



La table ronde  
**Rideau**  
Roundtable

P.O. Box 25,  
Smiths Falls, ON K7A 4S9  
(Tel) 613-284-8338  
[www.rirdearoundtable.ca](http://www.rirdearoundtable.ca)

**a not-for-profit, umbrella organization working to keep the Rideau Waterway & its watersheds healthy**

---

August 17, 2012

The Honourable Peter Kent,  
Minister of Environment,

Dear Sir,

Re: Rideau Canal

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Rideau Roundtable in response to budget reductions affecting Parks Canada and the Rideau Canal in particular.

The Rideau Roundtable is an association of individuals, community organizations and government agencies working together to keep the Rideau and Cataraqui Watersheds from Ottawa to Kingston healthy - socially, economically and environmentally.

Recent announcements of budget cuts to Parks Canada's Rideau Canal organization pose real threats to the integrity of the natural and cultural resources, and values of the Rideau Canal and its setting, as well as its contribution to the local economy. Among their many responsibilities, governments are elected to be stewards of our national heritage for the Canadian people. Your government must provide the organizational capacity to ensure the mandate of Parks Canada can be met. This mandate includes the protection of natural and cultural heritage, and ensuring that opportunities for public use and enjoyment are sustained. In addition, specifically for the Rideau Canal, the Government of Canada has an obligation to the world and to Canadians to conserve this UNESCO world heritage treasure.

Despite budgetary reductions by Parks Canada in response to government direction, the nationally and internationally significant heritage values of the Rideau Canal and its corridor must still be conserved. These cultural, ecological, recreational and economic values must be preserved to sustain our communities, and to ensure a legacy for future generations. Decisions made today can have lasting negative implications for the health of the Rideau system and its stakeholders, underscoring the importance of informed and prioritized choices.

The conservation of the cultural heritage, natural and scenic values of the canal and its setting; water management; and the retention of quality navigational and visitor services at least from early June to late September, should be the highest priorities for Parks Canada.

The health of the Canal's wetlands is vital to the maintenance of water quality and fisheries habitat. The Rideau's natural systems have adapted over almost 200 years, since the construction of the canal, to a consistent water management regime. Maintenance of the Canal's stable ecology relies on knowledgeable and reliable water management operations to maintain water levels throughout the year in order to minimize the potential for flooding. Simply put, without the assurance of the availability of year round skills, there will be unacceptable risks and potential harm to natural habitats, cultural resources, public safety and property values.

The recent changes to the Fisheries Act and the Federal Government's environmental assessment process could leave important natural resources more vulnerable. Coupled with changes within the Provincial jurisdiction related to Stewardship Councils, Conservation Authorities and the Ministry of Natural Resources, it appears that the future security of the Rideau's natural system and its values will be at risk.

Minister, there are many organizations and individuals along the Rideau who are looking for your leadership in ensuring that Parks Canada's future management of the Rideau Canal National Historic Site and World Heritage Site is successful in ensuring that the values, resources and services of the canal system are protected and sustained for future generations. As has been the case over many years, these organizations and individuals are more than willing to work collaboratively with a properly resourced Parks Canada organization to assist in the conservation and promotion of this national and world treasure. The Rideau Roundtable urges you and your government to take action to ensure that the healthy future of the Rideau system is assured.

Sincerely,



Peter Au

President, Rideau Roundtable

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

79 Golf Club Rd., Smiths Falls, ON , K7A 4S5

Email: [peter00au@gmail.com](mailto:peter00au@gmail.com), Phone: 613-284-8338

c.c. Gord Brown<[gord.brown@parl.gc.ca](mailto:gord.brown@parl.gc.ca)>

David McGuinty <[david.mcguinty@parl.gc.ca](mailto:david.mcguinty@parl.gc.ca)>

John Baird<[john.baird@parl.gc.ca](mailto:john.baird@parl.gc.ca)>

Hunter McGill<[huntermcgill@sympatico.ca](mailto:huntermcgill@sympatico.ca)>, Chair, Friends of the Rideau

Mauril Belanger<[mauril.belanger@parl.gc.ca](mailto:mauril.belanger@parl.gc.ca)>

Mayor Doug Struthers< [mayor@merrickville-wolford.ca](mailto:mayor@merrickville-wolford.ca)>, Chair, Steering Committee for RCLS

Paul Dewar <[paul.dewar@parl.gc.ca](mailto:paul.dewar@parl.gc.ca)>

Ted Hsu<[Ted.Hsu@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Ted.Hsu@parl.gc.ca)>

Royal Galipeau<[royal.galipeau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:royal.galipeau@parl.gc.ca)>

Scott Reid <[scott.reid@parl.gc.ca](mailto:scott.reid@parl.gc.ca)>