

GRAND ACTIONS

THE GRAND STRATEGY NEWSLETTER

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Grand River
Conservation
Authority



The Grand:
A Canadian
Heritage River

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Students take part in a tree-planting program at the McNeil Consumer Healthcare property as part of the Trees For Guelph Program.



Breaking new ground

Guelph tree project improves environment

By Martin Neumann
Grand River Conservation Authority

A groundbreaking tree-planting program in Guelph offers a glimpse into the future by showing the role corporations can play in meeting the nation's environmental goals.

McNeil Consumer Healthcare of Guelph, which makes Tylenol, has become one of the first "carbon neutral" facilities in Canada. That means the company took all feasible measures to reduce carbon emissions, and then committed to offsetting any remaining carbon emissions by planting as many trees as required to absorb the equivalent amount of carbon.

Carbon dioxide is a primary greenhouse gas. Surpluses of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere contribute to global climate change and local air quality impairment. Trees absorb, or sequester,

carbon in their woody parts as they grow. Planting more trees counteracts atmospheric carbon dioxide surpluses and global climate change.

The Canadian government has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet the goals set in the Kyoto accord.

In its efforts to become "carbon neutral" and to obtain ISO 14001 certification, McNeil has played a leading role in Trees for Guelph, a community-based partnership involving the City of Guelph, University of Guelph, the Grand River Conservation Authority, local industries and schools.

Since it was founded in 1990, Trees for Guelph has co-ordinated the planting of more than 70,000 trees by students and volunteers in and near Guelph, to improve the urban forest and the local environment. About 10 per cent of all Guelph residents have pitched in over the years,



a level of participation much appreciated by organizers. In many cases, the work was done by students as part of a hands-on environmental learning programs

In 2000, McNeil Consumer Healthcare struck a partnership with Trees for Guelph to plant 4,800 trees a year, to off-set the remaining carbon emissions from its factory.

A "carbon calculator" was used to determine how many trees needed to be planted to reach carbon neutrality for the factory, and another was created to help employees understand their carbon responsibilities and off-setting options.

Carbon calculator

These carbon calculators were devised with input from experts in Canada and the U.S. and are available from McNeil Consumer Healthcare, at 519-836-6500. Questions about planting trees to off-set carbon emissions should be directed to Jason Culp, Trees for Guelph Coordinator, at 519-621-2763, Ext. 259.

Now that McNeil has shown the way, a program is in place to work with other companies in the Guelph area.

The Ontario government's Trillium Foundation has provided a \$50,000 grant to Trees for Guelph to expand the program in the Guelph area. The money pays for a co-ordinator to oversee tree-planting programs and to line up other companies interested in participating. The GRCA is housing the co-ordinator and providing support to the program.

Already, two of Guelph's other major employers – Linamar Corp. and W.C. Wood Co., – have expressed interest in exploring the possibilities of participating in a similar program.

If the program works in Guelph, it could become a model for other communities in the Grand River watershed as other companies look for ways to help Canada cope with greenhouse gases.

Urban pesticides in regional watersheds

By David Roewade
Health Promotion Officer
Region of Waterloo Public Health

As spring is upon us, so is the list of outdoor tasks around the house that many of us will be tackling over the coming weeks. Many of these tasks will involve gardening and landscaping which, for some, may also include the non-essential use of pesticides on their lawns.

While the political debate over the regulation of pesticides continues in dozens of Canadian municipalities, there is growing certainty that common lawn care pesticides are reaching our waterways. Several studies over the past 20 years have demonstrated that a variety of pesticides are being detected in watersheds surrounding urban areas. For example, pesticides such as 2-4-D, atrazine, cyanazine and dicamba have been found in rivers of southwestern Ontario.

These studies have taken into account runoff of pesticides from farms in order to focus on commonly used lawn care applications. Samples in a Toronto study, conducted by Environment Canada, were taken at the river mouth as well as upstream and downstream locations to identify variances of inputs from golf courses and agriculture, as well as those coming from residential sources. Samples in the Don and Humber rivers were also balanced over wet and dry days to factor in the effect of precipita-

tion on runoff. The study conducted in Hamilton, Burlington and Guelph streams indicated residential-use pesticides in surface waters during rainfalls after their application to urban lawns.

Urbanization of land around watersheds has provided for increased potential of residential pesticides runoff via stormwater drainage systems. With rapid population growth expected to continue in the Region of Waterloo and surrounding areas, the quantities of non-essential pesticides detected in local rivers may also increase. In 2000, the City of Waterloo conducted a survey on residential use of pesticides. Approximately 70 per cent of those polled indicated that they used a pesticide product around their home.

While residential applications usually are much smaller in volume than in agricultural settings, the non-essential use of these compounds is still significant. Licensed applicators applied 1.3 million kilograms of pesticides to lawns in Ontario during 1993, accounting for 25 per cent of the agricultural total, not including applications made by homeowners themselves. However, urban use of some pesticide compounds associated with turf care was higher than agricultural use of the same compounds.

Urge reduction

Many in the health field argue for a reduction, or even elimination, of the non-essential use of pesticides.

Some pesticides have been associated with a wide range of human health effects such as dermatitis, exacerbation of cardio-respiratory illnesses and even cancer, in addition to contamination of wildlife communities within watersheds.

Health Canada's Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is reevaluating several pesticides that were registered prior to 1984 to factor in more modern scientific understanding of their health impacts. The PMRA is also updating their risk assessment process to account for aggregate exposures, cumulative effects and spe-

cific risks associated with pediatric exposures.

Locally, a working group has been established with representatives from the Region of Waterloo, all seven area municipalities, and local stakeholders to develop strategies and the framework for a region-wide education plan and a possible bylaw to reduce the non-essential use of pesticides.

