



December 2014

Conservation Services

About three-quarters of the land in the Grand River watershed is farmed, which gives farmers a significant role in protecting the environment.

The Grand River Conservation Authority works closely with rural landowners to help them conserve and enhance natural resources on their land.

There are three broad categories of activities carried out by the Conservation Services department of the GRCA:

- Agricultural programs, such as the Rural Water Quality Program
- Programs for rural non-farm landowners
- Community partnerships

Rural Water Quality Program

This program provides financial assistance and technical advice to landowners to help them improve and pro-



Landowners contribute labour, cash and materials to cover about 50 per cent of the cost of projects.



tect water on their land.

The program began in 1998 when the Region of Waterloo committed financial support to the program, which is administered by the GRCA. Since then, other municipalities have joined: Wellington County, City of Guelph, City of Brantford, County of Brant, Oxford County, Haldimand County and Dufferin County. They contribute about \$850,000 annually to the GRCA to make available to landowners to support project costs.

Other sources of money are used to supplement the municipal grants. This includes funds from federal and provincial programs as well as environmental foundations.

The RWQP provides grants to landowners to undertake a variety of projects. The grant level depends on the type of project, with the landowner contributing the balance in a combination of money, supplies and/or labour.

Eligible projects include manure storage facilities, stream fencing, the development of nutrient management plans, erosion control projects, barnyard clean water diversion, fuel storage upgrades, tree planting and others.

By the end of 2014 about \$15 million in grant has been provided to support the completion of more than 5,000 projects, with landowners contributing an additional \$26 million.

Projects include 366 manure storage facility upgrades, 289 stream fencing projects, 380 nutrient management plans and 264 barnyard clean water diversions.



Capping unused private wells helps reduce the risk for pollutants to travel from the surface to the aquifer.

The projects have resulted in more than 50,000 kilograms of phosphorus being kept out of watercourses.

Trees for the Grand

Established in 2008, Trees for Mapleton is a partnership between the GRCA, the Township of Mapleton and community groups to promote tree-planting in a portion of the watershed with the lowest tree cover – less than 10 per cent compared to a watershed average of 20 per cent. Since 2008 about 250,000 trees have been planted.

Following this model, similar partnerships to promote tree planting are now in place in the townships of Woolwich and Minto. The GRCA also partners with the City of Guelph, the County of Brant and City of Brantford



Children learn about water conservation and protection at water festivals held in Kitchener, Cayuga and Brantford.

to support community led tree planting initiatives in their communities.

Private land reforestation and restoration

The GRCA's private land tree planting program began in 1953 and since then more than 14 million trees have been planted.

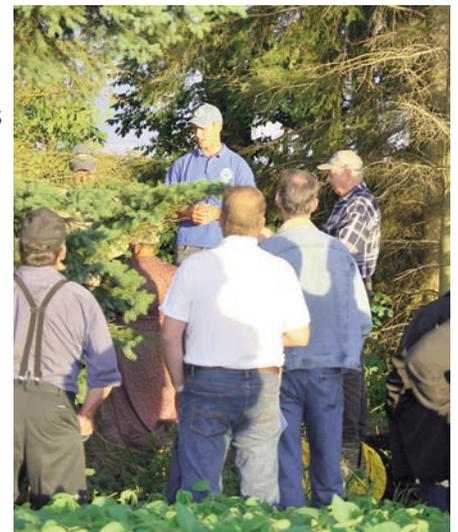
Each year GRCA's forestry staff provide assistance to more than 100 landowners. Staff help landowners develop planting plans, obtain grants from a variety of sources and assist with tree planting through contracted tree planters.

Community tree planting events

The GRCA supports a number of annual tree planting events around Earth Day in April in Waterloo, Guelph, Brantford and other communities. These events give thousands of volunteers the opportunity to add to the watershed's forest cover.

Tours and Workshops

Through workshops and participation in community events, the Conservation Services team works to increase the adoption of stewardship projects on private land. Each year staff host a variety of topical workshops targeted to both farm and non-farm, rural landowners to share information and raise awareness of stewardship issues.



Workshops help landowners learn more about the benefits of tree planting and other conservation methods.

Children's water festivals

These annual events held in Kitchener, Brantford and Cayuga give school children a fun, hands-on way to learn about the importance of water and ways to protect and conserve it. About 6,000 children take part each year in the events which are managed by community-based groups supported by the GRCA.