

GRCA Current



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Cambridge dike work

Bronte Construction has been hired by the GRCA to upgrade the Cambridge dike floodwall at 2 Water Street.

This project involves raising the top of the floodwall 1.5 metres behind the Water Street building to the design height of the wall. The original floodwall design was never completed at this location. The GRCA has also obtained an easement on title to ensure ongoing protection and maintenance.

This project is being carried out in August and will cost about \$100,000.

The Cambridge dike and channel was built as a series of projects from the mid-1970s through the early 1990s by the GRCA and the City of Cambridge.

The GRCA has recently completed assessment studies of the system to identify deficiencies and maintenance needs for the system, which has been in place for 40 years. The assessment also incorporated portions of the river floodwall predating that time.

Saturated watershed

Precipitation during the first half of July was varied across the watershed, with some climate stations recording only half of the normal rainfall and others recording almost twice the normal rainfall.

May and June were very wet, leaving much of the landscape saturated. The Luther climate station recorded almost three times the normal rainfall for June, and as of July 19 had recorded another 77 mm of rain.

The water level in the overburden monitoring well near Burford increased steadily from the start of the year to June, recovering from last year's low levels, and has stabilized slightly above the long-term average.

By mid-July, water levels in the Shand, Conestogo and Guelph reservoirs are at or slightly above their normal operating level, while the Luther reservoir is above its normal operating

level. Reservoirs are being drawn down to their normal operating levels following the recent rainfall.

The need for flow augmentation has been less than normal over the past few months. River flows are well above low flow targets through the middle Grand and Speed rivers.

Third season for Belwood Lake OspreyCam

This was the third year of operation for the Belwood Lake osprey webcam project.

It operated around the clock starting April 6, and a mating pair of ospreys were raising two healthy young chicks on the nest by June.

Early in the morning on June 18 the female osprey flew off the nest and didn't return. A dead osprey was found near the nest later that day. A preliminary diagnostic assessment of the bird revealed it was a healthy female that had injuries usually associated with a frontal collision.

The male continued to care for the two young on his own and they were growing quickly. It is rare for a male to care for osprey chicks alone, and the webcam was very popular for viewers from the watershed and around the world.

Unfortunately, overnight on July 9 a great horned owl took one of the chicks, returning July 11 for the second. Great horned owls are natural predators of ospreys.

The camera was subsequently shut down on July 20. While the osprey chicks at this nest did not fledge this year, there is a healthy population of ospreys within the Grand River watershed.

The GRCA will be reviewing the project's objective to determine next steps.

Total viewing time was close to 11 years, with an average viewing time of 20 minutes.

Blair Creek monitoring

In partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the City of

Communications audit – opportunities for stakeholder input

At the GRCA, we value the trust of our stakeholders and are committed to openness and accountability.

We strive for clear and respectful communication with our partners and with members of the public in order to build a better understanding of GRCA programs, services, projects and watershed challenges.

As part of our commitment to open communication, we work to keep stakeholders up-to-date on what's happening at the GRCA through our website, social media channels and a number of publications. In 2016, we conducted a review of three GRCA publications: GRCA Current, Grand Actions and The Grand. The review included a survey, and we thank all those who provided us with their feedback.

We are now expanding the scope of the review and taking a more thorough look at all of our communications practices. In May 2017, the GRCA hired Enterprise Canada to undertake a comprehensive Communications and Marketing Review. The overall goal of the review is to perform an organization-wide audit of current communications and marketing practices for the GRCA as well as the Grand River Conservation Foundation (GRCF).

Research underway

The audit will include a review of both internal and external communications in order to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to develop specific recommendations and action steps to strengthen and enhance the GRCA's communication processes.

The research phase of the project is now underway and questionnaires are being developed to gather input from all stakeholders. Information about the audit and ways to provide your input will be shared on our website, social media channels and in our publications in the coming months.

Any questions about the audit may be directed to Lisa Stocco, GRCA Manager of Communications at lstocco@grandriver.ca.



Photo by Ron Wu-Winter

In 2014 native flowers were seeded in a hydro corridor on GRCA land in Cambridge. The plants are doing very well this year and are attracting butterflies, such as this swallowtail. They are also a source of seeds used by GRCA staff for other plantings.

Continued from page 1

Kitchener, the GRCA is leading a study on the long-term Blair Creek Subwatershed Monitoring Program.

The study will evaluate the monitoring program, which has been underway since 2006, as a case study in cumulative effects monitoring. It will also assess potential impacts of ongoing residential development on the creek's water quality and hydrology.

The study is guided by a technical advisory committee and will be completed at the end of the year.

2017 accessibility award for Apps' Mill

The renovation of Apps' Mill Nature Centre has received a 2017 Accessibility Award from the County of Brant accessibility advisory committee.

The award was presented by Mayor Ron Eddy and Councillor David Miller in recognition and appreciation of the valuable contribution to the community made through construction of a fully accessible addition, renovations and outdoor classroom.

When members of the accessibility advisory committee visited the nature centre, they were very impressed with the changes that allow barrier-free travel.

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

It is a summary of the July, 2017 business conducted by the Grand River Conservation Authority board and committees, as well as other noteworthy happenings and topics of interest.

The Grand River Conservation Authority welcomes distribution, photocopying and forwarding of *GRCA Current*.

Next board meeting:

August 25 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre

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