

# GRCA Minutes

Grand River Conservation Authority, 400 Clyde Road, Cambridge, Ontario N1R 5W6  
Tel: 519-621-2761 Fax: 519-621-4844 Internet: [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca)

## January 2011 Volume 16 - No. 1

### GRCA General Membership

**Chair** - vacant

**1st Vice-Chair** - Jane Mitchell

**2nd Vice-Chair** - Vic Prendergast

**Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, East Luther Grand Valley, Melancthon and Southgate** - Tom Nevills

**Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North** - Pat Salter

**Township of Centre Wellington** - Joanne Ross-Zuj

**Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch** - not confirmed

**City of Guelph** - not confirmed

**Region of Waterloo** - Les Armstrong, Todd Cowan, Jan d'Ailly, Rob Deutschmann, Jean Haalboom, Ross Kelterborn, Geoff Lorentz, Claudette Miller, Jane Mitchell, Warren Stauch

**Town of North Perth and Township of Perth East** - not confirmed

**Region of Halton** - J. Barry Lee

**City of Hamilton** - Jeanette Jamieson

**County of Oxford** - Bruce Banbury

**County of Brant** - Brian Coleman, Steve Schmitt

**City of Brantford** - Robert Hillier, Vic Prendergast

**Haldimand and Norfolk Counties** - not confirmed

Many new board members on GRCA for 2011

The GRCA board for 2011 is very different as a result of the municipal election and new appointments.

Not all seats were confirmed as of the Dec. 17 board meeting, which is the first official meeting of the new board. Twenty of 26 board members had been confirmed at that time. Representatives for Guelph, North Perth and Perth East and Haldimand and Norfolk were not confirmed.

A couple of appointments are only short-term and will not continue throughout the year – Tom Nevills is only appointed until March and Pat Salter's appointment ends in December. See the names in the box to the left of the page for more information.

Alan Dale has been the chair for the past four years, but he was not reappointed to represent Oxford County. As a result, First Vice-Chair Jane Mitchell chaired the December meeting. A chair and two vice-chairs will be elected at the first meeting of 2011 on Jan. 13. By that time, all the appointments will be confirmed.

There are 26 board members who represent 32 local municipalities and 7 upper tier regions and counties.

#### December weather

December was on track for average precipitation across the watershed.

As of the meeting on Dec. 17th, 46 to 57 per cent of the long term average precipitation had fallen.

Warmer than normal monthly average temperatures for 2010 have kept the Great Lakes open and free of ice into mid-December. These are ideal

conditions for lake-effect snow, which is when the lake water evaporates at sub-zero temperatures and then wind carries it inland, depositing it as snow over the land. Some lake effect snow has already fallen in the northern part of the Grand River watershed.

Snow cover, as of Dec. 15, varies between a low of 0.3 cm in the southern part of the watershed to nearly 10 cm in the north. This is generally above average for this time of year.

The GRCA conducts snow surveys from late fall through early spring each year. This is done on the first and 15th of each month. Core samples are taken from snow accumulations at locations throughout the watershed to estimate the amount of water lying on the land in the form of ice and snow.

These estimates help the GRCA's flood management team determine the potential for flooding that may take place during mid-winter thaws and the spring runoff.

#### Freeport Creek subwatershed study now under way

A subwatershed study and environmental assessment is now under way for Freeport Creek and the lands that drain to the Grand River.

The subwatershed study is one component of a larger project, called the East Side Lands (Stage 1) Master Environmental Servicing Plan and Community Plan. The study is being led by the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and GRCA staff will be part of the project team.

The GRCA has budgeted \$40,000 to the subwatershed study component of the project. The total project budget is \$1.15 million.

The subwatershed study work will



focus on the lands between King Street East and Middle Block Road in the City of Cambridge, east of the Grand River. The study is being undertaken before land in Cambridge is designated for development. It will provide technical reports and a comprehensive background on how surface water, groundwater and ecosystems function together.

The study will then recommend how changes on the land, such as development, can take place in a sustainable way.

#### Two-zone flood plain policy area along part of Laurel Creek

A new area within the City of Waterloo is being considered for a two-zone flood plain policy area.

The University of Waterloo contracted Stantec Consulting to update the flood plain mapping and a two-zone technical analysis along the reach of Laurel Creek within their south campus. The map will be a guide for GRCA permit applications and planning matters.

A two-zone policy area is more permissive than the standard one-zone policy area. It recognizes that communities within the flood plain need to grow and meet new needs, so the province allows this type of policy in some existing urban areas. This policy is used to help plan development, such as additions to buildings or new buildings, in the flood plain.

There are already several two-zone policy areas in the watershed, including along Forwell Creek and Clair Creek in Waterloo.

#### Conservation Areas open for winter activities

Two GRCA conservation areas opened for winter activities before Christmas.

Pinehurst Lake south of Cambridge opened Dec. 18-23 and is expected to reopen after Christmas. Ice fishing, skating and snowshoeing are available there. Belwood Lake, east of Fergus, opened for cross country skiing on ungroomed trails.

Check the Newsroom on [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca) for updates on winter activities and the calendar for special winter events, because conditions change quickly.

#### Grand leaders in wastewater

Reduced wastewater spills and efficient use of multi-million dollar equipment are the goals of a pilot project that is taking place in the Grand River watershed.

The project is bringing wastewater plant operators from the watershed together to learn about making the plants work as well possible and to share their experiences.

The GRCA is working with municipal water managers to ensure their wastewater treatment plants are "optimized." Solutions to problems come from the plant operators themselves, because each plant has a unique set of challenges. The municipalities and Six Nations operate 30 wastewater treatment facilities that discharge effluent into the waterways. All the operators were invited to participate.

Two plants within the watershed – Guelph and Haldimand – have already undertaken optimization and the results have been positive.

#### Heritage Day workshop Feb. 11

The theme for the 2011 Heritage Day Workshop on Feb. 11 is Culturally Created Communities: Rooted and Growing in the Townships.

The 2011 workshop is at the Breslau Community Centre at 200 Woolwich Street South in the heart of the new Riverland community. It celebrates the unique facets of rural heritage in the Townships of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot and their contribution to "sense of place" and prosperity.

Speakers are Mark Reusser, Ontario Federation of Agriculture; Cheryl Peterson, Elmira Maple Syrup Festival; Bob Reid, Wellesley Apple Butter & Cheese Festival; Janice Harder, New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale; Vernon Erb, president and chairman of The Erb Group of

Companies; Rick Martin, general manager of Wallenstein Feed & Supply Ltd.; Terry Davis, executive vice-president and chief operating office of Home Hardware Stores Limited; and Dr. Marlene Epp, Conrad Grebel University College.

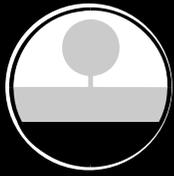
Entertainment will be provided by No Discernable Key and the Elmira Theatre Company. A reception will be hosted at the Runways Café, Waterloo Wellington Flight Centre, Region of Waterloo International Airport.

A registration form and schedule is available on [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca). The Heritage Day Workshop is held in a different part of the watershed each year with a focus on an aspect of the Grand River's heritage. It is hosted by the Heritage Working Group of The Grand Strategy. The workshop is free, although donations are always welcome. Space is limited so please register in advance.

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## February 2011 Volume 16 – No. 2

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### Jane Mitchell is new board chair

Jane Mitchell, a member of Waterloo Regional Council from the City of Waterloo, was elected chair of the Grand River Conservation Authority for a one-year term.

She was elected by the GRCA board of directors Jan. 13. The 26-member GRCA board is composed of representatives appointed by the municipalities within the Grand River watershed. Vic Prendergast, a board member since 1999 and the former second-vice chair, was acclaimed as the first vice chair. A new representative from Waterloo Region, Jan D'Ailly was acclaimed as second-vice chair.

The November municipal elections resulted in many changes on the board with 12 new faces among the 26 representatives.

Mitchell has been on the board since 2003 and has been first vice-chair since 2007. She is the first woman to serve as chair of the GRCA.

Prendergast was acclaimed first vice-chair of the board. Jan D'Ailly of Waterloo was acclaimed second vice-chair. Elections are held for all three positions at the first board meeting of the year.

In her acceptance speech, Mitchell said "the health and safety of our river system, both in water quantity and quality, is a pressing issue as we prepare for the effects of climate change and population growth."

### Sunshine brought people to GRCA parks in 2010

Warm sunny weather in 2010 brought more visitors to GRCA conservation areas and resulted in \$450,000 more than the \$6 million

revenue that had been budgeted for the year.

Last year there were 65 days with temperatures over 25 degrees in June, July and August, compared to only 38 days in 2009, when revenue was less than expected. Warm sunny weather is never assured, so the GRCA budget continues to anticipate a moderate number of warm sunny days. Revenue in 2011 is set at \$6.3 million, representing a five per cent increase over the 2011 budget.

