

## 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 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

## Weather delays opening of parks and facilities

Wintry weather led the GRCA to delay the May 1 opening of some parks due to saturated ground, tree damage and an April ice storm.

Then a severe wind storm on May 4 also resulted in temporary closure of some parks, trails and facilities.

The opening of Guelph Lake and Elora Gorge parks was delayed until May 4. When the severe wind storm struck later that day, Elora Gorge closed again and reopened on May 11. The opening of Laurel Creek and Conestogo Lake was also delayed until May 11 due to the April storm.

The GRCA operates 11 parks in the Grand River watershed, eight of which offer camping with about 2,500 campsites available. Elora Quarry will open in mid-June when the weather is warmer for swimming.

## 2017 WMP annual report

The annual 2017 progress report for the Grand River Water Management Plan has been circulated to municipalities in the watershed and is posted on the website at [www.grandriver.ca/WMP](http://www.grandriver.ca/WMP).

The progress report is prepared each year to outline the status of the 163 actions included in the plan. These actions were set out by partner agencies when they were developing the plan.

The GRCA hosted four meetings for water managers in 2017, including a joint meeting with watershed policy planners. The GRCA will continue to provide the opportunity for water managers to meet and discuss issues that go beyond municipal boundaries.

The GRCA has a long history of collaborative water management that dates back to 1932, when the Grand River Drainage Report came out. Since then, many plans have been put in place, implemented and adjusted.

In 2019, a State of the Watershed Water Resources Report will be issued, in addition to an annual progress report.

## Hazard mapping project

The GRCA has hired W.F. Baird and Associates Coastal Engineers Limited to complete the Haldimand County Lake Erie Shoreline Hazard Mapping and Risk Assessment project for \$196,000.

Updated and consistent mapping is needed across the three conservation authority jurisdictions within Haldimand (Grand River, Long Point Region and the Niagara Peninsula conservation authorities).

This study will update hazard mapping associated with flooding, erosion and dynamic beach conditions. This will help flood and erosion-related emergency response and planning. It will also help with planning and permitting decisions in at-risk communities, including Dunnville and Port Maitland.

## Parkhill hydro update

The GRCA board has authorized staff to take an important step towards building the proposed Parkhill hydro generating station on the Grand River in Cambridge.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project began in June 2017, and is now at the stage where specific design information is needed. This can only be provided by the equipment supplier. For this reason, staff will issue a two-part tender for all the equipment necessary to convert water into electricity. This equipment includes the turbine, generator, transformer and control equipment. This type of supply contract is called a water to wire contract, and is common in the hydro sector.

The contract will only be signed by the GRCA if the EA is approved and the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) issues a notice to proceed.

Public input and feedback is an important part of the project planning. Two public consultation meetings were held in 2017 as part of the EA process, and were well attended. In the fall 2018, a third and final Public Information Centre will be held, prior to the release of the draft



Environmental Report (ER), where members of the public will again be able to share their feedback. The ER will also be available for a 30-day public review and comment period. Information on where to view the document will be advertised in local newspapers and on the GRCA website.

If the environmental assessment for this project is approved and a notice to proceed is obtained from the IESO, the GRCA would proceed with completing final design and obtaining other required approvals. It is expected that obtaining the final design and all necessary approvals, acquiring the equipment, and building the facility could take 18 to 24 months. The plant could be commissioned between 2021 and 2022, and would generate about 500 kW of power, or enough electricity to power about 560 homes.

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## Cold wet April weather

April was a cold wet month, during which the GRCA was able to fill the reservoirs to the appropriate level for this time of year.

A winter storm April 14 to 16 delivered a month's worth of precipitation to the watershed. This was a mix of ice pellets, snow, rain and freezing rain, a combination that is difficult to measure with the tipping bucket rain gauges that are used at most GRCA sites. These gauges are designed to measure only rain. The tipping bucket gauge at Conestogo Dam recorded 35 mm of precipitation, while the weighing gauge more accurately recorded double that amount.

This is because the weighing bucket gauge measures the total weight of water within different types of precipitation. There are currently three weighing gauges installed at authority climate stations and installing more of these is one of the GRCA's climate change adaptation actions.

April's wet weather contrasts with the very dry conditions during March, when most of the watershed climate stations recorded less than half of the normal precipitation.

Environment Canada is predicting normal temperatures and above normal precipitation through June.

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## Prescribed burn held at FWR Dickson

A prescribed burn took place at FWR



The Haldimand Children's Water Festival is supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It is one of three children's water festivals in the Grand River watershed that that students attend with their class.

Dickson Wilderness Area in early May.

About 3.2 hectares were burned by Lands and Forests Consulting, a company that follows the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry guidelines for prescribed burning.

Prescribed burns are an important land management practice. Some ecosystems, such as FWR Dickson's tallgrass prairie, depend on periodic fires. The first burn on this property took place in 1995 and burns have been held every few years since then.

At one time, about 25 per cent of the Grand River watershed was tallgrass prairie. Today, only one per cent remains.

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## Three children's water festivals in May

Three children's water festivals are scheduled in the Grand River watershed this month.

Each festival features activity centres that focus on five water-related themes — water science, water protection, water technology, water conservation and attitudes towards water. The festivals are for children attending with their classes.

**Brantford-Brant Children's Water Festival**, May 15 to 17 for Grade 4 classes from Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations of the Grand River.

**Haldimand Children's Water Festival**, May 23 to 24 for Grade 4 students from

Haldimand County, Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the New Credit.

**Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival** is held May 25 and May 28 to 31 for primary school students in the Region of Waterloo, Wellington County and the City of Guelph.

The GRCA is a partner in the Waterloo-Wellington Festival which started in 1996, and leads the Brantford Festival (started in 2006) and the Haldimand festival (started in 2014).

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

It is a summary of the April, 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:**  
May 25 at 9:30 a.m.,  
GRCA Administration Centre

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