



Spinoff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA

Marcia Armstrong, President
April 16, 2024 Reporter: Don Butler

This meeting was hybrid
(In-person at the Queensview Cafe)

Program: Laura Reinsborough, Riverkeeper and CEO, Ottawa Riverkeeper

Meeting Video: https://youtu.be/00cpxHM_Dek

In-person: 39 members - 6 guests

Online: 13 members – 5 guests

We open:

President Marcia Armstrong welcomed us to 42nd meeting of this Rotary year! She acknowledged that we were meeting on the traditional land of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people and we should learn from their experience in the story of Canada. What if the Four-Way Test had been applied?

President Marcia welcomed Guest Speaker Laura Reinsborough, visitors Joy Baganda of RC Kampala Ssesse Islands Uganda, and from Yellowknife Gillian Moyer, niece of **Joan and Doug Heyland**, and, from Stitsville RC President Dave.Rooke, former RCWO member Phil Bronsther, and quite a few others She hoped our visitors would enjoy the meeting and perhaps consider joining our Club.

O Canada: Video- 5 member Walk off the Earth singing before 2016 World Cup of Hockey.

Speaker; Laura Reinsborough

Larry Chop told us Laura Reinsborough is Riverkeeper and CEO of Ottawa Riverkeeper, a charity which aims to maintain the health of the Ottawa River watershed. He added that her experience as a Rotary Exchange student in Norway helped develop her interest in environmental protection. She holds a DES and MES from York University.

Reinsborough took the mic and thanked us for the invitation noting that she and **President Marcia** had known each other since childhood. She also welcomed the spirit of cooperation which had led RC Stittsville members to attend this meeting as Ottawa Riverkeeper had had to decline the RC Stittsville invitation to speak to them separately for lack of staff. Such cooperation is also essential to the protection of freshwater ecosystems, such as Ottawa River watershed. She underscored the significance of water as the source of life, emphasizing the responsibility we all share in caring for it.

Ottawa Riverkeeper, established in 2001 as an environmental charity, plays a crucial role in advocating for the health and protection of the Ottawa River watershed. Reinsborough explained the organization's structure, and its affiliation with the global Waterkeeper Alliance. She emphasized the historical stewardship of Indigenous peoples in the region, recognizing their ongoing contribution to water protection efforts and told us about cooperation with Algonquin Guardians program.

Reinsborough provided insights into the concept of watersheds, explaining how the Ottawa River watershed, one of the world's largest, encompasses a vast area and spans multiple jurisdictions. Despite its size and complexity, the Ottawa River watershed has often been neglected politically, leading to a lack of data and attention. Ottawa Riverkeeper fills this gap by advocating for the river's health and conducting scientific monitoring to assess its condition.

The presentation highlighted Ottawa Riverkeeper's three main objectives: science, education, and advocacy. Reinsborough outlined the organization's scientific monitoring efforts, which involve both staff and community scientists collecting data on various indicators of river health. This data informs advocacy initiatives aimed at decision-makers and policymakers, urging them to take action to protect the river.

Education is another key component of Ottawa Riverkeeper's work, aimed at raising awareness and fostering a deeper connection to the river among the public, particularly youth. Reinsborough described educational programs, including school visits, youth leadership initiatives, and public engagement events like shoreline cleanups and turtle conservation efforts.

Throughout the presentation, Reinsborough emphasized the importance of community involvement and volunteerism in Ottawa Riverkeeper's activities and gave some specific examples of what communities and volunteers could contribute.

In conclusion, Reinsborough reiterated the significance of the Ottawa River as a vital resource for both humans and the environment. She called on us to deepen our connection to the river and to take action to protect and preserve it for future generation. We should support collective action in safeguarding the Ottawa River watershed and other freshwater ecosystems relevant to us. She highlighted the organization's new River House facility, which serves as a hub for education and public engagement, inviting us to visit and get involved.

Q&A

-Compliment on the Ottawa Riverkeeper newsletter *In Otter News*

Reinsborough invited us to sign up for the newsletter. Monthly. Stay up to date on current issues and Ottawa Riverkeeper activities.

- pesticide and fertilizer pollution.

Ottawa Riverkeeper monitors phosphorus and algal bloom and works with communities to promote control of pollutants.

-fuel runoff and nuclear waste.

Ottawa Riverkeeper has been actively involved in discussions on nuclear waste storage at Chalk River, and the modernization of nuclear waste treatment. It works closely with other interveners, including notably the Algonquin.

Larry Chop thanked Reinsborough on her interesting and informative talk and told her of our gift to End Polio to mark her visit.

Announcements

Sucha Mann reminded us of the cleanup at Brewer Park on Saturday the 20th.

Larry Chop: guidelines for photos for the 2025 Cash Calendar.

- Current scenes from the Ottawa area.
- Landscape orientation (not statures or portraits)
- Identifiable people should be asked if we can use pic.
- No copyright or credit info on the photo.
- Seasonality is preferred-
- Send “full size”. 5 Megapixel or larger and 300dpi or higher

Needed by May 1

See attached presentation.

Linda Flynn: Ads for Cash Calendar- need both the \$100 Ads for the back cover and \$1500 ads for monthly banners. Talk to the businesses and service providers you use. **Linda** will send us a sample letter for potential advertisers,

President Marcia: If you are putting plants which feed pollinators into the City right of way or in your garden Club has signs advising passers-by about the pollinator garden and backing of RCWO.

- She is pleased that the mental health event April 27 is sold out.

Gord Leverton circulated folders for signing up to do or support the Foundation Walk week of May 6-11. Folders would be circulated for next two meetings. And next meeting he would do a presentation on The Rotary Foundation

Ron Doll for Soc and Rec said there would be another visit to the Rideau Carleton Raceway May 9, a walk led by Larry Chop at Mud Lake in June and a visit to the River House of Ottawa Riverkeeper July 13. Stay tuned for details.

Graeme Fraser gave a shout out for Dick Coote, with us at the meeting, who actually built the new pergola for Rotel which had been incented by our **Phil Powel Smith** to which other Ottawa RCs had contributed.

And meeting was adjourned

Calendar winners

<https://www.ottawarotarycalendar.com/2023-winners.html>

Next Meeting - Hybrid

Tuesday, February 23 2024

The Queensview Café, 2650 Queensview Drive, Ottawa

NB Attending in person? Advise President Marcia by evening April 21

Doors open: 12:00. Meeting proper starts @ 12:30pm

Program: **Gord Leverton and Robert Eagle**

The Rotary Foundation and its support for the Club international work

Intro & Thanks: **President Marcia**

Spinoff: **TBA**

For log on info for Zoom see invitation