A gathering of 2,800 Girl Guides at Guelph Lake Conservation Area for the 100th anniversary of guiding was a big event that helped the bottom line of the park operations.

### Park user fees set for 2011

Park fees for 2011 have been set by the GRCA board and have come into effect for this calendar year.

The fees were set after comparing user fee rates from private camping operators, other conservation areas and provincial parks. These fees include the HST, which came into effect last July.

Adult park admission will be \$5.25 for all conservation areas, except Brant (\$6 including pool fee) and Rockwood (\$5.50). The vehicle season pass is set at \$115. It is the most economical way to visit conservation areas for families.

Overnight camping fees rise by \$2 for serviced and \$1.50 for unserviced sites. Seasonal camping fees also increased. Other fees have increased between seven and 20 per cent in 2011.

These fee increases will allow the GRCA to continue to provide a high level of service, maintenance and



security to park patrons.

### New nature centre planned for Guelph Lake

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The GRCA has approved a project design to replace the Guelph Lake Nature Centre.

The Grand River Conservation Foundation has taken on this project by spearheading a community fundraising campaign.

The Guelph Lake Nature Centre is the busiest of the GRCA's five nature centres and it is also the smallest of the permanent nature centre facilities. More than 23,000 visitors are received there each year. The centre was converted from a house 30 years ago and was intended to be a temporary facility at that time.

### Luther Marsh holdings grow

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A 48-hectare parcel of land next to Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area was purchased by the GRCA at the end of 2010.

The piece of land is in Wellington North and includes 20 hectares of birch-poplar-cedar-fir swamp and six hectares of sugar maple forest. A 1.7-kilometre watercourse runs through the swamp area towards Luther Marsh.

Luther is one of the most significant wetland areas in southwestern Ontario, and is the largest publicly-owned natural area in the Grand River watershed. Large natural areas are especially significant for biodiversity conservation and watershed health. For the GRCA, acquiring lands next to Luther Marsh is a priority because it protects the land and enhances biodiversity.

The Blanding's turtle, listed as "threatened," has been found around Luther Marsh. Any restoration of marginal farmland and pasture will aim to benefit this and other species at risk.

### Permit fees set to change March 1

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Fees related to planning have been

approved for 2011 and the changes come into effect March 1.

The fees are for a variety of services including permit applications, written inquiries and plan review applications. They will increase by three per cent in order to cover increased expenses.

The fees are collected under guidelines established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and are available in the Planning section of [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca).

The combination of permit applications and inquiries and plan review revenue is estimated to be close to \$750,000 in 2011. These fees help cover the costs of this service and keep the levy paid by partner municipalities down.

### Flood warning Jan. 1

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Warm temperatures of 10 degrees and 15 millimetres of rain melted much of the snow pack across the watershed on Jan. 1.

This increased the river flows and potential for flooding along the Nith River. The GRCA issued a Level 1 flood warning for parts of New Hamburg and Ayr, because there is no reservoir on the Nith River to hold back water under these conditions.

Flooding was not anticipated along the Grand River, but the river levels did rise dramatically.

Information on river flows and reservoir levels can be found on the GRCA's website at [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca) in the River Data section. Information on the flood warning system can be found in the Flood Management section of the website.

Receive flood warning messages via Twitter at [www.twitter.com/grca\\_flood\\_msg](http://www.twitter.com/grca_flood_msg).

### Cold January

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After a January thaw on New Year's Day, January was cold.

It was about one degree below the long-term average for the month at Shand Dam. But snowfall was only a

little above average, ranging from 82 per cent to 150 per cent across the watershed. Snow pack across the watershed was less than normal on Jan. 15, due to the Jan. 1 thaw.

Stream flows were at the normal summer low flow levels. Most of the river system was covered with ice by the end of the month. Small ice jams were in place on the Grand River downstream of York, through Brantford and above 10th Line above Belwood. These are being monitored.

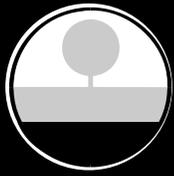
Reservoirs at Shand, Conestogo, Guelph and Luther were slightly above their normal operating range at the end of the month.

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**March 2011  
Volume 16 – No. 3**

## **GRCA General Membership**

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GRCA budget shows modest increase for 2011

The board approved a 2011 budget which calls for a modest increase in spending over last year.

The 2011 budget calls for expenditures of \$33.6 million (compared to \$33.4 million in 2010) to pay the cost of programs that protect water quality, reduce flood damages, preserve and improve natural areas, support responsible development and provide outdoor recreation and environmental education.

The budget was approved Feb. 25. Jane Mitchell, chair of the board, said it was a "hard budget year" for the GRCA. Municipalities had to pick up more of the cost of operations because some provincial grants have been frozen for years, she pointed out.

About \$9.47 million, or 28 per cent of the cost of operating the GRCA in 2011, will come from residents of the watershed who pay either through their local property taxes or their municipal water bills. That works out to about \$9.90 per person. Overall, the amount charged to municipalities will rise three per cent compared to 2010.

The GRCA will bring in revenues of about \$13.3 million (40 per cent) from fees charged for services ranging from camping to planning. The GRCA also raises revenue from land rentals, hydroelectricity generation and payments by school boards for outdoor education programs.

Government grants, mostly from the provincial government, will amount to \$8.3 million this year (25 per cent of the budget). The bulk of that money, about \$4.6 million, is being spent on development of source water protection plans under the Clean Water Act.

The plans are scheduled to be completed in 2012. Other government grants cover part of the cost of core programs such as flood warning and dam maintenance.

The remainder of the budget, about \$2.5 million (seven per cent), comes from GRCA reserve funds which consist of money set aside in earlier years. The budget is posted in About the GRCA on [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca).

### **Tree planting tenders awarded**

The GRCA has awarded three contracts for tree planting this spring.

St. Williams Nursery and Ecology Centre was awarded the contract for all machine and hand planting of seedlings in the watershed. This contract has a value of \$108,500 plus taxes.

A second contract was awarded to Sassafras Farms for just over \$27,000 for hand planting of saplings across the watershed. A small contract also goes to Bartram Woodlands to plant an assortment of seedlings and saplings on two privately-owned properties for \$2,350. Due to the number of trees being planted, the contracts were split based on method of plantings, location and stock size, allowing smaller companies to submit a bid.

The tenders were advertised and then opened on Jan. 28. The contracts were awarded Feb. 25.

### **Mileage rates and honorariums set for 2011**

The amount paid to GRCA board members in 2011 will increase by 2.4 per cent.

The increase matches the Statistics



Canada Consumer Price Index for 2010. Since 2008, the per diems and honorariums have increased at the rate of the Consumer Price Index. In 2009 this amounted to 1.2 per cent and in 2010 it was 1.3 per cent. The GRCA chair now receives nearly \$40,000 annually while the vice-chairs receive just over \$2,000. Vice-chairs and other members receive \$79 per day for committee meetings and \$132 for attending general membership/committee of the whole meetings.

Mileage rates for employees and board members will remain at 48 cents per kilometre, the same rate as in 2010.

### February was cold and dry

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Precipitation in February is below the monthly long-term average, continuing a three-month trend.

Monthly averages range from a low of 61 per cent at Conestogo to a high of 92 per cent at Luther. Total precipitation for the past three months has been seven to 28 per cent below the long term average.

A snow survey Feb. 15 found that snow pack ranged from 66 per cent to 160 per cent, with a heavier snow pack in the southern and the extreme northern parts of the watershed. However a mid-February melt on the 17th and 18th depleted the snow. The melt was followed by a cold snap that has left the soil across the watershed frozen and saturated.

Monthly average air temperatures at Shand Dam were 2.4 degrees below the long-term average for the month. The recent melt has moved ice in some reaches, but ice is still intact in the southern part of the watershed.

Rivers were open or partially open towards the end of the month following the thaw. Ice jams were located throughout the Grand, Conestogo and Nith Rivers. Many of the smaller watercourses, the reservoirs and the southern river were still completely ice covered.

The Shand, Conestogo, Guelph and Luther dams were expected to be in their normal operating range by March 1.

### Dundas Buried Valley study now complete

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Research is complete on the Dundas Buried Valley, which was carved out of bedrock before the last ice age.

When glaciers reshaped the landscape 10,000 years ago, the ancient valley was filled in. At its eastern end it cuts through the Niagara Escarpment where it forms the Dundas Valley. It runs west through Brant County and Waterloo Region before leaving the Grand River watershed.

The research looked into how deep it is buried under the surface of the Grand River watershed, the shape of the valley and the type of material in it. It could be a source of groundwater for communities in the future.

