

GRCA General Membership

Chair Helen Jowett

Vice-Chair Chris White

Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon and Southgate and Town of Grand Valley

Guy Gardhouse

Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North

Pat Salter

Township of Centre Wellington

Kelly Linton

Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch

Chris White

City of Guelph

Bob Bell, Mike Salisbury

Region of Waterloo

Les Armstrong, Elizabeth Clarke, Sue Foxton, Helen Jowett, Geoff Lorentz, Jane Mitchell, Joe Nowak, Wayne Roth, Sandy Shantz, Warren Stauch

Municipality of North Perth and Township of Perth East

George Wicke

Halton Region

Cindy Lunau

City of Hamilton

George Stojanovic

Oxford County

Bruce Banbury

County of Brant

Brian Coleman, Shirley Simons

City of Brantford

Dave Neumann, Vic Prendergast

Haldimand and Norfolk Counties

Bernie Corbett, Fred Morison

Dry conditions continue

The fall has been beautiful, warm and dry, but the fine weather has had a negative impact on the river system and groundwater supply.

Dry conditions have been ongoing since mid-April. In June, all water users were urged to reduce their water use by 10 per cent. In August, this was changed to a voluntary 20 per cent reduction, when Level 2 low water response was announced across the watershed.

Groundwater levels in a monitoring well near Burford have been declining since May. The groundwater level at this well is similar to 2007, which was the lowest November level recorded there.

Environment Canada is reporting the warmest water temperatures on record for the Great Lakes. This could bring some much needed lake effect snow over the winter and would help alleviate the low water conditions.

Change in operations at GRCA reservoirs

The GRCA is operating the reservoirs outside of the normal operating range due to the dry weather.

Since November, the water being released from the GRCA's Shand Dam has slowed to less than one cubic metre per second. The Guelph Lake and Conestogo dams are also releasing only a small amount of water.

This will keep more water within the large reservoirs. The water is needed for winter flow augmentation and will help protect the fish that live in the reservoirs. River flow targets will be returned to normal once water storage in the large reservoirs is back within the normal operating range.

The GRCA does not anticipate issues with municipal water takings or with wastewater assimilation. That said, low flow targets may not always be met during periods with low precipitation.

The GRCA will consult with municipal water managers if there is a need for further reductions in reservoir discharges.

New forest nearly complete

Brantford's New Forest in the City took five years and is nearly complete.

Over 57,000 native trees have been planted on the site, which is on 32 hectares (78 acres). A legion of dedicated volunteer tree planters has also grown in Brantford thanks to this project. They will move to a new site next year, leaving this as a legacy for future generations.

It will grow into a Carolinian forest with trails, bridges and lots of beauty. Next spring, the finishing touches will be carried out — a few final plantings will be done and the trails will be regraded.

The New Forest is on land that couldn't be developed beside Braneida Industrial Park and is bordered by Henry Street, Garden Avenue and Highway 403.

The project demonstrates how community groups and individuals can work together. It was led by the Brant Tree Coalition, the GRCA, the City of Brantford, County of Brant and industrial partners.

The volunteers and groups will move their planting effort to a new project location in Brantford next year.

New standby generator

The GRCA is purchasing a standby trailer generator that will be located at the Conestogo Dam.

Each dam and the main office also have a stationary back up generator onsite. These will be used if the main power grid goes offline and the backup stationary generator is not available or fails.

The new \$76,000 trailer generator was recommended as a risk reduction measure instead



of constructing an emergency spillway at the Conestogo Dam. It was included in the 2016 budget and half the funding is being covered by the province.

The GRCA has one other trailer generator at the Shand Dam.

Wastewater program has a few years of data

Wastewater optimization has resulted in a few years of wastewater data which helps with decisions about the future.

The program has been funded since 2009 through the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, as well as significant contributions of staff time and resources from municipal partners.

Optimization is an innovative way that the GRCA and municipal wastewater staff work together to ensure that the multi-million dollar plants along the Grand River and its tributaries work efficiently and improve effluent quality.

Solutions to problems come from the plant operators themselves, because each plant is very complex and has a unique set of challenges.

Optimization can have a big financial pay-off, because municipalities can save money on capital upgrades and also gain the best possible information to help make decisions in the future.

GRCA staff are discussing future funding options with municipal staff and others.

Photo contest captures beauty of the Grand

More photos than ever before were submitted to the GRCA's 2016 photo contest and the seven winning photos were announced in November.

The photos show the diversity of beautiful landscapes and recreational activities in the watershed. They will be used on the GRCA's website and in its publications.

The grand prize photograph is of a bald eagle fishing in the Grand River near Brant Park and it was taken by Anca Gaston of Brantford. This photo reflects the return of eagles, which are increasingly common throughout the watershed.

There were three categories for the photo submissions to this contest. They were



Anca Gaston is an avid amateur photographer from Brantford and her image of a bald eagle flying over the Grand River while fishing took the grand prize in the 2016 GRCA photo contest. Seven winning photos were selected for prizes.

recreation, nature and panoramic images. First and second place winning photos were selected for each of these three categories.

These winning photos and a selection of other contest entries may be viewed online at www.flickr.com/grandriverconservation.

Register for Winter Adventure Camps

Kids can spend part of their school break at Winter Adventure Camps at Laurel Creek Nature Centre (Waterloo), Guelph Lake Nature Centre and — for the first time — Shade's Mills Nature Centre (Cambridge).

Winter Adventure Camps are fun and educational. They teach 6 to 10 year olds about the natural environment by providing hands-on, environmental programs.

Parents can sign kids up for individual days on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday Dec. 28 to 30, or for all four days Tuesday to Friday, January 3 to 6.

The camp activities take place 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, and there is free supervision starting at 8 am and late pick-up until 5 p.m.

This is the first time that this program has been offered at Shade's Mills in Cambridge.

Registration and information is available

online at www.grandriver.eventbrite.ca.

While normally there is a winter camp at Apps' Mill Nature Centre, this is not taking place this year because it is closed for renovations.

This issue of *GRCA Current* was published in December, 2016.

It is a summary of the November 2016 business conducted by the Grand River Conservation Authority board and committees, as well as other noteworthy happenings and topics of interest.

The Grand River Conservation Authority welcomes distribution, photocopying and forwarding of *GRCA Current*.

Next board meeting:
December 16 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre

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