

Historic Sites



The Rideau Canal National Historic Site

The Rideau Canal and its surroundings bestow a rich cultural landscape and a great diversity of natural treasures. Experience the canal system through a series of Lockstations accessible by road or by water. The Township of Rideau Lakes boasts six lock stations on the Rideau Canal: Chaffey's Lock, Davis Lock, Jones Falls, Narrows Lock, Newboro Lock and Poonamalie.

The establishment of the Rideau Canal, completed in 1832, has profoundly influenced the commerce and now the tourism of the Rideau Corridor. Navigation on the Canal shaped settlements, encouraged development, and continues to significantly contribute to the culture and economy of the Township of Rideau Lakes.

Now operated by Parks Canada, this engineering marvel of the 19th century operates as a jewelled necklace of lakes and locks. In 2007, the Rideau Canal was accorded the status of a UNESCO World Heritage site.

For more information, contact the Rideau Canal Visitor Centre: 34 Beckwith St. South, Smiths Falls, ON K7A 2A8 613-283-5170 / 888-773-8888 email: rideaucanal-info@pc.gc.ca | parksCanada.gc.ca

Old Stone Mill National Historic Site

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has deemed this mill to merit commemoration as a National Historic Site. This stone mill, built in 1810 is a remarkable example of mill architecture that has persisted from the era of Upper Canada and now it is the only designated stone grist mill in Ontario. Located at 44 King Street in Delta.

Heritage Plaques



Lieutenant- Colonel John By, Royal Engineer

The life of Col. John By (1779 – 1836) and his work in Canada is commemorated with a provincial plaque located near the remarkable locks at Jones Falls on County Road 11. Between 1802 and 1811, Col. By helped engineer fortifications at Quebec and small canals on the St. Lawrence. The British military recognized Col. By's genius and asked him to return to British North America to supervise the construction of the Rideau Canal between 1826 and 1832.

Chaffey's Mills

A provincial plaque erected at Chaffey's Lock commemorates Chaffey's Mills. Following the success of Chaffey's extensive milling complex here on the Catarqui system in the 1820s and a small settlement known as Chaffey's Mills flourished briefly. However, construction of the Rideau Canal necessitated the demolition and flooding of Chaffey's mill sites.

Memory Wall and Outdoor Chapel

Located at the entrance to Chaffey's Lock cemetery, the memory wall was erected by the Chaffey's Lock and Area Heritage society to commemorate the founding, building and continuing life of the community. Buried in this cemetery are Samuel Chaffey and his wife, Mary Ann as well as 79 individuals including Rideau Canal labourers, mostly Irish immigrants, who died in the construction of the Rideau Canal. The stones of the masonry wall hold plaques inscribed with the names of families who settled in this area.

St. Edwards

A memorial plaque located on Parish Rd., north of Westport commemorates the original Catholic Parish, its place of worship and its parish school here in northern Leeds in 1840.

The Founding of Newboro

The provincial plaque erected at the War Memorial on Drummond Street (County Rd. 42) in Newboro commemorates the origin of this mecca of crossroads and commerce.

James Philips

A provincial plaque in Philippsville beside County Road 42 commemorates James Philips, an early store and tavern owner in this community. He became active in local politics, rose to prominence as a Reformer in the 1830s and became embroiled in the violence and rebellion during 1837. James Philips was killed in the Battle of the Windmill in 1838.

Dr. Lorne Pierce

A provincial plaque located on the grounds of the United Church in Delta commemorates Dr. Lorne Pierce, a prolific writer and ardent proponent of Canadian literature. He was brought up in Delta. Dr. Pierce was editor of the Ryerson Press between 1920 and 1960. He established several university scholarships and an excellent collection of Canadian literature at Queens University.

Sir Charles Edmund Kingsmill

A provincial plaque located at the Emmanuel Anglican Church Cemetery about 1 km. west of Portland along Hwy 15 commemorates the talent and service of this famous Canadian. Kingsmill advanced through the ranks of the Imperial Navy in the late 1800s. Prime Minister Laurier invited Kingsmill to return to his native land to establish the Royal Canadian Navy in 1910. He guided our fledgling fleet through World War I and became its Admiral in 1917. Viscount Kingsmill established the foundation for Canada's fleet that by the end of WW II was one of the finest in the world.

The Red Brick School

The Red Brick School in Elgin is a premier example of a late 19th century campaign by Elgion Ryerson to improve public education through the building of more stimulating environments for learning.

