

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
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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

187,200 trees planted through the GRCA in 2018

The annual GRCA tree planting tally is complete and 187,200 trees were planted this spring, reflecting a higher demand for trees when compared to last year.

The vast majority of the trees (122,500) were planted on private land in 110 projects. These projects were undertaken through the GRCA's Rural Water Quality Program, which helps landowners create custom tree planting plans and also helps them find funding sources to assist with project costs.

Through online sales and the annual May tree sale, 44,000 trees were sold to 156 customers. The GRCA also engaged the public in 15 planting events at which 20,700 trees were planted.

The general trend is toward smaller planting projects, because most of the large tracts of land within the watershed have already been planted.

In 2017, the GRCA was the winner of the Green Leaf Challenge in the small organization category. Last year, 88,867 trees were planted through the GRCA. The Green Leaf Challenge was set up for Canada 150 by the province and Forests Ontario to encourage planting across Ontario. The program tracked numbers and also mapped the locations of the trees.

Tree planting numbers fluctuate significantly from one year to the next partly because of changes to funding programs.

Grand River Conservation Foundation update

In 2018-2019, the Grand River Conservation Foundation (GRCF) expects to focus on several initiatives.

These include finding long-term funding for the Haldimand Children's Water Festival and continuing to raise funds for the new Guelph Lake Nature Centre, and improvements to the Laurel Creek and Apps' Mill nature centres.

Ongoing Foundation funding will also go towards tree planting, outdoor education, trails and habitat

improvement at Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area.

The GRCF is also looking more broadly at its planned giving program, which provides donors a way to leave an environmental legacy on the health of the Grand River watershed. More than \$250,000 was allocated to GRCA projects thanks to planned gifts received in 2017.

The annual river fundraiser dinner held by the Neighbourhood Group of Companies took place on June 25 at four restaurants in Guelph and Kitchener, with all of the \$15,600 raised going to the new Guelph Lake Nature Centre project.

Variable rainfall in June

Rainfall in June was variable, with most rain falling during localized storms.

Some areas of the watershed received near-normal precipitation, while parts of the southern Grand didn't have localized rain events. May was also dry, and ranged from 60 per cent of the long-term average to slightly below average. The widespread rainfall events in May were ideal for recharge and also produced limited runoff.

Temperatures in June were close to the long-term average, but it became hot at the end of the month. The average temperature during the first two weeks of June at the Shand Dam climate station was 16.1 C, slightly below the average of 16.3 C in May. May was very warm, much warmer than average.

Water levels in the GRCA's four biggest reservoirs are within the normal range for this time of the year. Reservoirs are now being operated to release water in order to increase river flows. By June 12, close to 65 per cent of the flow through Kitchener, 25 per cent of the flow through Brantford and 25 per cent of the flow on the Speed River below Guelph was coming from the reservoirs.

The level of Lake Erie continues to be above the long-term average and is the same it was last June, when it reached the highest since 1998.



New GRCA administrative bylaw being drafted

In July, the GRCA board will be presented with the first reading of a new GRCA bylaw.

Amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act were passed by the province in December 2017 and included a new section that outlines further requirements for conservation authority bylaws.

In 1985, the Ministry of Natural Resources approved a standard administrative regulation and directed all conservation authorities to adopt it. This is often referred to as the generic bylaw, and it was intended as a minimum set of standards that could be expanded upon by individual conservation authorities to suit their needs. The GRCA expanded upon the generic bylaw, and has reviewed and updated its bylaw from time to time to reflect updates to legislation and best practices, most recently in February 2016. The GRCA's current bylaw meets most of the new requirements that are specifically identified in the new legislation, and is being amended to reflect any further updates that are required.

A best management practices model bylaw has been developed by a Conservation Ontario working group to assist all conservation authorities with the implementation of new bylaws. This model bylaw forms the basis of the revised GRCA bylaw.

The GRCA's new bylaw must be adopted before December 2018.

Windstorm caused up to \$70,000 damage

The GRCA spent \$60,000 to \$70,000 to clear away tree hazards and repair hydro infrastructure after a severe windstorm on May 4.

The power was out in many locations. Two hydro poles were broken at Elora Gorge and a large tree near the entrance to Brant Park took out the hydro lines. Another tree fell onto the hydro lines at Pinehurst Lake. In most cases the power was restored quickly.

Brant, Pinehurst Lake, Shades Mills, Elora Gorge and Rockwood parks experienced the most severe tree damage.

Severe weather events have become more frequent over the last several years. Lessons



The hot weather is ideal to enjoy Grand River Parks, including Guelph Lake, pictured above. This park is large and has two beaches to enjoy. It also offers kayaks and stand-up paddleboards for rent.

learned from the ice storms on December 22, 2013 and March 24, 2016 were incorporated into the GRCA's Tree Risk Management Plan. It and the emergency response plan were followed after the May windstorm. A major difference from past events was that this windstorm took place when the parks and cottage lots were in operation, presenting different challenges. The GRCA will be enhancing existing procedures in order to respond to similar events in the future.

New source protection documents released

The Grand River Source Protection Authority has released two new documents related to the Guelph-Guelph/Eramosa Water Quantity Policy Development Study.

The documents are the Threats Management Strategy and the Water Quantity Policy Discussion Paper. Both of these were presented to the members of the Lake Erie Region Source Protection Committee at its meeting on June 21, and they are available on www.sourcewater.ca.

The new documents provide the foundation for water quantity policy development that will be part of the Grand River Source Protection Plan. This plan is made up of a series of policies developed in

consultation with the local community to protect municipal drinking water sources.

The source protection planning process is ongoing and the Lake Erie Source Protection Committee meets regularly at the GRCA Administration Centre.

This issue of *GRCA Current* was published in July, 2018.

It is a summary of the June, 2018 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:
July 27 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre

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