### Risk of spring flood still high flood co-ordinators told

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The warm spell in mid-February melted some of the snow and ice in the Grand River watershed, but not enough to reduce the risk of flooding later in the spring.

There's lots of time to replace the snow and ice that will be lost this week, says Stephanie Shifflett, a water resources engineer with the GRCA. It also means there's still a high risk of spring flooding.

Ice covered most of the Grand River and its tributaries prior to the mid-February melt. In addition, soils in most of the watershed were either frozen or saturated with water, which results in more runoff during a melt.

The potential for a major flood is higher than normal if a significant rain event occurs along with a rapid spring snow melt.

### Local stakeholders discuss green infrastructure

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Local stakeholders are coming together in a one-day workshop April 1 to discuss how the Grand River watershed can benefit from green infrastructure policies, programs and investments.

Green infrastructure provides many

economic, environmental and social benefits which are not recognized in current policies and investment formulas.

Hosted by the newly formed Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition and the GRCA, the workshop will include presentations and training sessions on green infrastructure best practices, policies and performance.

Green infrastructure refers to everything from woodlots, wetlands and urban forests to vegetative technologies such as green roofs and permeable paving.

This vital infrastructure offers many benefits for healthy living and a healthy economy, providing everything from shade and better air quality to employment and bottom-line savings on storm water management and energy costs.

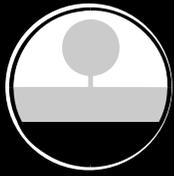
For registration information, visit [www.greeninfrastructureontario.org](http://www.greeninfrastructureontario.org).

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**April 2011**  
**Volume 16 – No. 4**

## **GRCA** **General Membership**

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### Schneider Creek remediation

The GRCA and the City of Kitchener will work together to complete an addendum to the Schneider Creek Remediation Class Environmental Assessment.

The EA was originally completed in 1995 due to historic flooding and damage to the railway line in the area between Hayward Avenue and Manitou Drive. Several erosion sites were also identified in this stretch of creek.

Kitchener has hired a consultant to prepare an update to the original 1995 study. This will be done under the Conservation Ontario Class EA process. This update will enable construction of a project that was initiated over 15 years ago. It will review the original preferred alternative in light of current conditions.

The study and recommended works will be funded by the City of Kitchener.

### More requests for permits

The planning department is increasingly active, says a report presented to the board.

A total of 659 planning permits were processed in 2010. This continues an upward trend that began in 2006 when the GRCA's new Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation came into effect. This regulation more than doubled the land that is regulated by the GRCA, which is now about 32 per cent. There was a corresponding increase in permit applications, which until 2006 had been under 250 permits per year.

As the number of permit applica-

tions have increased, so have the compliance issues related to permits. In 2010, GRCA staff conducted 267 field inspections, compared to 32 in 2009. In 2010, nine compliance investigations were initiated, three of which are ongoing. Three proceeded to charges and the remaining three investigations were resolved through the use of civil agreements or judicial orders.

### Warm and wet March

Precipitation in March was well above the monthly long term average across the watershed – from a low of 124 per cent at Conestogo to a high of 153 per cent at Shades' Mills.

The last three months have been well above the long term average and this follows a drier than normal fall.

The temperature at Shand Dam was a half-degree above the long-term average for March, reversing the cool trend.

Towards the end of the month, stream flows were receding throughout the watershed and river levels were high as runoff drained the landscape. Reservoir levels were lowered back to the normal operating range for this time of year.

Ice went out of the southern river system around March 15 and out of the extreme northern reaches March 18.

### Flood operations activities

Eleven flood messages and three bulletins were issued during the first three months of 2011, with half of these in March.

This has been an active flood season due to rapidly changing weather con-



ditions that have persisted since the third week of February. Alternating mild and cold spells, mixed with rain and snow have resulted in frequent runoff to the river system.

An advantage of the breakup this spring has been the release of water from the snow pack spread over several events, rather than in one large event. This helped ease the ice out of the river in most areas.

The exception to this was at Cayuga in the southern Grand River, where two ice jam resulted in some flooding. These were on March 7 and March 12 and resulted from upstream ice flowing down the river system and jamming at the leading edge of the Dunnville Dam ice sheet.

### Conservation awards

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The Grand River Conservation Authority is looking for nominees for its 2011 environmental awards.

Each year since 1976, the authority has presented awards to individuals, families, organizations and businesses that have taken action to protect and enhance the natural environment of the Grand River watershed.

The GRCA presents two types of awards: the Honour Roll Award for a sustained record of achievement over an extended period of time and Watershed Awards for outstanding examples of conservation and environmental work.

Nominations can come from anyone in the watershed, so if you know a person, organization or business that you think deserves an award, please make a nomination. The deadline for nominations is May 2, 2011. A nomination form is available in the Watershed Awards section of the GRCA website at [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca).

The 2011 winners will be selected by the Special Recognition Committee of the GRCA board and they will be honoured at an event in the fall.

### New scholarship

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Post-secondary school students in the Grand River watershed interested in improving the environment are eli-

gible for a new scholarship offered by the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

The \$2,000 McEwen Clean Water Prize is available to students who are pursuing a career in an environmental field. It's open to students registered at the Guelph, Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier (Waterloo and Brantford) and Nipissing (Brantford) universities, as well as Conestoga and Mohawk (Brantford) colleges. Students must be in second, third or fourth year or a graduate program in fields such as environmental science, engineering, emerging technologies, governance or education. Preference will be given to students who have attended programs at Grand River Conservation Authority nature centres.

The prize is named after the donor, Murray McEwen, a businessman living close to the Eramosa River near Ospringe in the Town of Erin.

The McEwen Clean Water Prize will be awarded by the foundation each summer. For more information about the prize, contact Doina Hartley at the Grand River Conservation Foundation at [dhartley@grandriver.ca](mailto:dhartley@grandriver.ca) or at (519) 621-2763, ext. 2372.

### Community Conservation Grants

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Applications are now being accepted from community groups and schools for Community Conservation Grants given out by the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

Each year the foundation awards grants of up to \$1,000 to qualified groups (must be a registered charity) or up to \$500 for elementary schools undertaking conservation projects in communities throughout the Grand River watershed. Eligible projects must be tangible and available for the use or benefit of the entire community.

The deadline for receipt of grant applications is May 2. The award recipients will be selected this summer with the cheque presentation taking place this fall. A final report may be requested of grant recipients within one year, or upon the successful completion of the project.

Applications can be downloaded from [www.grcf.ca](http://www.grcf.ca) or by contacting the foundation in Cambridge at (519) 621-2763 ext. 2373 or by e-mail at [foundation@grandriver.ca](mailto:foundation@grandriver.ca)

### iPhone App for Grand River Country

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There's a free and easy way to discover Grand River Country right at your finger tips.

This is Grand River Country's new trip planning companion for the iPhone, an easy-to-use App featuring the best of attractions, dining, accommodation, festivals and recreation found throughout the Grand River watershed.

Visitors to the Grand River watershed can browse listings in the iPhone App or search by activity and location, build a trip itinerary, save listings to a favorites list, send out a tweet to friends on Twitter, 'like' a location or activity on Facebook, and even book a reservation at a local inn or restaurant directly from within the app.

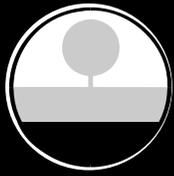
Travelers can download Grand River Country's App from Apple's iTunes store for free.

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# GRCA Minutes

Grand River Conservation Authority, 400 Clyde Road, Cambridge, Ontario N1R 5W6  
Tel: 519-621-2761 Fax: 519-621-4844 Internet: [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca)

**May 2011  
Volume 16 – No. 5**

## **GRCA General Membership**

**Chair** - Jane Mitchell

**1st Vice-Chair** - Vic Prendergast

**2nd Vice-Chair** - Jan d'Ailly

**Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, East Luther Grand Valley, Melancthon and Southgate** - Tom Nevills

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**New workshop at Conestogo Lake**

Conestogo Lake Conservation Area will get a new workshop with a \$400,000 price tag.

The current workshop is a converted agricultural storage building acquired by the GRCA in the 1950s. The building was abandoned at the end of 2010 because it was considered unsafe. The GRCA board agreed to replace it last year and staff have a design for a new building.

The construction contract went to Demikon Construction Ltd. of Gueph, which submitted the lowest tender. The building will serve as an office, storage area, repair shop and the base of operations for the conservation area and the dam. It will also be in a new location.

**Two controlled burns held in April**

The GRCA conducted two controlled burns in April one near Paris and the other in the Cambridge area.

The goal is to help re-establish prairie and savanna habitats on two properties and prepare another site to become a prairie habitat. All three properties are owned by the GRCA.