The Royal Sappers and Miners

A provincial plaque at The Cemetery of the Royal Sappers and Miners is found appropriately on the west side of the famous Rideau Canal at Newboro. It commemorates the two companies of the British Army's construction corps, the Royal Sappers and Miners, who were raised to work on the Rideau Canal. They built locks and military structures particularly in Bytown (Ottawa) and here at the Isthmus. This Newboro cut demanded that they new and blast through an outcrop of Canadian Shield granite, a formidable obstacle to linking the Rideau and the Catarqui Systems.

Trails, Roads and Railways – Then and Now



The Catarqui Trail

The Catarqui Trail follows the route of the old Napanee, Tamworth and Quebec City Railroad, a ribbon of steel built in 1912 to link the Bay of Quinte to the Ottawa Valley. The steel and ties, and even the legendary stations, are gone from Lombardy and Chaffey's, but its route is now part of the Trans-Canada Trail. Joggers, cross-country skiers, horseback riders, bird watchers and snowmobilers can now meet, mingle, and marvel with hikers who are striding from sea to sea to sea. The Catarqui Trail is maintained year-round by the diligent work of the Catarqui Trail Management Board. Multiple access points at Chaffey's Lock, Elgin, Forfar, Portland, and Lombardy. See the interactive map at cataraquitrail.ca.

The Rideau Trail

The Rideau Trail is a cross-country path that can take the hiker all the way from Kingston to Ottawa. Its route marked with distinctive orange triangles, the Rideau Trail is primarily for hiking, although some sectors are suitable for cross-country skiing. Within the Township of Rideau Lakes, join the Trail near Chaffey's Lock where it intersects with the Catarqui / Trans-Canada Trail. The hiker then treks northward to and through North Crosby, intimately experiencing biology and geology of the Shield. Swinging eastward, follow the north shore of Westport Sand Lake, through the Foley Mountain Conservation Area and along the north shore of Upper Rideau Lake to briefly re-join heritage civilization at Narrows Lock. Enjoy an exhilarating experience on the Frontenac Axis, its rugged granite plutons and its great diversity of flora and fauna. The Canadian Northern Railway, later the CNR, was an operating railroad through Rideau Lakes until 1979 (Chaffey's – Forfar – to Smiths Falls). Multiple access points include Foley Mountain, Salem and more. See the interactive map at rideautrail.org.

Sugarbush Island Trail

This Rideau Waterway Land Trust property is available to the community for passive recreational use and quiet contemplation. Enjoy an easy hike amongst magnificent butternut, sugar maple, white pine and bittersweet hickory trees. The 2.8 km trail leads to a view of the Murphy Bay Wetlands (Opinicon Lake) and to the short causeway leading to the island. Sugarbush Island has an abundance of wildlife and birding opportunities. Located off Davis Lock Road just west of the junction of Sleepy Hollow Road across from Chaffey's Lock on Opinicon Lake.

Mill Pond Conservation Area Trails

Peaceful and serene, Mill Pond has six kilometers of wilderness trails. Low undulating hills, forest, water views and a trail to the Lime Kiln provide a relaxing but worthy hike. Take a walk through the park and stop for a quiet picnic in the sugar bush or at the covered picnic shelter. There is also a boat launch (car top only) for those who would like to enjoy a quiet canoe trip. Located at 4774 Brian-Houghton Bay Road, Rideau Lakes.

Marion Dunn Trail

Established in 2007, the Marion Dunn Heritage Trail, located in Chaffey's Lock, provides a pleasant, easy walk among towering trees, including many large cedars. The trail is named after Marion Dunn, a descendant of one of the early settlers in the area, who generously provided funding for this trail. The hike leads down an old road and past the area's old lime kiln and blacksmith's shop all the way to the Chaffey's Lock Cemetery. Here are cut rocks Coloned By decided were not worthy for use by the canal builders but have become a memorial wall for residents and visitors. The cemetery hosts graves of canal workers that came from many different lands. The Marion Dunn Trail is open to the public to use at their own risk. The trail can be accessed from either the Chaffey's Lock Cemetery or from Chaffey's Lock Road (County Road 9), about 30 metres south (towards the lock) from the Community Hall.

