

GRCA Current



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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	Kirk McElwain
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

\$31 million 2017 budget

The GRCA will spend about \$31 million this year on programs that protect water quality, reduce flood damages, protect natural areas, support responsible development and provide outdoor recreation and environmental education.

The budget was approved by the GRCA board at the AGM on February 24. The board is made up of 26 members appointed by the municipalities in the Grand River watershed.

Municipalities will contribute \$11 million in general municipal levy to the GRCA this year, about 36 per cent of the total budget. The municipal levy works out to about \$10.60 per resident. When compared to last year, this is a 2.5 per cent increase, or 11 cents per resident.

Government grants totalling about \$4 million represent about 13 per cent of the budget. This includes \$800,000 from municipalities towards the Rural Water Quality program. The remainder is primarily provincial grants, which include funding of over \$800,000 for the Source Protection Program.

The GRCA also receives about \$300,000 from the federal government. Approximately \$220,000 of this funding this year is in support of Canada 150 projects.

The GRCA generates \$14.6 million, or about 47 per cent, of its own revenue through sources such as camping fees, park admissions, nature centre programs, hydro sales, property rentals, tree sales, planning permits and donations raised by the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

electricity from the proposed new hydro generating station. The IESO agreement was finalized and a request for engineering proposals was issued late in 2016.

The EA and the design are the first stage of this project and this is anticipated to take 12 to 18 months to complete.

The full project will take about five years and the new plant is expected to be commissioned early in 2021.

Moderate risk of flooding this spring

The overall flood risk in the Grand River watershed this spring is moderate, with the highest potential for flooding from heavy rain on saturated or frozen ground and along the Lake Erie shoreline.

The forecast was presented at the GRCA's annual meeting of municipal flood co-ordinators on February 22. The meeting is one of a series held each year, as the GRCA works closely with municipal officials to operate, test and improve the flood warning system.

The GRCA monitors weather and river conditions and issues warnings to municipal flood co-ordinators. When a flood message is issued, municipalities implement their local flood response program by warning residents, closing roads, managing evacuations and taking other actions.

This fall was very dry, but higher than normal precipitation returned in December. It has continued over the past three months. Along with higher precipitation, temperatures have fluctuated, resulting in cycles of melt and freeze accompanied by cycles of rain and snow.

The major reservoirs are at their normal levels for this time of year and Lake Erie is well above the long-term average level for this time of year. This is slightly above the levels they were at this time last year. Lake Erie is virtually free of ice, including the mouth of the Grand River.

Park Hill Dam hydro plant EA and design contract

The GRCA is hiring WSP Consultants for \$360,000 to carry out an Environmental Assessment and to design the proposed Park Hill Dam hydro generating station in Cambridge.

In September 2016, the GRCA board authorized staff to enter into an agreement with the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) under the Feed-in-Tariff Program for the sale of



Visit from Minister Kathryn McGarry

Kathryn McGarry, Cambridge MPP and Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, spoke briefly at the GRCA's annual general meeting February 24.

McGarry is leading the review of the Conservation Authorities Act, which governs Ontario's 36 conservation authorities. Public consultation on the review of the act was completed last September and McGarry thanked the GRCA for comments that were submitted.

The proposed new legislation is being finalized and she expects to introduce it in the legislature in the near future. She said the revised act could be passed into law in the fall of 2017.

Drayton flood meeting

Residents of Drayton and Mapleton can learn more about flooding at a public open house being hosted by the GRCA and the Township of Mapleton March 23.

Flooding along the Conestogo River occurs in Drayton and some other areas within Mapleton Township. This open house will explain the flood warning system, how to reduce the risks to your property and what to do after a flood. It will include displays on flooding, new maps showing flood warning levels in Drayton and other information.

The open house takes place at the PMD arena, 68 Main Street West, Drayton from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. and representatives of several organizations will be on hand to answer questions.

Roads closed at end of February

Highway 25 through Grand Valley and the low level bridge upstream of St. Jacobs at 1505 Three Bridge Road were both closed during the last weekend in February.

Flood messages about the closures were issued on February 23 and 24. Warm weather and heavy rains of 25 mm brought the last snowpack off the northern part of the watershed.

The weather outlook for March and April is warmer than normal.



Sheri Lovell of Rockwood received the top prize in the GRCA photo contest in the nature category for this photo of the Eramosa River as it flows through Rockwood Park. She lives in Rockwood and zipped over when she saw this dramatic sky as a storm approached.

Watershed heroes

Do you know a watershed hero?

Nominations for 2017 Watershed Award recipients can come from anyone in the watershed and must be made by May 1.

These awards go to individuals, families, groups and businesses that put their time and energy into improving the Grand River watershed. The GRCA has presented these awards each year since 1976.

More information on the program, including short biographies of past winners and a nomination form, can be found on www.grandriver.ca/awards.

Winners will be honored at a special event in the fall.

Tree planting services

The GRCA is hiring two contractors to plant more than 100,000 trees this year.

Some tree planting is contracted out by the GRCA in blocks based on the planting method and tree size. This allows many people to work at the same time to plant trees quickly, because bare root planting season is not long and starts as soon as the frost leaves the ground.

The Black River Tree Planting contract is valued at nearly \$40,000 and the Quiet Nature Ltd. contract is valued at \$65,000.

Planting on private land is paid for by property owners, but their costs are often offset by funding that comes from a variety of programs, including the Rural Water Quality Program, Forests Ontario and the Habitat Stewardship Program. Plantings on GRCA property are funded through external programs and donations.

About 30 million trees have been planted by the GRCA and its partners since the beginning of the planting program.

This issue of *GRCA Current* was published in March, 2017.

It is a summary of the February, 2017 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:
March 24 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre

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