Microbeads

Microbeads in cosmetics are now considered toxic in Canada.

Plastic microbeads have been added to the federal toxic substances list, thanks in no small part to the thousands of Canadians like you who supported Ottawa Riverkeeper in calling for action on this form of plastic pollution. We will continue to push for the logical next step: banning the manufacture, import, and sale of microbeads in personal care products. With your help, we will continue to inform the public on further actions we can take to reduce plastic pollution in our waterways.



Microplastic Pollution

Our Riverwatchers helped us study microplastic pollution.

Our over 70 Riverwatchers across the watershed are tireless volunteers who serve as our eyes and ears along the river, but also as active members of their communities - dedicating time to citizen science, outreach, and community issues surrounding river health. This summer, Riverwatchers participated in the first ever study on microplastics pollution in the Ottawa river, in collaboration with Ottawa Riverkeeper and Dr. Jesse Vermaire from Carleton University. Preliminary results are worrisome: thus far we have found microplastics in every sample taken along the length of the river.



Pollution Hotline

You called in pollution problems around the watershed.

When you saw something that didn't look right in or around your river - from sinking ice huts to bulldozed shoreline vegetation - you called our Pollution Hotline so we could help you report the problem and put a stop to the harm. Thanks to everyone who took the time to report issues to us this year.

RBC Blue Water Project

We're getting people talking about the source of their water.

In partnership with the City of Ottawa and the RBC Blue Water Project, Ottawa Riverkeeper hosted several water tasting booths where guests were invited to sample and compare water from various local sources, as well as from commercial bottles. Together, we are starting conversations about where our drinking water comes from.



Sewage Overflows

We've made progress on reducing sewage overflows.

Thanks to the Ottawa River Action Plan and the leadership of Mayor Jim Watson, Ottawa's combined sewer overflows have dropped by 80% in the last six years. Construction has already begun on an underground sewer tunnel to contain storm water overflows. In Gatineau, UV disinfection was just implemented at the main sewage treatment plant, and the City is about to embark on a \$115 million upgrade. It is also installing monitoring devices on 50 of the most troublesome sewage overflow outlets. Ottawa Riverkeeper is continuing to encourage further action - including the need for transparent public reporting of sewage overflows, and for a credible Gatineau Strategy on overflows, due in 2017.



4k swim

You united across borders for a swimmable river.

Over 130 swimmers challenged the strength of the Ottawa River in the third annual Riverkeeper 4K – the largest yet by far. Your participation showed a strong commitment to clean and healthy waterways: after all, what better way to make a statement about your river's health than by swimming in it?

Eel Awareness

The American eel is a native species of migratory fish that was once plentiful in the Ottawa River.

Now over 98% of the Ottawa River eel population has collapsed. Ottawa Riverkeeper is stepping up to reverse this trend. This summer we released over 400 eels in the Ottawa River at Hawkesbury, Ontario, and at the mouth of Brewery Creek in Gatineau, Quebec – part of a collaborative project with the Canadian Wildlife Federation. Along with the governments of Québec and Ontario, Hydro Ottawa, Hydro Québec, the City of Gatineau, and the St. Lawrence River Institute, we are working towards our priority objective of improving fish passage at the first two hydroelectric dams on the Ottawa River, Carillon and Chaudière.



Swim Guide

You took to the water this summer with Swim Guide.

Ottawa Riverkeeper is a leading affiliate of Swim Guide, an innovative app that provides real-time water quality testing data for beaches across North America and New Zealand - letting people like you know when and where to swim safely. This year, the app was used nearly 75,000 times across the 345 beaches we provide information for!



Shoreline Cleanups

You stepped up to clean up.

Ottawa Riverkeeper led a number of shoreline cleanups this year, and every time you impressed us with your commitment and hard work. When you do your part for your communities, you help protect the watershed for the generations to come. Thank you for cleaning up the river! In the picture to the right, volunteers removed over 770kg of garbage at the Kettle Island Cleanup on August 27, 2016.

Water Rangers App

We partnered with Water Rangers to launch a citizen science app.

Last year, the Water Rangers app took first prize at Aquahacking - the Ottawa River Summit. Since then, their dedicated team has partnered with Ottawa Riverkeeper to further develop and expand this award-winning platform - a map-based application that allows any user to share data and report pollution in real time. Ottawa Riverkeeper was thrilled to participate in the official launch of the app this year and to train our Riverwatchers to use this innovative tool.



Watershed Council

We're convening a Watershed Council for the Ottawa River.