Fire is a normal part of the life cycle of a prairie and savanna habitats. Native prairie and savanna species can tolerate fire, so burning the land clears out non-native species. Burning also releases important nutrients from the soil, which promotes growth.

Originally, much of the land between Brantford and Cambridge was dominated by prairie and savanna species but clearing of the land for agriculture reduced the prairie and

oak savanna landscape to just one per cent of its original size.

The properties were 3.6 hectares at the F.W.R. Dickson Wilderness Area, south of Cambridge and 6.6 hectares on a newly-acquired parcel of land known as the Morton Property on West River Road near the Pinehurst Lake Conservation Area.

No risk was posed to adjacent properties as the prescribed burns were contained within GRCA land.

**Annual road contract awarded to Cornell Construction**

The GRCA will hire Cornell Construction Ltd. of Brantford to undertake road surface maintenance at a cost of nearly \$238,000.

The GRCA maintains and constructs paved roads at many facilities. Each year deteriorated portions of roadway are pulverized, leveled and compacted. Once the road base is prepared, the road is surfaced using a mixture of asphalt and gravel. This surface requires special equipment.

**Cold wet spring**

The cold wet weather continued through April and the watershed wetter than expected.

This is because there have not been enough dry warm days to dry up the landscape. Average rainfall for the month ranged from a low of 83 per cent of the long-term average at Shand Dam to 136 per cent at Laurel and Shade's Mills. The temperature has been 0.6 degrees below the long-term average.

Stream flows were high for most of April thanks to rain and melting snow. The reservoirs are in their nor-



mal operating range for this time of year. They are being monitored closely to balance the need to keep some reservoir capacity to alleviate spring floods and also ensure the reservoirs are holding enough water the summer.

Weather forecasts have been extremely variable and sometimes called for more rain than actually fell. The monthly conditions report and the real-time river data are available on the GRCA website.

#### Deadline for comment July 11 for large quarry on Melancton

The Grand River Conservation Authority has filed comments on an application for a licence to operate a quarry on land just outside the Grand River watershed.

The Highland Group has applied to operate a large quarry in Melancton Township on a 2,300 hectare site immediately east of the boundary between the Grand River and Nottawasaga Valley watersheds.

Staff prepared comments which were submitted to the applicant and the Ministry of Natural Resources on April 26, requesting additional time to review the submission and additional information from the proponent.

That was the original deadline for public comments, but the ministry has since extended the deadline to July 11.

Mayor Bill Hill of Melancton appeared at the GRCA board's committee of the whole meeting on April 14 asking the board to endorse the township's request to the ministry that the deadline be extended. The GRCA agreed with the request.

#### New Conestoga campus gets forcemain easement

The GRCA is going to provide an easement to allow the City of Cambridge to build and maintain a sanitary forcemain for the new campus of Conestoga College.

The new campus is under construction south of Highway 401 at the end of Fountain Street in Cambridge, directly across Highway 401 from the

Doon campus.

Sanitary servicing for the campus will go under Highway 401 and will be pumped to the Kitchener wastewater treatment facility to the north. The forcemain will cross GRCA land near the mouth of Schneider Creek. The City of Kitchener already has an easement for a sanitary forcemain on this land and now Cambridge will have one also.

The forcemain will be constructed and maintained by the City of Cambridge. It is on land that is regulated by the GRCA, so a permit will be required from the GRCA before the work is carried out. A class environmental assessment has already taken place.

The 130-acre campus will accommodate 3,000 post-secondary technicians, technologists and apprenticeship students.

#### GRCA Insurance renewed

The GRCA's insurance coverage will cost \$403,000 for the coming year and is up about \$6,000 when compared to the previous year.

The coverage runs from April 1 for a year. The GRCA buys group insurance through Conservation Ontario along with other conservation authorities, and in this way there are some cost savings.

#### House for sale on Clyde Road

A stone house that was once the residence for the park superintendent at Shade's Mills is going on the market.

The GRCA sometimes sells property that does not fit within its plan. This house is vacant and would require significant upgrades if it were to be rented out. Referred to as the Gyurtis residence, it faces onto Clyde Road.

Staff was directed to obtain municipal approval to sever the residence and approximately 0.5 acres of land from the Shade's Mills Conservation Area so that it can be sold.

#### 2010 aquatic annual report

The aquatic resource program

report for 2010 was presented to the GRCA board.

This program ensures the protection and enhancement of fisheries within the watershed. This is done through advisory services, support to subwatershed studies, aquatic restoration and partnerships that result in implementing priorities of the GRCA and the Grand River Fisheries Management Plan.

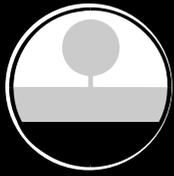
Nearly 150 plan input and permit review files relating to aquatics were undertaken during the year. To see the full report, check the Meetings section of [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca).

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**June 2011**  
**Volume 16 – No. 6**

## **GRCA** **General Membership**

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**1st Vice-Chair** - Vic Prendergast

**2nd Vice-Chair** - Jan d'Ailly

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### Wet spring weather

The first five months of 2011 have been very wet with precipitation above monthly averages since January.

In May rainfall ranged from a low of 112 per cent of average at Luther Marsh to a high of 149 per cent at Laurel Creek. As a result, stream flows have been high throughout the watershed during May. High precipitation, few drying days and high reservoir levels resulted in high flows on rivers and tributaries. Reservoirs were in their normal operating range for the time of year.

The average monthly air temperature in May was slightly above the long-term average.

### Safety paramount as rainfall causes water levels to rise

There were two flood messages issued during May – a high water safety bulletin on May 17 and a flood advisory on May 19.

These messages were issued after a week that saw approximately 70 mm of rain, which is what would normally fall within a month.

The major reservoirs are at the seasonal high and have very limited flood control capacity. Reservoir discharges have been increased to handle the additional runoff and will be adjusted as needed.

GRCA staff are working with the Waterloo Regional Police Service and the OPP to review and streamline the delivery of flood warning messages.

### Guelph Lake washroom contract

A sewage treatment system for the

new washroom at Guelph Lake Conservation Area will be installed by Lodder Brothers Limited for nearly \$164,000.

The washroom complex was constructed last year and was partially funded by the Recreational Infrastructure Canada program. This project also received a grant from the Hillside Festival, a three-day music festival that takes place on Guelph Lake Island every July. This grant is going towards solar hot water panels at the washroom.

The new washroom is barrier-free to meet Ontario accessibility regulations. The work is expected to be complete in July.

### Hydro upgrades to comply with new Hydro One agreement

The GRCA's three hydro plants will be upgraded to comply with Hydro One agreements and current meter requirements.

Hydro One operates the hydro distribution grids that accept electricity generated from the Shand, Conestogo and Guelph hydro plants. Hydro One requires a hydro connection agreement between the GRCA and Hydro One Networks for power generated at these plants. Two plants already have connection agreements while the agreement for Guelph plant is being finalized.

As part to the agreement, the GRCA must upgrade the hydro meters at the three plants to meet current commercial standards. The work is expected to cost \$225,000. Once this is complete, ownership of the meters will be transferred to Hydro One. The utility will then maintain the meters and cover the operating costs.



The GRCA anticipates increased hydro revenue of \$80,000 annually. This increase is because the rate paid for hydro under the new 20-year agreement at Shand Dam is higher than the current average spot market rate.

The GRCA plans to borrow \$145,000 from its Land Sales Reserve and this will be repaid with future hydro revenue. The forecasted hydro revenue increase of \$80,000 will also help cover this expense.

### Brant paving contract

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Brantco Construction of Cambridge has been awarded the tender for road and parking lot paving at the newly constructed Brant Conservation Area gatehouse.

This contract is for just over \$151,000 and will be fully funded from the 2011 GRCA budget.

A new gatehouse was constructed in 2010 at the conservation area. The staff are still using the old gatehouse and paving is the final step required to complete the project. Staff expect to greet visitors at the new, bigger gatehouse in July.

### 2010 was RWQP's best year

---

The Rural Water Quality Program had its biggest year yet and undertook more projects with a higher dollar value than in any year since it began in 1998.

Watershed landowners undertook nearly 500 projects in 2010, resulting in \$3.5 million in improvements. About \$1.5 million was covered through a variety of grant programs.

Most of the increase is a result of the Drinking Water Stewardship Fund.

Projects were implemented by 112 in areas near municipal water sources. Projects included septic system upgrades and decommissioning of unused wells. They properly decommissioned unused wells and upgraded farm wells.

The GRCA helps landowners find financial assistance from a variety of sources to help improve watershed

health. For more information e-mail [ruralwater@grandriver.ca](mailto:ruralwater@grandriver.ca) or contact Anne Loeffler at 519-621-2763 ext 2242.

