



RIDEAU CANAL SKATEWAY FACTSHEET • THE WORLD'S LARGEST NATURALLY FROZEN ICE RINK

Each winter, the National Capital Commission (NCC) transforms the Rideau Canal, a historic waterway, into the world's largest skating rink! Hundreds of thousands of skaters and outdoor enthusiasts from all over Canada and the world come to enjoy this unique 7.8-kilometre ice surface winding through the heart of Canada's Capital. The 2005-2006 season marked the 36th season of skating. The season was officially launched on January 7, 2006, and closed on March 10, 2006.

History of the Skateway

The first skating season dates back to the winter of 1970-1971. The idea to clear the Skateway originated with Douglas Fullerton, Chairman of the NCC from

1969 to 1973. On January 18, 1971, he sent a crew to the frozen Rideau Canal with hand shovels to clear the five-km ice surface between the National Arts Centre (NAC) and the Bronson overpass. Witnessing the success of this initiative, the NCC committed to pursue this unique winter tradition and it has extended the ice surface of the Rideau Canal Skateway to 7.8 kilometres. The Skateway is now known as one of Canada's world-class attractions. According to a 2003 survey, 98% of users are satisfied with the Skateway and 75% stated the Skateway was somewhat important in their decision to visit the Capital Region in winter.

The Rideau Canal stretches 202 kilometres from Ottawa to Kingston, and was constructed between 1826 and 1832 by

thousands of Irish and French Canadian labourers under the supervision of Lieutenant-Colonel John By.

The Rideau Canal Skateway is a skating rink, and much more. During the month of February, the Skateway serves as centre stage for Winterlude, the Capital's internationally renowned festival and North America's unique winter celebration. The 29th edition of this winter festival will take place on the weekends of February 2nd to 18th, 2007.

Guinness Recognition

In July 2005, Guinness World Records™ of London, England confirmed that the Rideau Canal Skateway in Canada's Capital Region is indeed the 'Largest Naturally Frozen Ice Rink in the

World,' with a maintained skating surface of 165,621 m².

Highlights of the 2005-2006 Skating Season on the Rideau Canal

- Despite the variability in the weather this past winter season, the NCC estimates that over 850,000 visits were made to the Rideau Canal Skateway during the 2005-2006 skating season.

- Officially launched on January 7, 2006, the 36th season of skating on the world's largest skating rink offered 39 days of skating. Colder weather conditions in February allowed the NCC to keep the Rideau Canal Skateway open to skaters for 29 consecutive days, with no temporary closures between February 9th and March 9th, 2006.

- Skating for the first time on the 'World's Largest Naturally Frozen Ice Rink' was a highlight for many residents, visitors and Winterlude festival-goers to the Capital, as well as for professional athletes. On January 17, 2006, to the delight of hockey fans, the NCC welcomed the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim Hockey Club for a one-

hour practice on the Rideau Canal Skateway. Crowds gathered along the banks of the canal to witness, for the first time in the history of the Skateway, an NHL hockey team from sunny California State skate on the world's largest skating rink.

Interesting Facts

- The Rideau Canal is one of Canada's nine heritage canals. The Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada is owned by Parks Canada. The Skateway is managed by the NCC during the winter months.

- The segment of the Rideau Canal known as the Skateway runs 7.8 km from downtown Ottawa, along Colonel By Drive to the Hartwell Locks, located near Carleton University.

- The "classic" 7.8 km loop on the Skateway was established over 20 years ago as a speed skating circuit for the prestigious, international Jack Barber Challenge, held on the Rideau Canal from 1982 to 1986 and sanctioned by the Ontario Speed Skating Association.

- The actual skating surface is comparable to more than 90 Olympic-sized hockey rinks.

- On average, the skating season starts between Christmas and New Year's Day, weather permitting.

Maintenance crews work day and night to keep the skating surface smooth and clear. Snow removal is ongoing, and the Skateway is flooded every night, weather permitting.

- The average skating season during the past five years was 50 days long. During the 2002-2003 season, the Skateway opened on January 3 and closed on March 16 for a total of 72 days (66 skating days). This closure matched the March 16, 1999 date for the latest closing in recent history.

- The longest skating season to date was in 1971-1972 and lasted 95 days, while the shortest was in 2001-2002 and lasted 34 days (26 skating days).



