



minto
Communities



Conservation Handbook

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1. Introduction

1.1 Riversbend

Riversbend is a quiet residential enclave located north of the Jock River. Residents of this community will be able to explore and experience all that the Jock River has to offer, while also having the opportunity to contribute to its protection. This Homeowner's Handbook provides residents with information about the natural features that exist near their community, while also describing ways that they can act as good stewards of the environment.

1.2 The Jock River

The Jock River is located south of Riversbend, and is a diverse aquatic ecosystem that provides habitat for a wide variety of animal and plant species. The Jock River headwaters are located in the Montague area of Lanark County. The river flows through various communities in Lanark County including Beckwith and Franktown. Near Ashton, the river turns east and flows towards the City of Ottawa, passing through Richmond, Barrhaven, and Manotick. The Jock River is a

major tributary of the larger Rideau River, and the two rivers meet about two kilometers east of Riversbend.

1.3 The Riparian Forest

A ribbon of riparian forest is present along the banks of the Jock River. This forest has been preserved in order to help protect the ecology of the river. Trees growing along the river edge help to protect the aquatic environment from sedimentation and erosion, while also helping to filter and absorb stormwater flow. The forest also provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, including many bird, mammal, and amphibian species that

make their home at the water's edge. Lastly, the riparian forest helps to protect the river from noise, pollution, and other forms of disturbance. It is important to maintain this forest cover in order to preserve the health of the river ecosystem. Trees growing in the forest near Riversbend include White Cedar, White Ash, Green Ash, Sugar Maple, American Elm, and Manitoba Maple.





2. Wildlife of the Jock River

The Jock River is a diverse aquatic ecosystem that provides habitat for a wide variety of animal and plant species. This includes thirty-six (36) fish species, as well as multiple species of migratory birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. Here are some of the wildlife species found living within and around the Jock River close to Riversbend.

Fish:

- Muskellunge
- Northern Pike
- Large Mouth Bass
- Small Mouth Bass
- Bluegill
- Pumpkinseed
- Rock Bass
- Brook Stickleback
- Brown Bullhead

Mammals:

- River Otter
- Beaver
- Muskrat

Reptiles and amphibians:

- Snapping Turtle
- Midland Painted Turtle
- Northern Watersnake
- American Bullfrog
- Northern Leopard Frog
- Green Frog

Birds:

- Great Blue Heron
- Belted Kingfisher
- Turkey Vulture
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Red Winged Blackbird
- Tree Swallow
- Mallard
- Common Loon
- American Goldfinch

**2.1 Species at risk****Snapping turtles**

The Jock River provides habitat for Snapping Turtles, which are listed in Ontario as a Species of Special Concern. Snapping Turtles are found living within the river, and they may be seen sunning themselves on exposed rocks, logs, or other perches in the spring and summer. In May and June, turtles will sometimes leave the river and nest nearby in areas of loose soil, sand, or gravel.

Residents can help protect Snapping Turtles by watching for them on roadways, especially in May and June.

Butternut trees

Butternut Trees are found in forested areas along the Jock River. Butternut Trees are an Endangered Species in Ontario and are disappearing primarily due to an invasive fungal disease known as the Butternut Canker. Riversbend has contributed to the recovery of this species by providing funding to support the Ontario Butternut Recovery Program. Working in conjunction with the Forest Gene Conservation Association and the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation, Riversbend has provided contributions that support the archiving of healthy Butternut specimens and the collection of Butternut seeds.



3. Protect the river

- Homeowners can help preserve the river's water quality by being careful not to allow any potentially harmful substances to wash away into the sewer drains. Residents should be aware that although the community design includes measures to protect water quality from stormwater runoff, ultimately the sewers and streets drain to the river.
- Chemicals such as detergents, solvents, oil, and fertilizers should not be allowed to flow into the river or sewer drains. In addition, pet wastes, garbage, loose soil, and other debris should not be allowed to blow away into the river or to enter the sewers.
- It is best to wash your car at a car wash facility, in order to prevent pollutants and detergents from entering the sewers. Similarly, automotive maintenance should be conducted at a garage, in order to avoid spills of oils and other automotive liquids.
- To help recharge groundwater supplies and improve water quality, residents can build and maintain rain gardens. Rain gardens that are planted with native wildflowers, sedges and grasses typically require less watering than lawns or gardens with exotic species. Installing rain gardens also helps to attract wildlife, and provides food for native birds, mammals, and

insects. Links to resources that provide detailed information on how to plant a rain garden are included on Page 21.

- Consider installing a rain barrel at the downspout from your roof. Rain barrels collect rainwater, which can later be used to water your garden. Rain barrels also help to protect the river by reducing stormwater flows, which can cause erosion and carry pollutants to the river.