Highlights of the RWQP from 2010 include:

- 82 well abandonment projects
- 54 well upgrade projects
- 5.6 km of stream fenced to keep 1,150 head of livestock out of the river
- 155 hectares of trees planted on private land
- 8.9 km of stream buffer planted
- 37 km field windbreaks
- 1.5 km farmstead shelterbelts
- 2 km living snow fence

### GRCA selects award winners

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The GRCA is issuing five 2011 Watershed Awards in September.

Each year since 1976, the GRCA has presented awards to individuals, families, organizations and businesses that have taken action to protect and enhance the natural environment of the Grand River watershed.

This year, the awards are going to two individuals and three groups. The individuals are Barbara Kidd, a teacher at Arthur Public School and Jim Philips who has planted thousands of trees on his property in Arthur. The groups are the Conestogo River Enhancement Workgroup (CREW), Cambridge WATER and the Fergus Lions Club.

### Taking care of the land

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Last year was a full one for terrestrial resources at the GRCA with many projects undertaken.

A multi-year forest restoration partnership with Ontario Power Generation at Luther Marsh was completed. This involved planting 285,000 trees on 215 hectares. Ducks Unlimited also replaced aging water control structures at Luther Marsh. Forty-five hectares of land was acquired at Luther.

Native grasslands were enhanced and four prescribed burns on 30 hectares of land improved grassland habitat.

The full 2010 Terrestrial Resources Annual Report is posted on the GRCA's website in the Forestry section.

### Enter GRCA photo contest

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Do you enjoy capturing the beauty of the Grand River watershed or the activities of family and friends in the great outdoors?

Enter the GRCA photo contest to win the grand prize of a Nikon camera or a \$300 gift certificate for each of three category prizes. The contest started April 30 and runs until March 31, 2012.

In addition, all contestants who submit a photo during the month are entered into a random draw for a vehicle season pass. The May winner is Alan Thompson of Brantford. In total, 11 vehicle season passes will be given out during the contest.

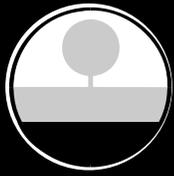
The complete list of rules and submission information is available on [www.grandriver.ca/photocontest](http://www.grandriver.ca/photocontest).

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**July 2011  
Volume 16 - No. 7**

## **GRCA General Membership**

**Chair** - Jane Mitchell

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**2nd Vice-Chair** - Jan d'Ailly

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GRCA receives \$600,000 for research from CWN

The Canadian Water Network is making \$600,000 available to the GRCA and a group of other organizations to get a better understanding of water quality issues in the Grand River watershed.

The money will allow researchers to better understand the many factors affecting water quality and predict the impacts on river health of population growth and climate change.

The GRCA and other agencies already study water quality in some detail. The research funding will help them pull their information together and develop tools to analyze how water quality may change in the future. That knowledge would give decision makers at the local, provincial and federal levels a way to assess the potential impact of investments or other changes in the way the river is managed.

The information will be used to help develop an updated Water Management Plan for the Grand River watershed. That plan is to be developed by 2013 and will look at water quality, water supply and flooding issues.

The Canadian Water Network will oversee the spending of the grant money in conjunction with a group called the Grand River Watershed Research Consortium. The consortium consists of the GRCA and 18 government and non-government partners. About \$200,000 will be available each year over the next three years.

Elora Gorge easement for sanitary sewer

The GRCA has granted Centre

Wellington Township an easement through the Elora Gorge Conservation Area in order to improve the Elora wastewater treatment plant.

A Class Environmental Assessment recommended expanding the wastewater treatment plant, which is beside the conservation area. A second access to the site through the conservation area is required so that trucks can move safely through when entering Wellington County Road 7. The easement will be used most during the spring and fall.

The existing service entry to the conservation area will serve as this access and the township will cover costs related to developing and maintaining the access.

Small Rockwood easement

The GRCA is selling a very small parcel of land to the Ministry of Transportation to improve Highway 7 as it enters the Village of Rockwood.

The triangular piece of land is on the southeast corner of Highway 7 and Fall Street South and is only 110 square metres. It is part of Rockwood Conservation Area and will facilitate a slight widening of the intersection.

GRCA saves one tonne of CO2 during commuter challenge

The GRCA ranked second in the 100-500 employee category for Waterloo Region for the 2011 Commuter Challenge June 5 to 11.

This helped propel Waterloo Region to the first place community in Ontario and the second in Canada. GRCA efforts reduced greenhouse gas emissions by over one tonne during the weekly event with an offset of 415 litres of fuel. During the Commuter



Challenge staff and board members carpooled, cycled, walked and bused to work and logged their efforts. Two people even paddled a canoe across the Shade's Mills Reservoir as part of this challenge.

### GRCA applies for grant

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The GRCA has applied for a three-year grant under the provincial Showcasing Water Innovation program.

The money will be used to support the update of the Grand River Basin Water Management Plan that is currently underway.

This funding program was announced by the province on April 29 and the application deadline was June 24. The grant is for up to \$1 million over three years, and must be matched 50 per cent by the partners to the project. The GRCA has put together a steering committee made up of several partners, a project team and several working groups. Together they are building on the knowledge, networks and tools that have been developed over the last couple of decades.

While the Water Management Plan is expected to be complete by the end of March 2013, work for the rest of that year will be needed to begin implementing the plan. This will include communications and promotion, the program launch and to finalize the deliverables and products.

### Dry June changes wet trend

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It may not seem like it to most people, but June was a dry month in the Grand River watershed.

Rainfall in June has been below the long term average with a record low of 22 per cent at Laurel Creek Dam to a high of 88 per cent at Shand Dam. This follows a record of wet weather during the first five months of the year. For example in May, rainfall was more than double the normal amount at Laurel Creek Dam. Higher rainfall during June at Shand and Guelph dams were the result of localized thunderstorms.

June was also slightly warmer than

normal, with the temperature at Shand Dam 0.4 degrees higher than average.

Stream flows started the month of June at much higher than normal levels as a result of the wet conditions in May. Throughout June flows steadily dropped as the watershed experienced drier conditions but flows remained above average.

River augmentation has been limited because flows have remained well above the flow targets. The need for augmentation from the reservoirs may increase if dry conditions continue.

### Forestry award for Neumann

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Martin Neumann, the GRCA's supervisor of terrestrial resources, was recognized with an award from the Ontario Professional Foresters Association.

The award, which is named for E.J. Edmund Zavitz, Ontario's first provincial forester and the person known as "The Man Who Saved Ontario with Trees and Determination," recognizes significant contribution to forest conservation. Neumann is the first recipient of this award and it has special meaning for him.

"I took inspiration from Zavitz's work long before I received this award, because he was not only a pioneer in forestry, but he was also applying forestry concepts to healing the landscape which is what we do," Neumann said.

This is one of eight awards that were given out.

### Water Forum Sept. 16

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On Friday, Sept. 16, the GRCA will host the 11th annual Grand River Watershed Water Forum to be held at the GRCA office in Cambridge.

This year's theme is "A sustainable watershed: can we get there from here?"

The forum will explore the theme of sustainability in the Grand River Watershed -- among the fastest growing watersheds in the province.

York University professor Peter Victor, recently awarded the Canada Council Molson Prize for outstanding lifetime achievement, will provide a keynote address. An environmental economist, Victor will describe the content of his latest book *Managing Without Growth* which provides novel approaches to managing without economic growth while sustaining our environment and improving our lives.

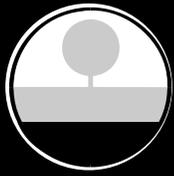
The other keynote speaker is Monique Dubé, the recipient of numerous awards; most recently, the 2011 Canadian Geographic Environmental Scientist of the Year. Her signature project, The Healthy River Ecosystem Assessment System is a tool that assists decision makers identify when important changes have occurred in the quality of the water in rivers.

There are many more speakers. For more information and to register, check [www.grandriver.ca/waterforum](http://www.grandriver.ca/waterforum) or see the program brochure that will soon be posted on the website.

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**August 2011  
Volume 16 – No. 8**

## **GRCA General Membership**

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### Driest July on record

It was the driest July on record since 1960 for Woolwich, Laurel and Shades Mill dams.

No rain fell for a month in parts of the watershed until the end of July. The monthly air temperature at Shand Dam was 2.6 degrees above the long-term average. Hot weather exacerbates the dryness due to lack of rainfall. A prolonged wet period is needed to bring soil moisture back to normal. As a result, stream flows declined throughout July. The wet spring caused high groundwater levels that helped to keep stream flows near normal for many of the tributaries of the Grand River, including the Eramosa River, Speed River, Lower Nith River, Mill Creek and McKenzie Creek.

Augmentation of the regulated river system increased significantly in July. Flows remained above flow targets with approximately 70 per cent of the flow at Doon, 50 per cent at Galt, 40 per cent at Brantford and 30 per cent below Guelph coming from the reservoirs.

