

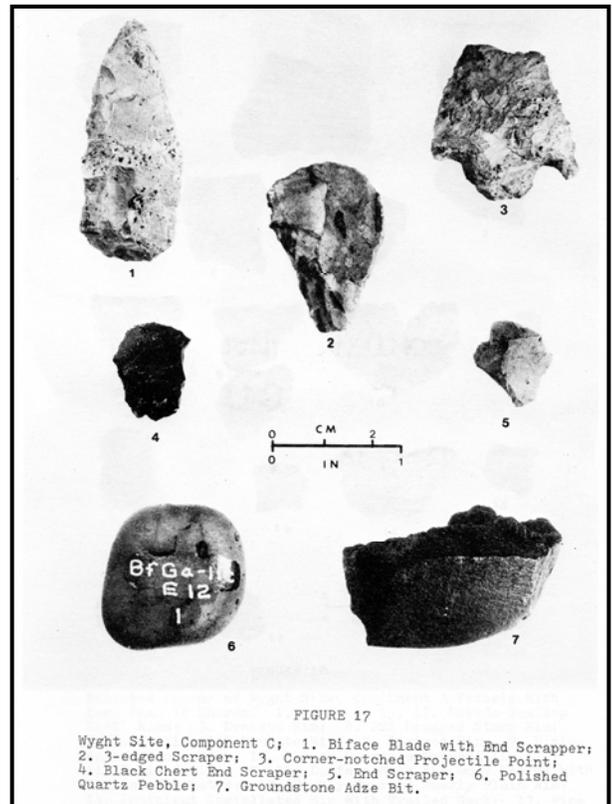
Indigenous Use of the Rideau Waterway

People arrived in the Rideau area at some time after the retreat of the glaciers that used to cover this area. By 13,000 years ago the glaciers were gone, replaced in the northern Rideau (Ottawa to Big Rideau Lake) by the Champlain Sea. The landscape had been depressed by the ice to below sea level, allowing Atlantic ocean waters to flow in. However, the land was rebounding (rising) and by 11,000 years ago the Rideau region had risen above sea level, the sea was gone. We have no direct evidence of people dating to the Champlain Sea era, but they most likely were here, as people would have followed wildlife now occupying the new ice free regions. A fluted point, characteristic of paleo-native people, dating to between 10,000 to 11,000 years ago, was found near Lower Rideau Lake. These people were nomadic hunter-gatherers, often following large game animals such as caribou. Conditions were still sub-arctic in this area and the number of people very low.

We have much more evidence from the archaic period (10,000 to 2,800 years ago). The climate was warming, the type of wildlife and vegetation that we see today becoming more common, and at this point people were travelling along the waterways in dug-out canoes. Trade with people in other regions is evident with the discovery of artefacts, such as copper beads, not local to this region. Perhaps the most famous archaeological site in this area is the Wyght archaeological site on Lower Rideau Lake which saw use, as a seasonal occupation site, from about 6,000 BC to 1,100 AD. It was in an ideal location, the junction of several waterways, the Rideau lakes, Tay River and Rideau River.

The archaic people hunted a variety of animals, everything from squirrels to moose. They also ate fish and shellfish; plants such as lily roots, cattail roots, and wild rice; and a variety of nuts and wild berries. They had a number of different tools to help them in their hunting and food preparation including projectile points, adzes, gouges, knives and hide scrapers. In about 1,000 BC, pottery started to be used, shard remainders can be found all along the Rideau. White tailed deer, by then the most common large game animal in this region, became the favourite of native hunters.

The Rideau corridor, in addition to being a seasonal hunting, fishing and gathering area, was also used as a travel way between the Ottawa Valley and the St. Lawrence River/Lake Ontario. The main route led from Ottawa to Gananoque, since the part of the Rideau today occupied by Whitefish and Cranberry lakes was not



Artefacts from the Wyght Archaeological Site

From "The Wyght Site: A Multicomponent Woodland Site on the Lower Rideau Lake, Leeds County, Ontario" by Gordon D. Watson, Master's Thesis, Department of Anthropology, Trent University, 1980.

navigable by canoe at that time. That canoe route went from the Rideau River to the Rideau lakes to the White Fish River (Jones Falls to Lower Beverley Lake) and down the Gananoque River. The Cataraqui River was used as a secondary southern route to the Rideau, going from Lake Ontario, up the river to its headwaters in Loughborough Lake and from there to Hart Lake and then to Opinicon Lake.

ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

Saturday, May 5, 2018 (see back page for details)

Friends of the Rideau is a volunteer, non-profit organization, working to enhance and conserve the heritage and charm of the Rideau Canal.

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We know the general location of the original long portages along the Rideau such those at Newboro, Chaffeys and Jones Falls (each over a kilometre in length). Used for thousands of years, two hundred years of disuse and cultural disturbance have obscured most of these. The route at Newboro is obscured by cultural disturbance, although archaeological evidence of a campsite at the Newboro lockstation, dating to the Point Peninsula cultural period (early AD), has been found. The route past Chaffeys was abandoned after dams were established for mills at Davis and Chaffeys, c.1820, and a new, shorter portage was established. Although the trail isn't evident, portions of the original portage can be followed today based on topography. The portage route at Jones Falls is still partially evident today since the original native route saw continued use during the building of the canal. None of these portages have ever been archaeologically investigated, so much more remains to be discovered.

During the building of the Rideau Canal, native people and those building the Rideau Canal can be best described as two solitudes – each group doing their own thing – one group continuing with traditional hunting and gathering, the other building a canal. The official reports are silent on the topic of native people, but we have a couple of very brief first hand accounts.

John McTaggart noted that a survey party he was on got lost in the drowned lands north of Upper Brewers. At that time (1827), mill dams (Morton & Round Tail) had flooded the forested areas of the Cataraque Flood Plain.

They were travelling through acres of dead trees. They got lost and had to overnight on the shore. While trying to find a way out the next morning "... we heard the report of a musket at a distance. We bore away to the place whence the sound proceeded, heard another shot let off, and even saw the smoke. It was an Indian shooting wild ducks. We all felt rejoiced to see him, divided the drop of brandy, engaged him as a guide, and he brought us out at the famous Round Tail mouth of the Cataraque ..." (from *Three Years in Canada* by John McTaggart).

We also have an account, written by Hugh Macgregor, who



Portage at Chaffeys in 1816

The original 1,500 yard (1.4 km) portage is shown on an 1816 survey map. From a map by Joshua Jebb, R.E., 1816, Library and Archives Canada

travelled with Colonel By on the first steamboat trip along the Rideau in 1832. He stated (on about May 23, 1832) "It was with great pleasure that on passing through Indian Lake, after leaving Chaffey's Mills, we beheld a party of Indians drawn up rank and file on the beach in front of their encampment, having two Chiefs, and Union flags floating among the dark green foliage of the clustering pines. On our approach, they saluted the boat with a *feu de joie* in most regular order, and in a style that would not discredit a regularly organized corps. We immediately returned the compliment by firing a cannon several times and making a sheer out of the direct course, passed in front of the encampment, when Col. By

received them on board to the number of about 40 men, women and children, who went on to the Isthmus with us, their boats and canoes towed astern of the steamer, ten in number - here we were again received with shouts of applause, from a numerous body of people, ready on the rock to receive us, Captain Cole and lady of the number, several firing guns, which we returned by firing the cannon, and a *feu de joie*, fired by the Indians who stationed themselves on the wings of the boat." (Kingston Chronicle, June 9, 1832)

Indigenous use declined over the years as land along the Rideau Canal became developed and native hunting and gathering opportunities diminished. The early canal records show many instances of "passing Indian canoes" but these dwindle over time until the era of native hunting and gathering in this area ended.

- Ken W. Watson



Indigenous Camp on the Ottawa River in 1833 across from the new Rideau Canal This camp was located near where the Canadian Museum of History sits today. Entrance valley and Barrack Hill (now Parliament Hill) are visible across the river (right side of painting). *Entrance of the Rideau Canal, Ottawa River, Canada* by Henry Pooley, 1833. National Gallery of Canada.