Rock Dunder Trail

Located in Morton, this trail offers a series of trails for different skill levels including a good 2-to-3-hour challenge through rough terrain, steep hills, rocks to manoeuvre, and a spectacular view. At the parking lot visitors will see a map depicting the various trails. Owned and operated by the Rideau Waterway Land Trust, this trail is a carry-in carry-out site and is suitable from sunrise to sunset. No fires are permitted. The **Cabin Trail** is an easy 1.3 km walk past a beaver pond, through mixed forest and a white pine plantation. The **Morton Bay Loop** comprises two moderately steep sections and to from a small peninsular outlook over Morton Bay. The hike is 2 km through mixed forest. Hiking boots recommended. The **Summit Loop** is a 3.9 km climb which runs alongside Deans Island through a variety of forest, offering sneak peaks over rocky cliffs. The summit offers a panoramic view of the Rideau Waterway. Hiking boots recommended. Day passes available online at wtv.org/rockdunder or on site. To find the trail head, take Stanley Lash Lane west of Highway 15 and follow for 1200 metres to the parking lot.

Foley Mountain Conservation Area Trails

Owned and operated by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Foley Mountain Conservation Area comprises of 800 acres of mixed forests, ponds, and fields. It is nestled on the top of the "mountain" overlooking the village of Westport and offers a variety of outdoor opportunities, including several marked trails: **Spy Rock (Blue Circle Trail)** is a 3.2 km route that leads to the Spy Rock lookout high above Westport. This view was created when a meteor slammed into the planet a few kilometres to the southwest. The impact resulted in a massive earthquake causing the earth of Foley Mountain to fall away 100 metres creating the abrupt, high cliff with its spectacular panoramic view. The path to the lookout is accessible by an easy access ramp. **Mobility Trail**, at 0.3 km, is wheel-chair friendly with a wide crushed-stone path and low grades. **Rideau Trail** runs for 8 km along the edge of the conservation area. Shorter trails include the **Meditation Trail** (0.1 km), the **Beaver Trail** (1.2 km), the **White Pine Trail** (1.2 km), the **Red Oak Trail** (1.3 km), the **Orange Maple Trail** (2.3 km). Located at 105 Foley Mountain Lane, Westport.

Shillington Park Trail

Located just outside the village of Westport, Shillington Park offers easy walking trails through the wooded area that surrounds the softball diamond, community hall with canteen, 2 shuffle boards, 2 tennis courts, playground, gardens, and sheltered picnic areas. Located at 875 Concession Road 8, Westport.

Jones Falls Trail

The lock station at Jones Falls hosts a number of loops in and around the locks. A trail from the parking lot will give you access to the Stone Arch Dam – a site well worth visiting. When completed in 1831, this was the highest dam in North America (almost 60 feet), a stunning feat of engineering, still very impressive to this day. A more recent trail offers the hiker a trip from the lockmaster's station along rocky terrain that runs parallel to the turning basin and to the blacksmith's shop. The defensible lockmaster's house is known as Sweeney House after the first lockmaster, Peter Sweeney. The blacksmith's shop was built in the 1840s. Rideau Canal Locks 39-42 Jones Falls is located on Kennys Road, Elgin.

Lower Beverley Lake Park Trails

This 106-acre multi-use campground offers a 2.5 km interpretive trail loop. Pick up a trail guide at the park entrance and follow the

numbers to learn about the native plants and animals living there along with historical remains of the B&W Railroad - Brockville to Westport. The line was called, "Brockville, Westport and Sault Ste Marie" but was never completed. There are 2 alternate pathways to shorten or extend your hike through this beautiful, wooded area. The trail spurs at the northeast end towards the beach, offering a full day of recreation. A brochure of the Nature Trail that runs perpendicular to the rail line is available at the park. Located at 146 Lower Beverley Lake Park Road, Delta.

Memorial Park Trail

Newboro's Memorial Park is home to an enchanting walking trail, one of two "StoryWalk" trails in Rideau Lakes. The trail meanders through wooded areas nearby to pickleball courts, a ball diamond, soccer pitch, playground and seasonal washrooms. Located at 28 John Street, Newboro.

The Old Kingston Road

The Old Kingston Road provided an early land link between the northern Townships and Kingston, the Limestone City, fortress of Upper Canada. For much of its route, this road for stagecoach and buckboard predated modern Hwy 15, taking dusty and shaken travellers through places called Whitefish Falls (Morton) and Singleton's Corners (Crosby). At Portland, however, the Kingston Road took a more direct line to Oliver's (Rideau) Ferry. This was an important traverse of Big Rideau Lake enroute to Perth, at one time capital of the Bathurst District of Upper Canada. The section between Portland and Rideau Ferry still bears much of its rustic charm and its name, "Old Kingston Road".

