

**Friends of the Grand River****Established: 1995****Membership Size:** 200 members

**Contact:** Larry McGratton  
**Address:** 660 Colquhoun Street  
 Fergus, Ontario N1M 1S3  
**Phone:** (519) 843-3102  
**Fax:** (519) 843-5675  
**Email:** mcgratton.mcgratton@sympatico.ca  
**Website:** www.friendsofthegrandriv.com

**Goals/Mission/Background**

*Friends of the Grand River (FOGR)* develops, promotes and implements projects that preserve, conserve and enhance the ecology of the Grand River watershed. The group's action-oriented activities projects occur in Wellington County & Waterloo Region. The *Friends of the Grand River* focus their actions on education, recreational activities and projects that enrich individual appreciation of the watershed. This organization presents a voice to the parties that develop policies and projects that have effects on the Grand River watershed and strive to be part of the decision-making processes that determine such developments. In 2005, *FOGR* celebrated 10 years of project activity in the watershed.

**Events/Activities/Actions (2005)**

In 2005, *Friends of the Grand River* was involved in many different environmental actions, including:

- **"Adopt a Road"** – *FOGR* cleaned up County Road 18 between Belwood Lake Conservation Area and Fergus, and South River Road in Fergus (100+ bags of garbage a year). Recognized in 2005 by County of Wellington for 10 years of service.
- **River Watch** – A long-standing program under which *FOGR* volunteers trained by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) patrol the river to assist users and inform them of regulations and river ethics.
- **Tree Planting Projects** – Over 80,000 trees have been planted to date. In excess of 350 high-quality older trees were planted in 2005.
- **Fish Stocking** – *FOGR* volunteers stocked 20,000+ brown trout between the Shand Dam and West Montrose. More than 400,000 fish have been stocked since 1989.
- **Garbage Kiosks** – Between April and October, kiosks sponsored by groups and businesses were placed at river access points. Volunteers maintain the kiosks. *FOGR* contracts a commercial disposal bin service during the summer months to remove garbage (150+ bags per year).
- **Grand Opportunities Forum** – The 9th annual forum held at Belwood Lake Conservation Area attracted several hundred visitors who came to attend seminars on fly-fishing, visit manufacturers' representatives and help youngsters fish in the stocked Hampton Pond. This event, which included a used equipment sale, raised almost \$10,000.
- **Grand River Fisheries Management Plan** – *FOGR* was represented on the plan's implementation committee and the migratory fish working group. The Fisheries Management Plan is part of *The Grand Strategy*.
- **Belwood Tailwater Fishery Management Plan** – *FOGR* co-chaired the committee that developed this plan. A final draft version was approved following considerable public input and review.
- **Fishing Regulations Review** – *FOGR* was involved in an intensive review of Ontario fishing regulations which entailed many hours of research and preparation of papers. Revised regulations are expected by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007.
- **Conestoga River Enhancement Workgroup (CREW)** – *FOGR* has "adopted" a group of individuals interested in rehabilitating the Conestoga River. The workgroup has developed access points at Macton Bridge and Wallenstein and completed tree planting, fish stocking and clean-up projects. These activities often include local schoolchildren. The Conestoga River is an important tributary of the Grand River and with community support, it has the potential to be a strong recreational fishery. CREW members are full members of *FOGR*.
- **River Access Improvement** – *FOGR* installed steel stairs at two access points in late 2004. They were first used in the 2005 season and were well received. Maintenance activities continued on various established access points.
- **Beatty Dam, Fergus** – *FOGR* advocated the removal of the Beatty Dam in Fergus for a number of years. In 2004, the dam failed and it was as a hazard to public safety. *FOGR* committed funds for clean-up and a planned program of monitoring which continues to date.
- **Conferences & Show Participation** – Members attended the Spring Fishing Show and the Canadian Fly Fishing Forum to inform attendees about the Grand River and its recreational opportunities. They were also invited to attend academic/technical symposiums to describe their initiatives.
- **Centre Wellington District High School** – *FOGR* supported the school's outdoors group by sponsoring the appearance of a TV personality who made a special presentation on survival and safety outdoors.



# GRAND ACTIONS: A Registry of Accomplishments and Commitments, 2005

Recognizing Actions Which Improve the Grand River Watershed, Promote Heritage Appreciation, and/or Support the Grand River as a Canadian Heritage River

## Number of Volunteers



## Age Range

50 project volunteers, 200 *FOGR* members



8-79 years of age

## Sponsors/Partners/Supporters

☆ Grand River Conservation Authority ☆ Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources ☆ Wilfrid Laurier University ☆ University of Waterloo ☆ Niagara College ☆ TD Friends of the Environment Foundation ☆ Wellington County Stewardship Council ☆ Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) ☆ Township of Centre Wellington ☆ County of Wellington ☆ Izaak Walton Fly Fishing Club ☆ K-W Flyfishers ☆ Winter Hatches Club ☆ Grand River Troutfitters ☆ Jordie Enterprises ☆ Hamilton Area Fly Fishers Club ☆ Crystal Wealth Management ☆ Dofasco Angling Club ☆ Centre Wellington District High School ☆ Linwood Public School

## Media Coverage

- ✂ The Record, Waterloo region newspaper
- ✂ Guelph Mercury, newspaper
- ✂ Wellington Advertiser, newspaper
- ✂ Fergus-Elora News Express, newspaper
- ✂ Canadian Fly Fisher

## Future Activities Planned

In 2006, the *Friends of the Grand River* will continue to actively support research and education, conduct road cleanups, maintain garbage kiosks, plant trees, improve access and undertake fish-stocking initiatives. *FOGR*, along with the GRCA, will co-host the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian National Fly Fishing Championship to be held in the Fergus/Elora area June 22-25, 2006. Input into MNR's review of fishing regulations will continue. Participation in various planning initiatives and implementation of river-related plans will also continue and Grand Opportunities will be held again.



**A Sense of Community** – Ken and James Ingram-Smith stocking fish in the Grand River near Wilson's Flats.



**The Fine Art of Casting** – During the Grand Opportunities Forum, Ken Robins gives a dry demonstration.