2018 AGM

Our AGM will be held on Saturday, May 5 in the theatre of the Rideau Canal Visitor Centre in Smiths Falls. We'll have **Susan Millar**, heritage planner with Parks Canada, giving us an update on the new management plan. Our featured speaker will be **Shawn Pankow**, the Mayor of Smiths Falls, with a presentation about how they are revitalizing the waterfront in Smiths Falls (see article on next page).

Our AGM is also a great opportunity to come out and meet the directors and members of Friends of the Rideau. We share a common love of the Rideau Canal so there is no lack of interesting conversation. Come out and show your support of Friends. See the back page for full details.

Everyone is welcome to attend!

The Depot

We hope to have The Depot in Merrickville open in June, depending on availability of summer students and volunteers. And speaking of volunteers, we could use some help, all we ask is that you bring your knowledge and enthusiasm for the Rideau and share it with visitors. If interested or if you wish to learn more, please contact us at info@rideaufriends.com.

2018/19 Membership Renewal

A reminder that this is membership renewal time (our membership year runs from June 1 to May 31). If your membership is up for renewal, you'll find a handy renewal form with this newsletter. We thank you very much for your support.

Summer Activities

This summer we hope for warm dry days for the following events, as we plan to be present in our Friends of the Rideau booth and meet many members of Friends and the interested public.

June 2: Rideau Paddlefest, Smiths Falls

Aug 6: Colonel By Day, Bytown Museum, Ottawa Locks

Aug 11: Classic Boat Show, Westport

We welcome anyone that would like to help us meet and greet the public during these events. Please contact us at info@rideaufriends.com.



Hunter in our booth at the Classic Boat Show in 2017

Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

As we emerge from a strange winter, with temperatures bouncing all over the place, here's hoping for a warm summer with the right amount of rain to keep water levels reasonable.

Over the winter, members of the board have been taking part in a number of activities regarding heritage and the Rideau Canal. Several of us participated in stakeholder discussions convened by Parks Canada as part of the preparations for the development of a management plan for the Rideau. The discussions were well-structured and the participants felt they were given a good hearing. We're still not sure what the schedule is for the management plan process, and we were sorry to learn that John Festarini, the Associate Director of Ontario waterways and in effect the director of the Rideau Canal, has been assigned for the summer of 2018 to the Bruce Peninsula National Park. John has been an important supporter of Friends and we have developed a valuable friendship with him; we hope he will return to the Rideau Canal soon.

A member of the Friends board took part in the consultations on the redevelopment of the Smiths Falls waterfront. It is encouraging to learn that the town wants to re-energize the area around the locks in the centre of the town. We hope that the plans will give proper recognition to heritage.

Looking ahead, we are planning the 2018 season at The Depot in Merrickville, our visitor and interpretation centre. We're in the process of recruiting students to staff the centre, and we look forward to welcoming many first-time visitors as well as returnees. Like many others, we are also interested to see how Le Boat fares in its first season of operation.

As always, we welcome volunteers to assist at The

Depot, and at events during the summer along the Rideau, including the Rideau Paddlefest in Smiths Falls, Colonel By Day in Ottawa and the Classic Boat Show in Westport (see "Summer Activities").

Thank you for your continuing support. We welcome comments and suggestions and the opportunity to meet you and exchange views on how much we value the Rideau Canal.

- Hunter McGill

Smiths Fall Waterfront Revitalization

Big changes are coming to the waterfront in Smiths Falls. Those recently travelling through Smiths Falls have likely noticed the work on the removal of the trailer park in Victoria Park, part of a long-range plan of waterfront revitalization. This spring will see new docking put in the basin for Le Boat as well as new public finger docks. Parks Canada is also presently doing work on the canal in this area, including the restoration and replacement of the north and south concrete walls in the basin.

