

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 Foxtan, 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



2016 Watershed Awards

The GRCA held the 41st annual awards event on Oct. 20.

The top award — the Honour Roll award — went to master bird bander **David Lamble** who works independently in the northern part of the Grand River watershed where he has banded nearly 200,000 birds of nearly 200 species since the late 1970s.

In addition, four 2016 Watershed Awards were given out. These went to:

- Volunteer organizers of **Youth Outdoors Day** who have been holding this popular and educational event at Luther Marsh for the past 15 years.
- **The Neighbourhood Group of Companies** in Guelph founded by Bob Desautels for a focus on environmental initiatives, including contributions to Guelph Lake Nature Centre.
- **Dr. Paul Karrow** a pioneering geologist from the University of Waterloo who mapped the surface geology in much of the Grand River watershed.
- Beef producer **John Rowe** for his sustainable agricultural practices and his willingness to educate people about them.

Award nominations for 2017 can be made anytime by anyone.

Apps' Mill Nature Centre closed for renovations

Apps' Mill Nature Centre near Brantford is now closed while renovations take place.

The nature centre offers programs geared to schools as well as families, youth and community groups and staff are continuing to accept reservations for when the centre re-opens in early February.

The nature centre was constructed in 1981 and is in need of upgrades. A small vestibule will be added at the back of the building for coats and outdoor equipment storage. The renovation will also make the building wheelchair accessible by adding an elevator. A new gender-neutral

washroom is being built on the upper level that is barrier-free, while existing washrooms will be updated. The classrooms and main entrance will also become barrier-free.

A new outdoor classroom is being constructed just west of the nature centre building to allow for outdoor programming.

The entire property, including all trails, is off limits to all visitors at all times until the work has been completed.

Vicano Construction Limited of Brantford won the \$435,000 contract to carry out the work. The GRCA has received a Canada 150 Community Infrastructure grant of \$137,000 to help cover the cost. The rest of the funding will come from the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

Reservoirs are low

While the GRCA's reservoirs were low at the end of October, they were at a level similar to 2007, which was also a dry year.

At the end of October, the Belwood and Guelph Lake reservoirs were below the normal operating range for this time of year. Conestogo Dam was at the lower end of the normal range, and Luther Marsh was within its normal operating range.

At the end of the month, stream flows were below the flow targets. Discharges from the reservoirs have been reduced as a result of lower fall flows, but the demand for augmentation in the rivers was still high.

The entire watershed remains in Level 2 Low Water Response, meaning voluntary cutbacks of 20 per cent for water users across the watershed.

The temperature during the past couple of months has been around 3.5 C above the long-term average for this time of year.

Review of wetland conservation strategy

A GRCA staff report on the provincial wetland conservation strategy confirms that the GRCA

supports the provincial government's efforts to stop the loss of wetlands.

The proposed strategy provides a framework for wetland conservation in the province. Its two main targets are to identify and conserve significant wetlands by 2025 and to achieve "no net loss" by 2030 in areas where wetland loss has been highest.

The GRCA has had its own wetland policy since 2003. Since that time, approximately 45 hectares of wetlands have been lost across the watershed, and 31 hectares have been gained. The gain has come through projects carried out by conservation organizations, the GRCA's conservation programs and by landowners.

The proposed provincial strategy aims to increase public awareness and update provincial wetland mapping and inventory. It will also review Ontario's Wetland Evaluation System and look at new approaches to policy.

Wetland loss is an ongoing problem in southern Ontario. Approximately 68 per cent of the wetlands were lost by the early 1980s and an additional four per cent have been lost since, mostly due to land conversion. Fortunately, the rate of loss appears to be decreasing, likely due to conservation legislation and policies.

A key item covered in GRCA comments relates to a proposed plan to implement a wetland compensation policy. Staff noted concern with the use of compensation as a way to achieve "no net loss" and have suggested a "net gain" approach be considered instead.

Two landowner workshops in November

The GRCA is holding two workshops in November for landowners.

Right Tree, Right Place is on November 23 in Amaranth Township and will look at shelterbelts, windbreaks and living snow fences. This takes place at 7 p.m.

A soil health workshop is scheduled for 1 p.m. on November 30 in St. Jacobs. Both of these educational events are free. Details are available online at www.calendar.grandriver.ca. To register, please email ruralwater@grandriver.ca or call Karen Buschert at the GRCA at 1-866-900-4722 ext. 2305.



From left are GRCA Chair Helen Jowett, Joel Pegg (co-ordinator of Youth Outdoors Day), John Rowe, Dr. Paul Karrow, Bob Desautels (The Neighbourhood Group of Companies), David Lambie (Honour Roll Award recipient) and Joe Farwell, CAO of the GRCA.

Environmental scholarships

Three scholarships were given out by the Grand River Conservation Foundation to support students attending post-secondary institutions in the watershed.

The SC Johnson Environmental Scholarship of \$4,000 went to **Laurissa Christie**, University of Guelph. The Allan Holmes Scholarship of \$3,000 went to **Maricor Arlos**, University of Waterloo and the McEwen Clean Water Prize of \$2,000 went to **Joseph Salerno**, University of Guelph.

Order trees now for spring 2017

Until March 1, 2017, rural landowners can order trees from the GRCA.

To take advantage of this program, landowners must have at least one hectare (2.5 acres) of land. Ordering early is advisable, since there will be a broader selection of trees. The trees can be picked up next spring. The minimum order is 200 seedlings or 20 tall stock trees (this includes saplings, whips and potted trees).

A GRCA forestry specialist can visit large rural properties to put together a planting

plan, arrange for the planting of trees, or help access funding programs (if applicable).

For more information and to view the tree availability list, go to the forestry section of the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca/Trees.

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

It is a summary of the October 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:
November 25 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre

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