Shand, Conestogo, Guelph and Luther dams are at their normal operating range for this time of year. The reservoirs are being operated to meet downstream flow targets. The reservoirs are in a good condition to continue to meet these targets into the fall, however hydro production has been reduced.

Whitemans Creek water users asked to cut by 10 per cent

Exceptionally dry weather has led the Grand River Low Water Response Team to urge people throughout the watershed to limit water consumption, particularly outdoor water use

such as lawn watering and car washing.

The team declared a Level 1 low water situation in the Whitemans Creek watershed on July 20 and this remains in effect. This means major water users are asked to voluntarily reduce water consumption by 10 per cent. The Whiteman's Creek watershed includes the tributaries of Horner and Kenny creek and takes in parts of Brant and Oxford counties.

The GRCA has plenty of water in its seven reservoirs, but rivers and streams without reservoirs were impacted by the dry weather.

The aquifer that feeds Whitemans Creek also feeds many wells and dug ponds. Water withdrawn from wells and ponds can reduce the amount of water that makes its way into the creek. Therefore, it is important that all water users help to conserve water.

### Wastewater optimization project

The final report for the watershed-wide wastewater optimization pilot project for the Grand River was presented to the GRCA board.

The year-long project was completed this spring. Two watershed municipalities, Guelph and Haldimand, had already undertaken this approach. The goal is improving the quality of effluent through attention to daily plant operations and solving problems. It has a side benefit of cost savings on operating and capital costs.

Twelve of 13 watershed communities participated in three workshops to learn about the process and share experiences. The goal was to engage all wastewater managers in this process and allow them to meet, share experiences about problems and solu-



tions.

The project was funded by a \$57,000 grant from the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program.

### New Brant gatehouse opens

The new gatehouse at Brant Park officially opened Aug. 3 while rain poured down all around.

The gatehouse replaces one constructed when the conservation area opened 40 years ago. It was expected to be only temporary and was jokingly described during the opening ceremony as looking like two outhouses nailed together.

The GRCA received funding in 2009 through the Recreational Infrastructure Canada Program in Ontario and Ontario Recreation. This joint federal and provincial program was made available to modernize recreational infrastructure, with objectives that included local economic stimulus, encouraging higher levels of participation in physical activity, and community building. The \$700,000 gatehouse project at Brant Conservation Area fit these objectives and contributions were made by the federal and provincial governments and the GRCA.

Local MP Phil McColeman, MPP Dave Levac, Brantford Councillor Debi Dignan-Rumble and GRCA chair Jane Mitchell spoke at the event.

### Landowner ordered to remove fill, restore property

The owner of a Woolwich Township property has been ordered to restore land where he illegally dumped fill in the spring of 2010.

Silviu Buta of Holborne Drive, Kitchener was ordered to remove the fill, regrade and revegetate property he owns at 2721 Shantz Station Rd., west of the village of Maryhill.

Buta pleaded guilty in provincial offences court to one count of undertaking development on the property without obtaining a development permit from the GRCA.

In addition to restoring the proper-

ty, Buta must also pay a fine of \$1,000. The fill was placed in a wetland on the Shantz Station Road property. Under the Conservation Authorities Act, the GRCA has the authority to regulate development activity within and up to 120 metres from a wetland. The purpose of the regulation is to protect the flow of water into, from and near the wetland.

The GRCA received complaints in May and June 2010 that fill was being placed on the property. GRCA staff met the owner, provided information about the regulation and asked him several times to stop.

The rehabilitation order issued by Justice of the Peace Zeljana Radulovic requires Buta to remove up to 20 full dump truck loads of fill and then restore the property within 10 days of the fill removal.

Landowners planning to undertake a project near a wetland, stream, river or other regulated area should contact a resource planner at the GRCA. E-mail addresses and phone numbers are available in the Planning and Regulations section of the GRCA website at [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca) They can also use "Map My Property" – an interactive mapping tool on the GRCA to see if any parts of their property are regulated.

### Source Protection plans 18 months from completion

The Lake Erie Region Source Protection Committee has released 20 discussion papers to municipal partners for source protection planning purposes.

Fourteen of the discussion papers have been posted on [sourcewater.ca](http://sourcewater.ca) and the remaining six will be posted once the committee's comments have been incorporated. These discussion papers will be used to guide the development of the Source Protection Plan.

Over the next year and a half, the Source Protection Committee, together with the municipalities and conservation authorities, will be developing the source protection plans with public and stakeholder input

Please contact Sue Brocklebank [sbrocklebank@grandriver.ca](mailto:sbrocklebank@grandriver.ca) or Martin Keller [mkeller@grandriver.ca](mailto:mkeller@grandriver.ca) if you have any questions.

### Register now for Water Forum

Details and registration information about the 11th annual Water Forum are available online.

It takes place Friday, Sept. 16 in Cambridge and the theme is "A sustainable watershed: can we get there from here?"

Water Forum allows people to gather and hear experts explore the theme of sustainability in the Grand River Watershed – among the fastest growing watersheds in the province.

There are many speakers including York University's Peter Victor who will speak about Managing Without Growth: Slower by Design, Not Disaster and the 2011 Canadian Geographic Environmentalist Monique Dubé. The GRCA's Watershed Report will be presented by CAO Joe Farewell and Ontario's Environment Commissioner Gord Miller will also talk.

For more information and to register, check [www.grandriver.ca/waterforum](http://www.grandriver.ca/waterforum).

**This issue of "GRCA Minutes" was published in August 2011.**

**It is a summary of the July 2011 business conducted by the Grand River Conservation Authority board and committees. Space permitting, other noteworthy happenings and topics of interest have been included. The Grand River Conservation Authority welcomes the photocopying and distribution of "GRCA Minutes." Reports mentioned in the GRCA Minutes are available online at [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca) in the Meetings section.**



# GRCA Minutes



October 2011 • Volume 16, Number 9

## GRCA General Membership

<b>Chair</b>	Jane Mitchell
<b>1st Vice-Chair</b>	Vic Prendergast
<b>2nd Vice-Chair</b>	Jan d'Ailly
<b>Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, East Luther Grand Valley, Melancthon and Southgate</b>	Tom Nevills
<b>Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North</b>	Pat Salter
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<b>County of Brant</b>	Brian Coleman, Steve Schmitt
<b>City of Brantford</b>	Robert Hillier, Vic Prendergast
<b>Haldimand and Norfolk Counties</b>	Lorne Boyko, Fred Morison

## Permit to build a house in floodplain denied

The GRCA board turned down a request to grant a permit to build a house on a property in Mapleton Township at a hearing on Sept. 23.

The proposed house would be entirely within the floodplain of the Conestogo River. The property is subject to GRCA policies, which don't allow new residential development within the floodplain.

A previous permit was approved in 1977, based on best available information and technical requirements at that time. Only a garage or storage building was built. Current information shows that the proposed house location could be subject to more than a half-metre of flood water during a regional storm. The access road could be covered by nearly a metre of water, so safe access would not be available under these conditions.

The GRCA board voted to refuse the permit application.

## Grand River sustainability at 2011 Water Forum

The topic of sustainability attracted an attentive audience at Water Forum 2011 on Sept 16.

About 300 people attended the event to discuss "A sustainable watershed: Can we get there from here?" A dozen speakers and two moderators weighed in on this topic and they all agreed that it is necessary to move away from being consumer-oriented to being conservation-minded in how we approach water.

The vision of the Grand River Conservation Authority is "a healthy and sustainable natural environment in the Grand River watershed" so the topic is fundamental to the future of the organization.

This was the 11th year this day-long symposium was held.

## Landowners fined for building lane in wetland

The owners of a Roseville Road property in North Dumfries Township have been assessed penalties totalling \$15,625 for building a laneway through a wetland in August 2009.

Jason John Geil was fined \$10,000, his company Geil Style Enterprises Inc. was fined \$1,000 and Janet Ann Bratton was fined \$1,500. In addition, they must each pay an additional 25 per cent victim fine surcharge. They were also ordered to remove the fill and rehabilitate an area estimated to be about 300 metres long and about 12 metres wide. That work must be completed by Nov. 25. The three were convicted Jan. 26 following a trial in Provincial Offences Court in Kitchener. They had pled not guilty to the charges laid under the Conservation Authorities Act. The Act prohibits placement of fill in a wetland.

A \$10,000 fine plus a surcharge of 25 per cent is the maximum allowed by the Act.

The GRCA and other conservation authorities in Ontario administer regulations that control development near wetlands, along watercourses and their flood plains, steep slopes and the Lake Erie shoreline. Regulated areas make up about one-third of the Grand River watershed.

In recent years, the GRCA has hired two enforcement officers to investigate complaints. Most cases are resolved through negotiation between the GRCA and landowners without court action.

