

River Institute presentation to Cornwall City Council

September 28, 2020

From: Dr. Jeff Ridal, Executive Director

Instead of the usual formal presentation to Council, we are happy to submit our 2019 Annual Report together with this 2020 update. We hope you will look through the Annual Report and reflect with pride on the impact of the City's involvement with the River Institute. We are grateful to everyone who has joined our journey the past 25 years.

Of course 2020 has presented new challenges. We are adapting quite well by making adjustments and seizing new opportunities along the way. For example:

- Our education team quickly transitioned to online learning during the school shutdown, with online workshops and interactive live programming with scientists. This program, called *OutsideIN*, was developed to benefit students in our local community and to reach students in more remote areas of Canada.
- Our summer camp program for Jr. Scientists was successfully delivered outside and on the river with personal protective equipment and social distancing measures in place.
- Research and monitoring programs have proceeded with staff, interns and summer students adjusting to revised field and lab protocols for Covid-19.
- Our scientists have also been very busy teaching and supervising labs for the St. Lawrence College Environmental Technician and Nursing students with the new Covid-19 adaptations.
- The Great River Rapport team led by Dr Leigh McGaughey, together with our Mohawk partners, has made great progress with the development of ecological health indicators that tell the story of ecosystem health in the St. Lawrence River
- A new scientist, Dr. Mary Ann Perron, joined our team to contribute and share her extensive knowledge on aquatic insects and plants. Dr. Perron is also contributing to the River Institute teaching for the St. Lawrence College Environmental Technician program.
- Our Education Coordinator, Cristina Charette, is managing our school programs while also working on her PhD to study the impacts of the





Round Goby – an invasive species of fish in the St. Lawrence River. She was recently featured on the Quebec TV program, La Semaine Verte to discuss her research.

- The RiverLabs team continues to forge new partnerships through applied research initiatives with breweries to study wastewater applications and organic waste treatment from a local cannabis grower.
- RiverLabs is also a provider of UAV (drone) services and pilot training for a variety of applications including environmental surveys, mapping, and use of infrared technologies and spatial analytics using drones.
- River Institute educators are excited to be working with the City of Cornwall on a social media campaign to raise awareness on water use and water conservation.
- Community outreach programs have gone virtual, including our Annual Symposium, taking place October 28-29, 2020 and our monthly Speaker Series. Please refer to our website and subscribe to our social media for regular updates on all of these programs.

One thing is for sure - as people are connecting with nature and finding renewed appreciation for the outdoors, environmental health and wellness is more important than ever. All of us at the River Institute are extremely grateful to our donors, sponsors, and community supporters who recognize this need and continue to support our work.

River Institute 2019 Annual Report is available here: <https://www.riverinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2019-Annual-Report-v.-July-29-DIGITAL.pdf> Please have a look!


With sincere thanks,

Jeff Ridal, PhD
Executive Director
River Institute

*Photo credits: Stephany Hildebrand



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**River Health:
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The 27th Annual River Symposium | October 28 & 29, 2020
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Plenary Speaker
Abraham Francis,
Michewik Council, Akwesasne
Kaniatarowanenneh (St. Lawrence River):
Akwesasne Relationships Across Time
Thursday, October 29th, 2020
9:00 am to 9:55 am