

GRCA General Membership

Chair	Helen Jowett
Vice-Chair	Chris White
Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon and Southgate and Town of Grand Valley	Guy Gardhouse
Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North	Pat Salter
Township of Centre Wellington	Kirk McElwain
Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch	Chris White
City of Guelph	Bob Bell, Mike Salisbury
Region of Waterloo	Les Armstrong, Elizabeth Clarke, Sue Foxton, Helen Jowett, Geoff Lorentz, Jane Mitchell, Joe Nowak, Wayne Roth, Sandy Shantz, Warren Stauch
Municipality of North Perth and Township of Perth East	George Wicke
Halton Region	Cindy Lunau
City of Hamilton	George Stojanovic
Oxford County	Bruce Banbury
County of Brant	Brian Coleman, Shirley Simons
City of Brantford	Dave Neumann, Vic Prendergast
Haldimand and Norfolk Counties	Bernie Corbett, Fred Morison

Getting set to build a new Guelph Lake Nature Centre

The GRCA is getting ready to build the new Guelph Lake Nature Centre, which it expects to complete by the summer of 2020.

At its November meeting, the GRCA board allocated \$100,000 to this project. These funds will come from the building and mechanical equipment reserve. This brings the funding to \$1.82 million, or more than 80 per cent of the expected construction cost. Staff received board approval to go ahead with construction drawings, detailed designs and specifications and to tender the project.

The Grand River Conservation Foundation will continue raising funds to meet the \$2.5 million goal of the Nature at Your Doorstep Campaign for the Guelph Lake Nature Centre. Funds raised will cover the cost of the facility and the site work. Many community organizations, businesses and individuals have already contributed. Most recently, the Rotary Club of Guelph announced its Centennial Project at Guelph Lake, which includes a trail expansion, an observatory in the park, a planetarium for the nature centre and \$250,000 for construction of the nature centre itself. The club's centennial year is also 2020.

The existing nature centre is a single-family home that was converted into a nature centre in 1980. The site has many accessibility barriers. The new nature centre will be within Guelph Lake Park and will be accessible, providing a place for both students and people visiting the park.

parts of the creek. GRCA staff will monitor the drawdown and will move any fish that become stranded. While the water level is low, large mud flats will be exposed and water will continue to flow through the old creek channel at the bottom of the reservoir.

A similar drawdown was completed in November 2014 for concrete repairs on the structure.

New Secretary Treasurer/Deputy CAO appointed

Karen Armstrong has been appointed as the new Secretary-Treasurer/Deputy CAO, effective January 1, 2018.

Karen has worked at the GRCA for 15 years, currently serving as Manager of Human Resources. She holds a BBA from Wilfrid Laurier University, an MBA from the University of Windsor and a Diploma in Municipal Administration from the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario.

In her new role, Karen will oversee the Administration Division of the GRCA, which includes Communications, Human Resources, Corporate Services and Information Systems and Technology. She will also be the Acting CAO when CAO Joe Farwell is away.

Karen replaces Keith Murch, who will be retiring in February, after 24 years in this role.

Wellesley Dam inspection

The water level in Wellesley Pond will be drawn down for about one week beginning December 4 in order to allow for a dam inspection.

The inspection will be conducted in one day, and then the pond will return to its normal holding level. The dam is owned and operated by the GRCA. Water is being drained slowly over a few days to minimize silt from being washed downstream and to give fish time to move to other

Dike maintenance in New Hamburg

A maintenance project for the New Hamburg Dike will last approximately three weeks, until mid-December.

Trees, shrubs and invasive plant species are being removed from the face of the dike and, where needed, grass is being planted. Much of the area is heavily overgrown with invasive Manitoba maples, many of which are split or fallen, with exposed roots.



This work improves the integrity of the dike and allows for more efficient passage of flood waters along the river, reducing flooding.

The project has been undertaken by the GRCA, which owns and maintains this section of dike along the Nith River behind Sobey's, between Burns and Mill Streets. The maintenance program for this dike is similar to that at other GRCA-owned dikes in Cambridge and Brantford.

The \$50,000 project is being carried out by contractors. Most of the work will be completed in areas with limited access.

Seasonal weather

November brought seasonal temperatures and precipitation, following the warm, wet weather in October.

The first recorded snowfall was during the second week of November. The Luther Marsh climate station recorded the biggest snowfall at six centimetres, but it melted during the warm days that followed.

The large reservoirs are close to the normal operating level for this time of year. During the winter, reservoir water will be discharged into the rivers to help with both wastewater assimilation and healthy river ecology.

Lake Erie continues to be well above the long-term average, so the lower Grand River continues to be susceptible to flooding from lake surge. Three high lake level watch messages were issued for Lake Erie since late October — on October 24, 30 and November 1.

A big thanks to Dufferin

Dufferin County will contribute to the Rural Water Quality Program (RWQP) each year, starting with \$20,000 this year.

The program provides funding to Dufferin County landowners who are completing projects that improve water quality. Through the program, landowners in Dufferin have received \$417,000 since 2002 for 174 projects.

For the first years of this program, grants came from outside funding partners. Later, the Upper Grand Restoration Fund allowed the program to continue. In 2012, Dufferin provided a one-time \$50,000 grant. Now it is making a long-term commitment.



GRCA Forester Ron Wu-Winter and Forestry Specialist Meghan Clay check the work at Shade's Mills Park where rows of trees were removed to improve forest health.

The Grand River RWQP is provided across the watershed by GRCA staff, thanks to funding contributions from municipalities and many partners. Since 1998, nearly 6,000 voluntary projects have been completed to help to improve river health and reduce the Grand River's impact on Lake Erie.

Forestry work at Puslinch and Starkey

Puslinch Tract in Cambridge is closed to visitors on December 5 and December 6 and Starkey Hill in Puslinch is closed on December 7 and December 8 for hazard tree removal.

GRCA forestry crews are working with a contractor to remove hazard trees near trails. They appreciate the co-operation of visitors to GRCA properties and ask them to obey signs, fencing and yellow and black warning tape wherever they see these on GRCA property.

Forest improvement at Shade's Mills

Forest improvements in the conifer plantations at Shade's Mill Park took several weeks this fall.

Crews thinned the plantations east of the reservoir and trails were closed on weekdays while work was underway. A contractor

harvested rows, groups and selected individual trees which had been marked for removal. This improves forest health and creates varied habitats. By removing rows of trees, damage to the forest was minimized.

It is part of the GRCA's long-term forest management program to convert plantations to more natural forests. Thinning was scheduled to avoid nesting season.

The contractor removed most of the felled trees, but some branches and other small pieces were left on the ground to decompose

This issue of *GRCA Current* was published in December 2017.

It is a summary of the November, 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 and forwarding of *GRCA Current*.

Next board meeting:
December 15 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre

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