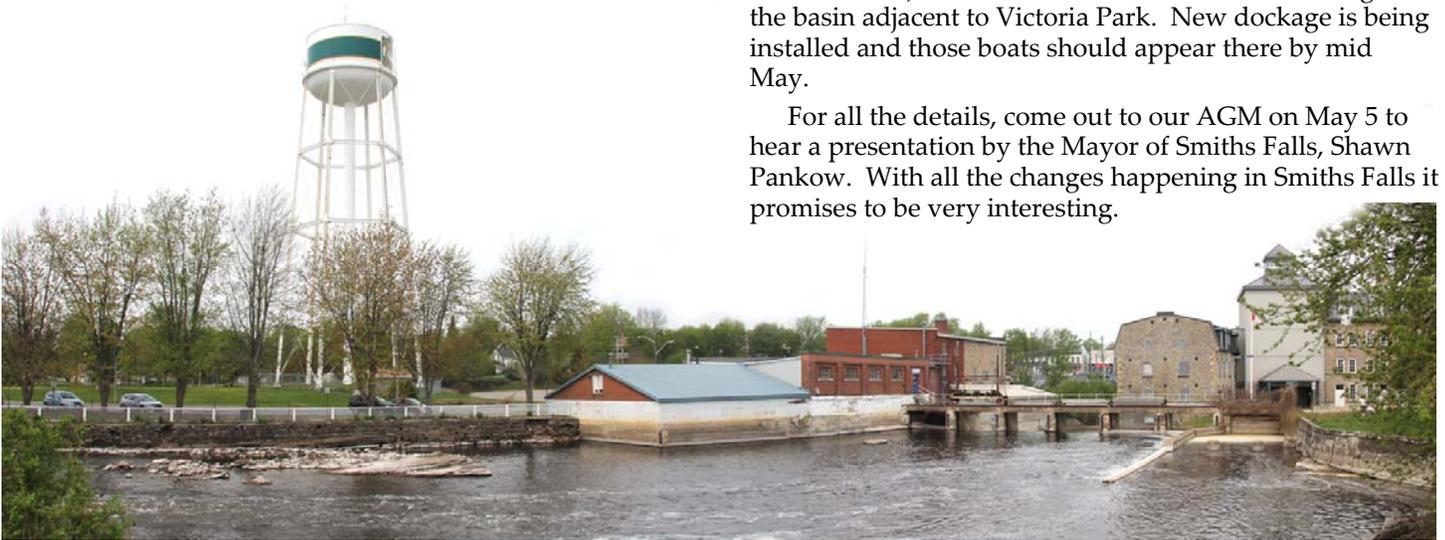
A session was held in Smiths Falls on March 28 with business and organization representatives to solicit ideas for how to make the central area (Detached to Combined locks) more public friendly, to provide reasons for people to come and enjoy the waterfront (both locals and visitors). This is part of a Town of Smiths Falls planning

proposal that encompasses the entire downtown area. Lots of ideas were put forward; time will tell what actually gets implemented.

The old Smiths Falls water treatment plant, just across from the Rideau Canal Visitor Centre and Parks Canada's Rideau Canal offices, is going to be redeveloped by Canopy Growth Corp. (the parent company of Tweed Inc., the medical marijuana operation in the old Hershey's plant). Their vision includes a hotel, restaurant and event space in that location. Negotiations are underway with the town to refine that vision. That re-development alone will dramatically change the area.

