

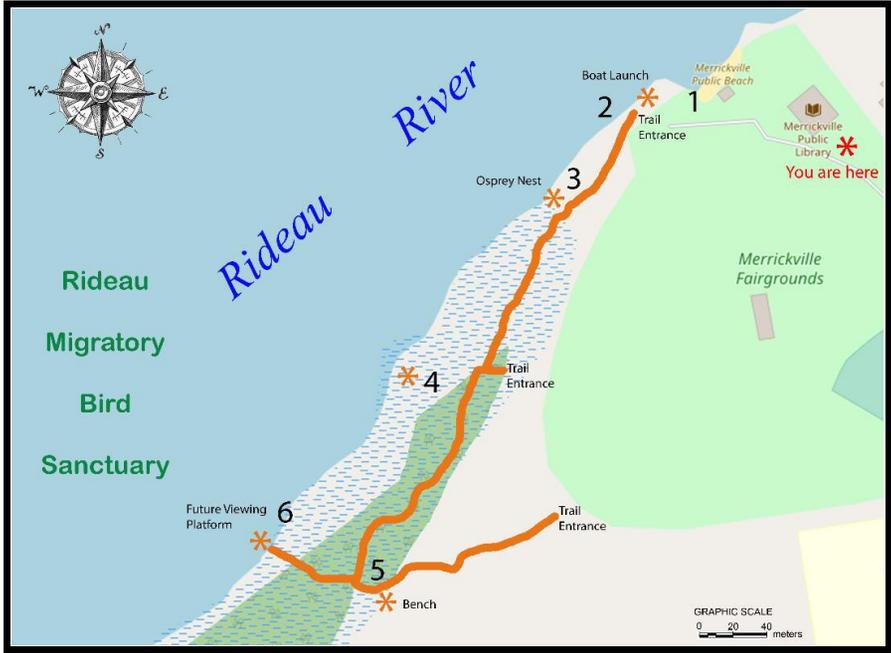
Welcome to the Riverwalk Trail

This short trail starts near the Merrickville Beach and boat launch area and follows the Rideau River west to a proposed viewing platform overlooking the wetlands of the Rideau Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The trail is currently a "work in progress" but is open for walking.

NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT

<input type="checkbox"/>		Flower	<input type="checkbox"/>		Butterfly
<input type="checkbox"/>		Water	<input type="checkbox"/>		Grass
<input type="checkbox"/>		Tree	<input type="checkbox"/>		Green Leaf
<input type="checkbox"/>		Spiderweb	<input type="checkbox"/>		Brown Leaf
<input type="checkbox"/>		Bug	<input type="checkbox"/>		Ant
<input type="checkbox"/>		Rocks	<input type="checkbox"/>		Fern
<input type="checkbox"/>		Bird	<input type="checkbox"/>		Cloud
<input type="checkbox"/>		Tree Bark	<input type="checkbox"/>		Sand or Dirt

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Check all the circles for the things that you saw on your walk!

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Spring/Summer 2021

Points of Interest - Riverwalk Trail

1: Merrickville Beach

The beach was excavated by Harry McLean in the 1930's when he also built a boardwalk and a pavilion along the shore. This area of the riverfront has been a popular recreation spot for villagers throughout the years... a welcome place to cool off after working all day in the many hot factories. Activities included swimming, picnics, boating, fishing, and just relaxing to view the sunsets. The adjacent Fairground and race track was a popular spot to socialize on Sundays during exciting horse races.

2: Riverbank / Riparian Zone

When walking the Riverwalk Trail, you become part of the shoreline ecosystem of the Rideau River. This "riparian" area is full of changing life, with special features each season, as the river water rises and lowers. This special strip of land, between the water's edge and higher dry land, hosts a range of aquatic vegetation: shoreline cattails, water sedges, a diversity of woody wetland shrubs and coniferous and deciduous trees. Many animals nest in riparian areas.

3: Osprey is King

You will find "Osprey the King" sitting on his family nest at the top of the pole or in nearby crown-bare trees. He arrives first from wintering in Florida or Mexico, usually in April. He and his life-long mate will repossess their nest, lay 1-4 eggs and together raise their chicks before returning south in October. Known as the "fishing hawk", Osprey circles high over the river, spots a fish, grabs it with its talons and enjoys a meal at the nest or in a nearby tree. You can sense or hear an Osprey's presence, enjoy its grandeur with a 4-6 foot wingspan, and appreciate its watchful interest in the people and animals passing by all along the riverbank. Long live the King...often for 15-20 years.

4: Beaver Activity

Beavers are herbivores and are North America's largest rodent. They eat aquatic plants, leaves, twigs, tree bark and the tender wood found underneath. They also build dams to create quiet ponds for their homes, called lodges, made of tree limbs, branches, sticks and rocks, held together with mud. A large river like the Rideau is not suitable for a dam, so beavers build lodges into the shoreline, or in safe, open areas of permanent wetlands. Dropping a tree is a great way to bring the best food and building material down to water level. Gnawing on wood also keeps their big front teeth from growing out of control. Look for chisel marks on tree stumps and trunks carved into an hour-glass shape.

5: Lichens and Mosses

As you relax on the bench, look around at all the soft, shaggy, bright green mosses growing on the trees and the old cedar fence-line. Mosses thrive in cool, shady places and retain precious moisture for the forest. Growing alongside them, pale green or grey and somewhat crusty-looking, are lichens, a unique symbiotic life form in which an alga photosynthesizes and a fungus reproduces. Lichens also come in yellow, orange, white and black growing in interesting shapes and patterns on everything. They provide food for many animals and they do no harm.

6: Rideau River Migratory Bird Sanctuary and Wetlands

This area was designated in 1957 by the Canadian Wildlife Service to provide safe refuge for migrating birds. The sanctuary occupies 800 hectares extending 5.6 Km upstream, south west of the village along both sides of the Rideau River. During fall migration, one may see up to 1000 Canada Geese and 1000 ducks at any given time. This is a feeding and resting area for many species of waterfowl, including mostly dabbling ducks that feed near the surface such as Mallard, American Black Duck, and the Blue-winged Teal. Parks Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry protect the sanctuary.