Perth or Rideau Ferry Road

Travellers and transporters had to pay tolls. Now this public highway ranks as Leeds County Road #1.

Perth Road

The Perth Road preceded the route of present-day County Road 10. Surveyed in 1852, this rugged path traversed the ancient granite hills of the Frontenac Axis in present-day North Crosby. Its purpose was to encourage settlement on the isolated townships and rugged lands between Perth and Kingston. In lieu of good farmland, settlers exploited valuable timber like white pine and red oak, and a treasure trove of minerals like mica and apatite. Now you may enjoy the vivid colours of an autumn afternoon as you travel the Perth Road. Stop at the commemorative plaque beside County Road 10 about 1.5 km. south of Westport.

Farmersville (Athens) - Westport Road

The nascent route of present-day County Road 42, this macadamized road required that grumbling travellers pay tolls during much of its early history. Along its route a number of communities such as Philipsville and Newboro grew and thrived as rest stops for those weary and thirsty souls. Now a sign between Newboro and Westport commemorates this, "the Stone Road".

The Brockville – Westport & Sault Ste. Marie R.R.

The Rideau Canal is the most prominent of the historic transportation routes in the Township of Rideau Lakes that is still in active use. But early in the 19th century a number of primitive roads passed through the northern sector of Leeds County, providing essential but bone-jarring and seasonal links between established towns along the St. Lawrence such as Brockville and Kingston, and the growing communities of the hinterland such as Newboro and Portland. The year of 1888 saw the coming of a new dimension of travel to the north country, a new mode of year-round (well almost) and rapid (relatively so) travel. The Brockville- Westport & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad began its daily schedule and students from farms and villages along its route could attend high school in Athens, Brockville. But Westport was as far as the B - W and "Seldom See Money R.R." ventured. A couple decades later, the C.N.R. traversed the Township from Smiths Falls enroute to Napanee. Freight and passenger trains frequented Forfar Station. Now, Via trains race from Brockville to Ottawa on a ribbon of steel along the eastern side of South Elmsley Ward. The other rails, at one time busy daily even hourly, have been abandoned. Many of their embankments and bridges now serve as recreational trails, opening up remote vistas of the Township to hikers and snowmobilers.

Museums



Chaffey's Lockmaster's House Museum

This former lockmaster's house is a structure of stone built in 1844. It now features a permanent display of the history of the lockmasters and the daily work of the men and women who settled the shores of Opinicon and Indian Lakes. Evolving displays each year depict aspects of life along the Rideau Canal. Open from June to September annually. Located at 1724 Chaffey's Lock Road, Elgin.

Delta Old Stone Mill (National Historic Site)

A landmark of the heritage village of Delta and designated a National Historic Site, the Old Stone Mill Museum is owned and operated by the Delta Mill Society, a non-profit volunteer group dedicated to maintaining and showcasing this 1810 grist mill. The impressive stone building is open seasonally to visitors (free admission). At various times during the season, heritage wheat is ground into flour by the mills 200-year-old millstones. Adjacent to the mill is the Blacksmith Shop which is open on special occasions. The Delta Mill helps host a number of community events including the popular Delta Maple Syrup Festival, and the Delta Harvest Festival. Bus tours, school tours and large groups are welcome with prior notice. A fee for groups may apply. For more information, including mill and blacksmithing schedules, please visit the website at deltamill.org. Located at 44 King Street, Delta.

Red Brick School

This historic building, an 1887 former two room elementary school, features a recreated classroom as well as permanent and changing annual exhibits relating to the heritage of Elgin and South Crosby. Open weekends during the summer. Notice of special events can be located on the Elgin and Area Heritage Society Facebook page and eahs.ca website. Located at 3 Halladay Street, Elgin.

Rideau District Museum

Located at the corner of Bedford and George Street in Westport, the Rideau District Museum is housed in a carriage shop constructed in the 1850s. The forges, bellows and iron tools are displayed in their original setting. Browse with fascination the many exhibits and artifacts related to the history of North Crosby and Westport. Open June to September, 1 to 4 pm. Small admission charge. Located at 29 Bedford Street, Westport.

Documentaries

A series of historical documentary films about the fascinating stories of Rideau Lakes including Rideau Canals Big Breakthrough in Newboro, the WVU college hospital of Agnes Etherington and others are a must see. rideaulakes.ca/documentaries