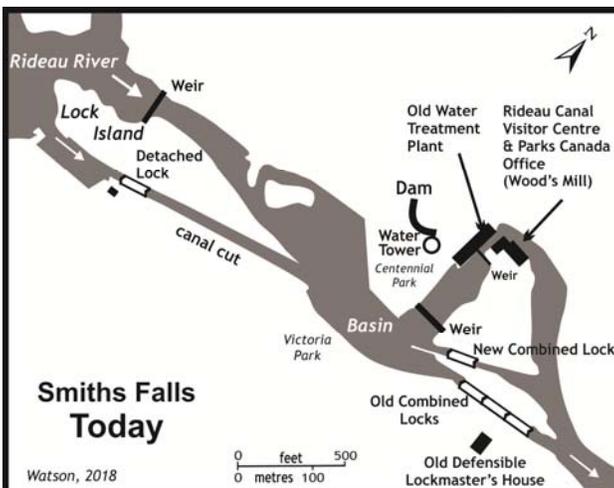
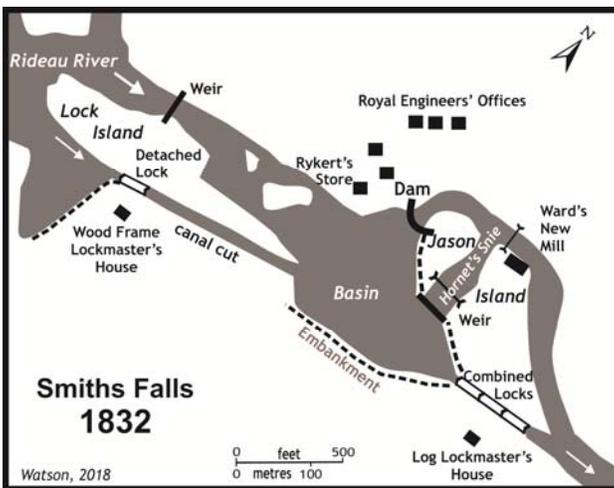
And of course Le Boat, who are headquartered the old Lockmaster's house at 1 Jasper (former offices of Friends of the Rideau), will have their fleet moored at dockage in the basin adjacent to Victoria Park. New dockage is being installed and those boats should appear there by mid May.

For all the details, come out to our AGM on May 5 to hear a presentation by the Mayor of Smiths Falls, Shawn Pankow. With all the changes happening in Smiths Falls it promises to be very interesting.



Old Smiths Falls Water Treatment Plant

In this view we see part of Centennial Park on the left, the old Smiths Falls water plan in the centre and the Rideau Canal Visitor Centre on the right. This area is going to see some big changes in the not too distant future. Photo by Ken W. Watson.



Smiths Falls Then & Now

Smiths Falls has already seen some of the most extensive changes of any part of the Rideau Canal since the completion of the canal in 1832. More changes are coming.

2018 Lock Hours of Operation

Dates	Days	Hours
May 18—June 21	Mon to Thurs	10 am to 4 pm
	Fri to Sun, holidays	9 am to 7 pm
June 22 – Sept. 3	Mon to Thurs	9 am to 6 pm
	Fri to Sun, holidays	9 am to 7 pm
Sept. 4— Oct. 8	Mon to Friday	10 am to 4 pm
	Sat to Sun, holidays	9 am to 5 pm

2018 Fees

Fees are back for 2018, set at the last (2016) levels.

Single Lockage & Return	= \$ 0.90 per foot
One Day	= \$ 1.60/ft
Transit (one way)	= \$ 4.65/ft
Six Days (any six days)	= \$ 5.05/ft
Seasonal	= \$ 8.80/ft

Paddling Fees

Parks Canada will be offering a special deal for paddlers this summer. Not details are available as yet, we'll have them posted on Facebook and our website as soon as they are available.

Water Management InfoNet

Parks Canada has opened up a new section on their Rideau Canal website (www.pc.gc.ca/rideau) dealing with water management of the Rideau Canal.

Of interest to many is the water level information. Water levels on the Rideau follow what are known as rule curves, the target level of the water for any given date. Water levels are lowered in the winter to provide capacity for the spring freshet in order to prevent flooding and then brought up to full summer navigation levels by May 1st of each year. This is a system that's been in place since 1832. Today the rule curves are also designed not to disrupt fish spawning areas and to maintain ecological integrity.

Rideau water is also used for hydro-electric generation (i.e. Jones Falls, Upper & Lower Brewers, Kingston Mills) leased from Parks Canada. Navigation trumps power generation, the power company (Hydro Ottawa) can only take as much water as Parks Canada allows. The main purpose of the water control system is to maintain water at navigation levels for the entire navigation season.