## September brings average rainfall

Rainfall during September was average, with the exception of Woolwich Dam which had only received only about 40 per cent of the long term average by Sept. 20.

Parts of the watershed are still recovering from dry conditions earlier in the summer. After a wet spring, extremely dry conditions in late June and July set some records for the lowest rainfall since 1960.



It has been 2.1 degrees warmer than average at Shand Dam. In fact, monthly temperatures have been above the long term average since May.

Stream flows are below average for September and are above low water conditions for most areas. The exceptions are the lower Nith River which dropped into a Level 1 for a short time, while Whitemans Creek has been in a Level 1 since August.

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## Demand Management Workshop

How do you get a whole town full of people to cut back on the quantity of water they use every day?

This was one of the topics of a workshop held at the GRCA headquarters in Cambridge on Sept. 15. Called the Water Supply and Demand Management Workshop was attended by representatives of about two-thirds of the municipal drinking water systems within the Grand River

Water demand management (WDM) means adopting policies, programs and technologies that encourage reduced water use. This includes toilet rebate programs, higher water billing at certain times of the day and new ways to get residents motivated to use less water. It may also include new technologies and eliminating leaks in the water delivery system.

The group talked about the barriers that stop people from cutting their water use and municipal strategies that look promising.

Presentations challenged workshop participants to consider the next generation of tools and then everyone talked about water delivery technology and operations, economics, community engagement, regulations and implementation.

Ideas gathered at the workshop will be used by the municipalities to develop their own strategies that will then be incorporated into the GRCA's Water Management Plan.

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## Trees to be removed from dike in Cambridge

The GRCA will remove trees and brush from the west side of the Grand River near the Parkhill Dam in Cambridge (Galt) to protect the integrity of the dike and improve flows during high water.



Fall colours at Shades' Mills Conservation Area in Cambridge.

The work will take place later this month. It is expected to last about three days.

The roots from the trees and bushes can penetrate the dike, or work their way between the floodwall and the bedrock. This can lead to erosion or reduce the strength of the structure.

Trees and shrubs will also be removed from a small island between the river and the old mill race on the west side of the river. They reduce the capacity of the river during high flows.

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## 2011 Watershed Awards presented Sept. 15

On Thursday, Sept. 15, the 2011 Grand River Watershed Awards were presented to groups and individuals who have undertaken projects to enhance the natural environment in the Grand River watershed.

Five Watershed Awards were given out. They went to Barbara Kidd, a teacher who recently retired from Arthur Public School for her greening efforts at the school; Jim Phillips, a land owner and operator of Copernicus Educational Products for planting 75 acres of land in trees; the Fergus Lions Club for creating the Grand Arboretum in Fergus, Cambridge WATERS, a group dedicated to educating people about groundwater and the Conestogo River Enhancement Workgroup, a group that has helped create a brown trout fishery on the river.

Videos about the award recipients are available by visiting [www.youtube.com/grandriverca](http://www.youtube.com/grandriverca).

## New look for GRCA publications

The GRCA's publications have a new look this fall thanks to designer Tracy Riley.

The fall issue of The Grand, released in September, has a new look while this is the first issue of the GRCA Minutes to have a new design. It is now available in electronic format in colour, but it can also be printed in black and white.

The November-December issue of Grand Actions, which comes out every two months, has also received a design update. All these publications are available online on [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca).

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# GRCA Minutes



November 2011 • Volume 16, Number 11

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<b>City of Brantford</b>	Robert Hillier, Vic Prendergast
<b>Haldimand and Norfolk Counties</b>	Lorne Boyko, Fred Morison

## GRCA contributes 100 trees to reforest Goderich

The GRCA is donating 100 hardwood sapling trees to the Town of Goderich to help with reforestation after the tornado on Aug. 21.

Many local organizations and municipalities are making either financial or in-kind donations to help the town rebuild after this tragedy. The value of 100 hardwood bare root saplings is \$1,500, with an additional cost of \$300 to deliver the trees. They will be planted next spring.

The GRCA also offered the services of its forestry operations coordinator to help with hazard tree inspections and work planning.

October was also a warm month, with 2.6 degrees above the long-term average at Shand Dam. Temperatures have been above average since May.

Stream flows were above the long-term average for October, except in the upper Grand River where it was close to average.

During early October, water released from the reservoirs accounted for about half of the flows at Doon, 40 per cent at Galt and 25 per cent at both Brantford and Guelph. But augmentation dropped to virtually nothing due to rain later in the month.

Check the **Conditions Report**.

## ForestFest 2011 a success

ForestFest 2011 took place at Shade's Mills Conservation Area in Cambridge and was a resounding success despite the rain.

This free event featured numerous activities including horse-drawn wagon rides, raptor and birds of prey shows, forest walks, bird walks, bug hunts and tree harvesting and planting demonstrations. About 200 people attended the event which was put on by the GRCA and many of its partners.

For other events at nature centres and conservation areas, please check the **Calendar**.

## High and low water

A high water safety bulletin was issued on Oct. 19 to advise the public and recreational users of the river of changing river conditions.

The Grand River watershed was forecast to receive 40 to 50 mm of rain due to a storm. Ground conditions were already wet due to earlier rain, which caused increased runoff into lakes, rivers, and creeks.

The Grand River Low water Response Team removed the Low Water Level 1 for Whitemans Creek on Oct. 21. This low condition had been in effect for three months, since July 20. By the end of the month, river flows were back within the normal range. Check **River Data** for flow information.

## October brings rain, rain, and more rain

Most of the watershed saw more than 50 per cent more rain than usual during October, so the watershed has recovered from the dry conditions during the summer.

This year has seen very wet periods and very dry periods, but 2011 is on track for near-normal precipitation. Shand Dam received the most rain at 127 mm, while Woolwich received the least at 92 mm of rain.

## Trees for Mapleton workshop

Trees for Mapleton held the fifth annual hands-on tree care workshop Friday, Oct. 28.

This included lunch, a tour of two farms where trees have been planted, a pruning workshop and information sessions with speakers.

Trees for Mapleton has been dedicated to planting trees because current tree cover in the township is under 10 per cent, and it is even as low as three to four per cent in some areas.



This is a long way from the 30 per cent forest cover recommended by Environment Canada for a healthy watershed.

Mapleton Township has some of the lowest tree cover in the Grand River watershed due to its highly productive agricultural land and the hardworking farming history, said Myles Henderson, the Trees for Mapleton coordinator.

Tree advocates say that planting trees as windbreaks along fields are production tool, just like seeds, soil, drainage and machinery. By adding trees as buffers along streams, living snow fences, shelter belts around homes and farm buildings and wind breaks along farms tree cover would increase by 20 per cent and farm yields could go up. So far, Trees for Mapleton has more than 160 property owners planting trees, but there is room for more.



This is a section of Ellis Creek. There are about 11,000 kilometres of waterways within the Grand River watershed.

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## Call now for trees to be planted next spring

If you own a property that is greater than one hectare (2.5 acres) exclusive of buildings, and you would like to plant trees next spring, call the GRCA now.

GRCA staff are doing site visits with landowners this fall to create planting plans for next year. Sites may have to be prepared this fall to be ready to plant in the spring. A phone call to the GRCA now means your name will be added to the list for site visits. Demand for this service is high, so the sooner you call, the greater the likelihood that you will have trees on your property next spring.

The GRCA planted 370,000 trees this year and more than 200,000 of them were on private land. The GRCA can also help landowners obtain grants to offset some of the cost.

Projects such as windbreaks, shelterbelts, riparian buffers and large block plantings can receive grants covering 70 to 90 per cent from sources such as Trees Ontario and the Rural Water Quality Program.

For plantings that will be done by GRCA staff the deadline is Dec. 1. The minimum order is 500 seedlings or 20 saplings or potted plants. For plantings that will be done by the landowner the deadline is March 1, 2012. The minimum order is 200 seedlings or 20 saplings or potted plants.

For more information, check the **Tree Planting section** of the GRCA website at or call the appropriate staff member for your area at the GRCA office at 519-621-2761.

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## Please complete survey by Dec. 2

If you want to have your say on how water in the Grand River watershed should be used now and in the future, now you can.

The GRCA has posted an online survey on behalf of the partners of the Grand River Water Management Plan aimed at gathering information about the water uses and values that matter to people across the watershed.

The survey is just one of the ways the GRCA, watershed municipalities, First Nations and provincial and federal agencies are collecting public feedback to update of the Plan. The survey will close Friday, December 2. It can be found at: [www.grandriver.ca/wmpsurvey](http://www.grandriver.ca/wmpsurvey).

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## Warning buoys and booms removed

Warning buoys and booms upstream of GRCA dams were removed during October to prepare for winter.