ZANDER
SOD CO. LIMITED

Suppliers of
Top Quality Turf Products

GOLPLA
Turf Reinforcement System

* No. 1 Kentucky Bluegrass
* Five Varieties of Bentgrass
* Extreme Fescue

(877) 727-2100 (416) 364-5700
www.zandersod.com



G.C. Duke EQUIPMENT LTD.
ISO 9002 REGISTERED

Paul Turner
Sales Representative
Cellular: (416) 566-0211

1184 PLAINS ROAD EAST, BURLINGTON, ON L7S 1W6
Burlington (905) 637-5216 Toronto (905) 338-2404
1-800-883-0761 • Fax: (905) 637-2009 • www.gcduke.com



Master's
Turf Supply Ltd.

890 Fairground Rd. R.R. #4 Langton Ont. N0E 1G0
Phone (519) 875-4094 Fax (519) 875-4095
Website: mastersturfsupply.com
email: mastersturf@uniserve.com

Make the Switch to Quality

Quality Seeds for Sod Growers, Golf Courses, Sports Facilities, Municipalities & Landscape Contractors



District Sales Managers
Peter Coon • Cell: 705-715-3760
John Konecny • Cell: 905-376-7044

1-877-856-7333 • 905-856-7333 • www.qualityseeds.ca

- The 1972–1973 and 1981–1982 seasons tie for the earliest Rideau Canal Skateway opening on December 18. The latest Skateway opening was on February 2, 2002, breaking the previous record established on January 18, 1971. The latest Skateway closing was on March 25, 1972.

- Every year in mid-October, Parks Canada drains the Rideau Canal by opening the sluice valves at the Ottawa Locks near the Fairmont Château Laurier Hotel. In just a few short days, vehicle-access ramps, skate shelters and other facilities are installed in the Canal before beams are placed at the locks and the water is raised to skating level. From then, until the time the surface freezes, maintenance crews are busy installing stairs, hooking up plumbing and electricity, and setting up an entire infrastructure before the opening of the season.

- As the ice freezes and is covered with snow, the surface is cleared manually and with light equipment. Once the ice is approximately 15 centimetres (6 inches) thick, heavier equipment can be used.

- Maintenance crews work day and night to keep the skating surface smooth and clear. Snow removal is ongoing, and the Skateway is flooded every night, weather permitting.

- It takes about 10 to 14 consecutive days of cold weather (-15° C to -20° C) to get an ice surface safe for skaters.

- The ice must be at least 25 to 30 centimetres (10 to 12 inches) thick for skaters to be allowed on the Rideau Canal



Skateway. The NCC Ice Safety Committee experts assess the ice thickness before the official opening of the Skateway can be announced. The Committee continuously monitors ice conditions throughout the skating season.

- Snow must be removed when ice thickness permits as it acts as a thermal blanket and prevents the ice from expanding.

- The maintenance of the Skateway is 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- The NCC uses a flag system to indicate Skateway conditions. The green flag means fair to good conditions, but caution should be used when skating. The red

flag means the Canal is closed and conditions are unsafe.

- The Rideau Canal Skateway has its own skate patrol of 40 to 45 patrollers trained in First Aid and CPR. Some of these patrollers work two hours a week, while others do six- to eight-hour shifts.

- The second year the Rideau Canal Skateway was in operation, new skate shelters were installed on the ice surface of the Canal. They all sank! Since then, shelters have been supported by gravel pads and frames so they do not rely only on the support of the ice. The majority of the shelters are heated, and some are universally accessible.

- The holes along the Skateway serve as access for pumps required for flooding.

- Some 2,500 Christmas trees are recovered by the NCC and displayed in all the rest areas located on the Rideau Canal Skateway.

- The Skateway features an array of services such as concession stands, skate and sleigh rentals, shelters and rest areas.

Public Information

For Rideau Canal Skateway ice conditions, the public can call 613-239-5234 for a recorded message. For more information about the activities offered on the Rideau Canal Skateway, visitors may call the National Capital Commission toll free at 1-800-465-1867 in North America, or at 613-239-5000, or they may stop by the Capital Infocentre at 90 Wellington Street in Ottawa, across from Parliament Hill. ♦

Z-E-B-A
A Revolutionary, All-Natural Solution for Localized Dry Spots and Turf Repair

logic
 ALLIANCE

For more information, call 1.866.538.1280 or visit www.logicalliance.ca.

OTS 2007: FEBRUARY 19 & 20, GUELPH, ON

Keeping it Green!

University of Guelph
 Guelph, Ontario

519-767-5000
info@open.uoguelph.ca
www.open.uoguelph.ca/OTS