One small issue as of this writing is that only the names of the water gauges are shown, which for many spots doesn't indicate the body of water the level is referencing. The levels are the upstream levels, so Narrows is Upper Rideau Lake, Jones Falls is Sand Lake, Davis is Opinion Lake, etc. A suggestion has been made to Parks Canada to add the water body names so that problem will hopefully be fixed by the time you read this.

Rideau Canal Management Plan

Public consultations for the new Rideau Canal management plan are to take place this summer along the Rideau. We have no information as yet to when and where these will take place, but we will have that information posted on our website and Facebook page as soon as we get it. At these meetings the public will get a chance to review and comment on a draft plan. On-line review and input is also supposed to be available.

Some detailed consultations were held with various partner organizations, including Friends of the Rideau, in February of this year. These were led by John Festarini, Associate Director of Ontario Waterways, who is the management person in charge of developing the plan. The sessions were very good, John received lots of feedback regarding what is expected in the plan - much of it different than what was in the Parks Canada internal preparatory scoping document. Unfortunately, immediately after those sessions, John left the Rideau Canal to take a nine month assignment in Bruce Peninsula National Park.

John is still the lead person in charge of developing the plan, but since he's not here and obviously has other things

to occupy his time, there is a worry about how the plan will be developed. Parks Canada has not replaced John with someone in an acting position at the Rideau Canal office - all senior management is now located on the Trent-Severn Waterway in Peterborough. Susan Millar, the Rideau Canal heritage planner, will continue to be responsible for the technical aspects of the plan.

The draft plan will be a "high level" plan - very different than the 2005 plan which included details of how the plan would be implemented. This detail will not be in the new plan, but rather it will be used as a general guide for developing yearly work plans. One of the issues brought up in the February meetings was how to make the plan actionable, accountable and publicly transparent. It remains unclear how that will be achieved. We hope the information will show up in the draft document to be discussed this summer.

The management plan is one of the very few opportunities for the public to have input on how Parks Canada manages the Rideau Canal, so your participation in the process is important.

FRIENDS OF THE
RIDEAU 
ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

Saturday, May 5, 2018

9:30 am to noon

Rideau Canal Visitor Centre

34 Beckwith Street South, Smiths Falls

9:30 am	Meet and Greet
10:00 am	Annual General Meeting
10:20 am	Management Plan Update, Susan Millar, Parks Canada
10:45 am	break
11:00 am	Smiths Falls Waterfront Revitalization, Shawn Pankow, Mayor of Smiths Falls

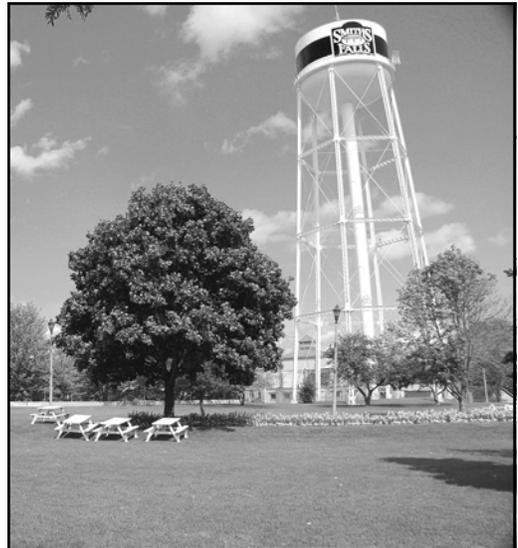
Susan Millar, heritage planner with the Rideau Canal Office of Parks Canada, will provide us with an update and answer questions about the new Rideau Canal Management Plan.

Our featured presenter will be **Shawn Pankow**, the Mayor of Smiths Falls about big changes planned for the waterfront in Smiths Falls including the re-development of the old Smiths Falls water plant, the arrival of Le Boat and a new vision of what the waterfront should look like.

Both presentations promise to be of great interest to any rideauphile.

***Come out and meet some
Friends***

Everyone is welcome



Centennial Park in Smiths Falls

The Rideau Canal Visitor Centre (formerly the Rideau Canal Museum) is easy to find – it's the big stone building with the grain elevator sitting at the south end of the main downtown area (34 Beckwith Street South) in Smiths Falls.