The removal schedule started Oct. 12 and finished before the end of the month. The buoys and booms are installed each May to provide warning to boaters about the danger of approaching these dams.

Boaters should exercise extra caution around the dams after the buoys and booms are removed.

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## Anyone can subscribe to GRCA news service

Anyone is welcome to subscribe to the GRCA News Service, which includes this newsletter and GRCA press releases.

You can do so by sending a blank e-mail with no subject line to [GRCAnews-subscribe@grandriver.ca](mailto:GRCAnews-subscribe@grandriver.ca). You will receive an e-mail acknowledgement to which you must reply within five days to have your e-mail address added to the list.

Full details are in the **Newsroom section of the website**.

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# GRCA Minutes



December 2011 • Volume 16, Number 12

## GRCA General Membership

<b>Chair</b>	Jane Mitchell
<b>1st Vice-Chair</b>	Vic Prendergast
<b>2nd Vice-Chair</b>	Jan d'Ailly
<b>Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, East Luther Grand Valley, Melancthon and Southgate</b>	Tom Nevills
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## Second draft of 2012 GRCA budget

The GRCA board is working through the 2012 budget, which will be approved in February.

The board was presented with the second draft in November. It shows a budget of \$29.3 million, compared to an overall budget of \$33.6 million in 2011.

The base programs budget is expected to increase by 2.7 percent while the capital budget is expected to decrease by 32 per cent. Overall, the general municipal levy is budgeted to increase three per cent. Special projects spending is expected to decrease \$3.3 million.

Changes to the budget will be reviewed by the board over the next few months. The budget is scheduled to be ratified by the board at the annual general meeting in February.

The draft budget is available online by looking [www.grandriver.ca/MeetingReports](http://www.grandriver.ca/MeetingReports) under November 2011.

## Groups take part in WMP workshop

The GRCA hosted a meeting of 33 representatives of the environmental non-government community on Nov. 10 to talk about the Grand River Water Management Plan.

Many described it as "an important first step" towards involving the people who play an active role in addressing local, regional and national water and conservation issues at the grassroots level.

The group evaluated the draft water objectives that have been drafted as the basis of the plan.

There was general agreement that the list of objectives is comprehensive and that the objectives address the issues that matter most. But several participants stressed the importance of acknowledging the limits of the natural system as a central component of the plan.

The GRCA will share the ideas that came out of the meeting with members of the Project Team and Steering Committee. The goal is to revise the water objectives based on feedback received through this meeting, the public survey and other engagement activities.

For more information about the roundtable meeting, the survey and the Water Management Plan visit [www.grandriver.ca/wmp](http://www.grandriver.ca/wmp).

## E-flows workshop a success

A day-long workshop on the e-flows for the Grand River held at the end of October was hosted by the GRCA and about 130 people from across the province attended.

Water managers have been working to improve their understanding of e-flows, also called environmental flow requirements. This means taking a holistic look at natural river flows that support healthy aquatic ecosystems and human well-being. The healthy flow will vary at different times of the year.

The goal of this workshop was to bring together practitioners, researchers and water managers to talk about steps to integrate e-flow requirements into water management and planning in the Grand River watershed. This was the first time such an event has been held in Ontario.

There were 11 speakers and two panel discussions on both the policy and science aspects of e-flows at the workshop. The group spent part of the morning defining what "ecological flow requirements" means to them. During the afternoon they considered scientific approaches and a framework for ecological flow assessments.

A website section at [www.grandriver.ca/eflows](http://www.grandriver.ca/eflows) provides more information on this workshop, links to resources and e-flow information for specific reaches within the Grand River watershed.

## Warm November

Precipitation in November was far below the long term average across the watershed until the end of the month, when there was lots of rain.



In 2011 there have been very wet periods and very dry periods so November follows this trend.

Most of the watershed saw approximately 25 per cent of the long term average precipitation by Nov. 21, whereas October precipitation was about 175 per cent of average. Then there was a big turn around during the week of Nov. 29 when there was over 50 mm of rain in some locations.

This resulted in flood warnings in two locations.

In New Hamburg the affected residents were in the Milton Street and Jacob Street areas. Regional police and municipal staff also were urged to warn residents of Ayr along Tanner and Piper streets. They were advised not to park vehicles in low lying areas overnight. River levels peaked Nov. 30 in New Hamburg and on Dec. 1 through Ayr.

The year is on track for slightly higher than normal annual precipitation across the watershed.

As of Nov. 21, the air temperature at Shand Dam was 4.7 degrees above the long-term average. Monthly average air temperatures have been above the long-term average since May.

Groundwater levels at the monitoring wells near Mill Creek have been decreasing since June, but they are high for this time of year. Levels are close to the highest levels recorded in November since 2001. Check [www.grandriver.ca/WSCconditions](http://www.grandriver.ca/WSCconditions) for the full report.

## Auto subscribe to receive Grand Actions

Grand Actions has a new updated look and is now a full colour publication when viewed or downloaded from [www.grandriver.ca/grandactions](http://www.grandriver.ca/grandactions).

Links are also embedded in the online newsletter, making it easier to go to the web to find specific information.

Grand Actions newsletter has been produced every two months since 1996 by the GRCA and is available at no charge.

E-mail subscribers to Grand Actions can now subscribe automatically by sending a blank e-mail (no content in subject line) to:

[GrandActions-subscribe@grandriver.ca](mailto:GrandActions-subscribe@grandriver.ca).

Subscribers will be able to automatically unsubscribe by sending a blank email to: [GrandActions-unsubscribe@grandriver.ca](mailto:GrandActions-unsubscribe@grandriver.ca). You can also easily forward Grand Actions to friends, coworkers or others within your organization. Full details on GRCA information services are listed on [www.grandriver.ca/Newsroom/news.cfm](http://www.grandriver.ca/Newsroom/news.cfm).

Receiving the print version in the mail is the same as it has always been. Send an e-mail to [jbaine@grandriver.ca](mailto:jbaine@grandriver.ca) with your name, address and any changes you would like to make or call 519-621-2763, ext. 2302 and provide your name and address. The print version is still only available in black and white.

## New signs tell Grand River story

People who use recreational areas will notice new interpretive signs going up to provide information about the Grand River.

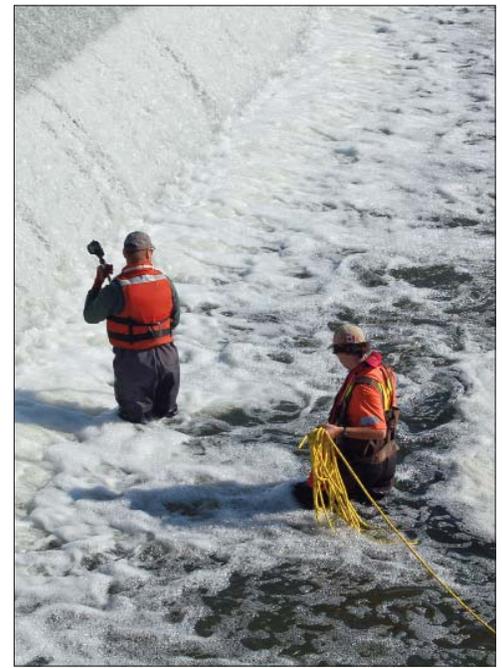
A grant for the Telling the River Story interpretive sign project came from the Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation's Community Fund and the Florence Louise Marsland Fund. The goal of the signs will improve understanding of the river and engage more people in river activities.

Twelve sets of two signs each are going into information kiosks, most of which are new. These are at the gatehouse of Laurel Creek Conservation Area and by the Laurel Creek Reservoir, close to the Shand Dam at Belwood Lake Conservation Area, by the parking lot at the Woolwich Reservoir, at Pilkington Outlook and by the pedestrian bridge that is under construction at Pioneer Tower. These signs focus on various aspects of the river including the tailwater fishery, dam management, the value of natural areas and recreational opportunities.

## Give green for the holidays

This holiday season, consider giving the gift of a strong and resilient natural world by making a donation to the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

Whether it is for family, friends or someone you appreciate in your community, a gift in support of tree planting, trails and special natural places is unique and will be appreciated for generations to come.



GRCA staff members take measurements at Parkhill Dam on a warm fall day.

A \$50 contribution provides an outdoor learning kit for students attending GRCA nature centres, \$30 will cover the costs to plant a tree in your area and \$20 helps keep trails in top shape for the community.

The recipient of your gift will receive a beautiful personalized card from the foundation and you will receive a charitable tax receipt. Please order by Friday, Dec. 16, 2011. Give by visiting [www.grcf.ca](http://www.grcf.ca) calling Doina Hartley toll-free at 877-29-GRAND (877-294-7263) or e-mailing [dhartley@grandriver.ca](mailto:dhartley@grandriver.ca).

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