- Respect the shoreline as a natural feature. The forest along the shoreline has been preserved to help protect the river. You can help maintain this function by avoiding walking along the shoreline with pets and by not establishing trails along the shoreline. The shoreline should be left to grow vegetation, which helps to prevent erosion and stabilize the banks.
- Keep your drains, culverts, and gutters clear of debris so that they will drain properly and not convey excess material to the river.

4. Protect the forest

- The trees and other plants found within the riparian forest are intended to be preserved. Residents should not cut trees, collect fire wood, remove plants, gather flowers, or otherwise alter the natural forest. Residents should also not 'clean' the forest, and should leave woody debris, rocks, and even dead trees where they are.
- Avoid depositing yard waste or other garbage within the forest. All yard wastes should be bagged and put out for collection by the City. Yard wastes collected by the City are composted.
- Stay on pathways – wandering through the forest outside of designated pathways will damage the ground cover vegetation.
- Landscape with native plants, or at minimum, species that are known not to be invasive. Non-native trees, shrubs, and other plants should be avoided to reduce the potential for non-native species to colonize the riparian forest and other natural areas found along the Jock River. Native plants also typically require less watering and are more useful to native wildlife. Links to resources that provide detailed information on how to garden with native plants are included on Page 21.



Examples of native trees and shrubs which could be planted in Riversbend include:

Native shrubs:

- Nannyberry
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Meadow Sweet
- Red Elderberry

Native trees:

- Sugar Maple
- Red Maple
- White Cedar
- Black Cherry

- Bur Oak
- White Pine
- White Spruce
- Basswood
- Hackberry and Chicagoland Hackberry
- Skyline Honeylocust

- Red Oak
- Boulevard Linden
- Firefall Maple
- Triumph Elm

Plants to avoid:

- Lily of the valley (Convallaria majalis)
- Periwinkle (Vinca minor)
- English ivy (Hedera helix)
- Day lily (Hemerocallis fulva)
- Amur maple (Acer ginnala)
- Black locust (Robinia pseudoacacia)
- European linden (Tilia cordata)
- Honeysuckle

5. Protect the wildlife

- In order to protect native wildlife, domestic pets should be kept on leashes whenever walking near natural areas.
- Cats should not be allowed to wander through natural areas, as they are a leading cause of death for wild birds and small mammals.
- Pick up after your pets, as their waste can carry bacteria and viruses that may impact native animals. Also, their waste may pollute the river if not properly disposed of.
- Drive carefully and watch for wildlife. In particular, be aware that turtles may be found on roadways near the river, especially in May and June.
- Use organic methods of pest control. Avoid the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides, which may negatively impact native animals including bees.
- Do not feed wild animals, including ducks and geese. Food provided to ducks and geese by humans is often not good for their health, and feeding these wild animals should be avoided.
- Never collect or capture wild animals, even if you only intend to keep them temporarily. Handling wild animals such as frogs, turtles, snakes, etc. can injure or even kill those animals.



6. Important information

Living in Riversbend will provide homeowners many opportunities to appreciate the beauty of the Jock River. With your help, the natural environment surrounding your new home can be preserved and enjoyed long into the future. If you want to learn more about nature in Ontario and how you can help conserve the environment, additional information can be found online at the following websites.

Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary

613-258-9480

www.rideauwildlife.org/orphaned-or-injured-wildlife/

Wild Bird Care Centre

613-828-2849

Ottawa Humane Society

<http://www.ottawahumane.ca/services/get-help-for-a-sick-or-injured-animal/>

6.1 Additional information

Fletcher Wildlife Garden

Provides local and practical information on how to garden with native plant species in Ottawa, and how to attract wildlife to your garden.

<https://ofnc.ca/programs/fletcher-wildlife-garden/make-your-own-wildlife-garden>

Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario

Provides range maps, breeding information, and opportunities to report sightings for Ontario's Birds.

<https://www.birdsontario.org>

Ottawa Field Naturalist Club

Ottawa's leading naturalist group, providing local information on wildlife and birds, opportunities to report sightings, and local stewardship activities.

<http://ofnc.ca/>

Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas

Provides a field guide, range maps, opportunities to report sightings, and stewardship activities for Ontario's Reptiles and Amphibians.

<https://ontarionature.org/programs/community-science/reptile-amphibian-atlas/species>

Species at Risk Ontario

Ontario's provincial website that provides information on species at risk within the province.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/species-risk-ontario>

City of Ottawa - Avoiding Problems with Wildlife

Basic information and tips on how to avoid problems with wildlife around your home and neighbourhood.

<https://ottawa.ca/en/residents/water-and-environment/plants-and-animals/animals-ottawas-wildlife/avoiding-problems-wildlife>

E-Bird

The world's leading resource for birdwatchers. Provides information on birdwatching, local bird sightings, and opportunities to report sightings.

<https://ebird.org/home>

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Protecting Ontario's biodiversity while promoting economic opportunities in the resource sector and supporting outdoor recreation opportunities.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-natural-resources-and-forestry>