Building on the momentum of last year's Ottawa River Summit, we are working hard to create a Watershed Council that will work to implement a common vision for our beloved river. Ottawa Riverkeeper has been holding conversations and gathering support across borders for the creation of the Council, bringing together governments, industry, and community stakeholders from across the watershed who want to have a voice in caring for the river. Stay tuned for the official launch of the Council in the coming year.

Heritage River



Canada's capital river is now a Heritage River. At last! This summer, we celebrated the designation of the Ottawa River as one of Canada's Heritage Rivers. The road to Heritage status began over ten years ago, with the leadership of Len Hopkins, Larry Graham, and Algonquin Elder William Commanda, who travelled the watershed collecting stories, uniting people around the Ottawa River, and pushing for a Heritage nomination. Ottawa Riverkeeper helped to build this momentum. At Aquahacking – the Ottawa River Summit in 2015, stakeholders collectively agreed on the need to acknowledge and celebrate the cultural, heritage, and natural values of the river. In Quebec, Ottawa Riverkeeper has officially nominated the Outaouais as a Historic Site, a proposal under serious consideration by the provincial government.

Gala 2016

We welcomed Sophie Grégoire Trudeau as our
2016 Honorary Riverkeeper.

On June 1, 2016, over 400 river lovers came to the grounds of the Lemieux Island
Water Purification Plant to celebrate the Ottawa River at our fourth annual
Riverkeeper Gala. Guests included our 2016 Honorary Riverkeeper, Madame Sophie
Grégoire Trudeau, and Mayor Jim Watson, recipient of our 2016 Water Leader award.

We were moved to see communities and partners from both sides of the river
rallying for clean waters. This year's Gala was our most successful ever. Thank you for
all your support!



A strong Ottawa Riverkeeper

Meet our Board of Directors

Our incredible Board of Directors are our highest contributing volunteers, putting in countless hours for our cause.

Geoff Green, Chair
Raymond Brunet, Vice-Chair
Mark Patry, Treasurer
Megan Conway, Secretary

Jean Castonguay (outgoing)
Claudette Commanda
Kathleen Edwards (outgoing)
Jean Perras
Philip Rimer

Peter van Roon
Bob Slater
Daniel Spence
Carrie Wallace
Colleen Westeinde

Meet our team

Patrick Nadeau, Executive Director

Amanda Masterson, Communications Coordinator

Meredith Brown, The Riverkeeper

Lisa Harding, Executive Assistant

Adele Michon, Director of Operations for Quebec

Jared Phillips, Communications Intern

Brigitte Boudreau-Cassidy, Community Outreach Coordinator

Rachel Balderson, Outreach Intern

Meaghan Murphy, Staff Scientist and Riverwatch Coordinator

Sarah-Claude Bergeron-Lefontaine, Outreach Intern

Stephanie Bolt, Legal Strategist

Ryan Conlon, Project Manager

Ruth McKlusky, Development Director

Natasha Reddy, Digital Communications Intern

Thank you

You keep us going.

We are deeply grateful to all our supporters. Whether you're an individual, family, business, club, or foundation, we recognize and value your contribution as a champion of a swimmable, drinkable, fishable Ottawa River. The following generous supporters contributed \$500 or more during our 2016 fiscal year (April 2015 to March 2016).

\$25,000+

Fondation de Gaspé Beaubien
Lush Handmade Cosmetics
Mountain Equipment Co-op

Ontario Trillium Foundation
RBC Foundation
Ville de Gatineau

\$10,000-\$25,000

Accenture
Adobe Systems
Employment and Social Development Canada
(Digital Skills Youth Internship Program)
EY
Five B Family Foundation
Labarge Charitable Foundation

Leacross Foundation
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
Telesat Canada
Telus
Tides Canada
World Wildlife Fund Canada and Loblaws

\$5000-\$9999

Anonymous
The Brewery Market
Canadian Museum of Nature
Cement Association of Canada
Charles Frederick Fell Charitable Fund
Golder Associates

HUB Ottawa
Lafarge Canada
The Lawson Foundation
Taggart Parkes Foundation
Unifor
Wallspace Gallery
Windmill Green Fund LVP

\$1000-\$4999

Beau's All Natural Brewing Co.
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Money Fund via Community
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Bolt, Ron
Brookfield Renewable Energy Group
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Canadian Wildlife Federation
CIBC

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University of Ottawa
Van Loon, Jean
Westeinde, Jonathan

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Werner Paddles
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Wheeler, Andrew