Details of this program can be obtained from the Region of Waterloo Public Health at (519) 883-2008. The Elora Centre for Environmental Excellence provides a website promoting the use of alternatives to residential applications of pesticides www.ecee.on.ca/pesticide_free.htm.

In addition, the retail sector is improving gardening options. Last year Loblaws grocery stores (including the company's Zehrs outlets) announced that its 400-plus garden centres across Canada will be carrying their Green line of garden and lawn care products exclusively starting this year. A local group is also offering workshops and support for achieving healthy landscaping and sustainable gardening practices through a Peer Gardening program. Those interested in the program should contact Susan Koswan at (519) 578-8508 or dandelion@gto.net.

Given the fact that we all play a role in protecting our regional water resources, residents and other property owners should consider reducing their use of non-essential pesticides. Drinking water quality, human health and protection of wildlife communities along the Grand River watershed are all compelling reasons for considering alternative lawn-care practices.

David Roewade is a Health Promotion Officer for the Region of Waterloo Public Health department. Mr. Roewade's work primarily focuses on researching the health effects of environmental hazards and public education regarding health protection and promotion. He may be contacted at ravid@region.waterloo.on.ca.



Marilyn Murray, chair of The Living Classroom-Campaign for Outdoor Education uses a dip net to catch a \$250,000 campaign pledge from Brian Tiffin, president of SC Johnson and Son Ltd. of Brantford, at the campaign launch.

Foundation launches \$2.2 million campaign for outdoor education

The Grand River Conservation Foundation has launched an ambitious \$2.2 million fund-raising campaign to support Outdoor Education programs for the next five years.

The official launch of *The Living Classroom - Campaign for Outdoor Education* took place Tuesday, April 8 at the GRCA headquarters in Cambridge.

Tom Land, chairman of the Foundation, said the goal of the campaign is to support Outdoor Education programs for more than 30,000 public, Catholic and private school students each year – a total of 150,000 nature centre visits over the next five years. The children come from schools throughout the Grand River watershed, which stretches from Dundalk in the north to Port Maitland on Lake Erie in the south.

The Foundation, which has a 25-year history of supporting Outdoor Education, stepped forward when some school boards, faced with their own budget challenges, contemplated cutting back or eliminating their Outdoor Education programs.

"Our Foundation is saying to our community we believe that tomorrow's healthy environment depends on the connections our children make with nature...today," said Land.

The *Living Classroom-Campaign for Outdoor Education* has already reached 40 per cent of its target with more than \$900,000 committed to date.

That includes two lead contributions of \$250,000 each, said Campaign Chair Marilyn Murray. In addition, more than 160 other individuals, corporations, service clubs, foundations and other

organizations have made pledges to the campaign, she added.

One of the \$250,000 donations was made by SC Johnson and Son Ltd. of Brantford, which has a strong record of contributing to environmental projects.

Brian Tuffin, president of Johnson, said "the environment is of tremendous importance to the Johnson family and this company." He noted that Fortune magazine has described Samuel Curtis Johnson, the company's chairman emeritus, as "corporate America's leading environmentalist."

"Our sustainability is truly dependent on what actions we take today to preserve and educate people on the environment," said Tuffin. "The Living Classroom is set to do just that. Ensuring environmental education for our children creates life-long behaviour that will promote sustainability."

The other \$250,000 donation was from the Musagetes Fund of the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation.

'A space for dreaming'

Louise MacCallum and Michael Barnstijn, donors to the KWCF, said: "Our Musagetes Fund, which is part of the Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation, provides support to arts and cultural organizations throughout Waterloo

Region. The natural environment is an important part of our culture, providing us with places to play in and with spaces to dream in. We believe that every child should experience the outdoors as a part of their education, so that they may better appreciate the world around them."

Murray pointed out that the success of the campaign so far is a strong indication that "it is a project with the right components."

"It's about our environment, right here in the Grand River valley. It's about young people, who will be the next



A student studies a crayfish at a GRCA nature centre.

stewards of our natural resources," said Murray. "It's about school administrators and classroom teachers, who understand the importance of environmental education and who endorse our initiative. It's about dedicated nature centre staff who share their knowledge and enthusiasm with eager young students."

But without supporters "the project would simply be a good idea," said Murray.

The children take part in Outdoor Education programs at nature centres, including five operated by the GRCA in Waterloo,

Guelph, Cambridge, Brantford and Cayuga. Some take part in programs at select GRCA conservation areas.

The Waterloo Region District School Board also has three nature centres at Heidelberg, Blair and Wrigley.

The programs conform to the Ontario elementary school curriculum and are tied directly to classroom work.

The work of the nature centres was praised by the director of one of the six school boards which will benefit from The Living Classroom campaign.

Don Drone, director of education for

the Wellington Catholic District School Board said the GRCA's Outdoor Education program is "simply outstanding."

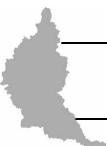
"In our focus on student achievement and in our belief that effective education is sometimes delivered beyond our buildings, we have been very pleased with the program effectiveness of the Guelph Lake Nature Centre, operated by the GRCA," said Drone.

Campaign Chair Marilyn Murray has a long association with the Foundation and other community and charitable organizations. She and her husband Ken, who live in Puslinch Township, were recently presented the Philanthropists of the Year Award by the Waterloo-Wellington Fund Raising Executives.

John Pollock, of Cambridge, is the Honorary Campaign Chair. He is the president and chief executive officer of Electrohome Ltd. in Kitchener and also involved in a wide variety of community and charitable groups.

Other campaign leaders are: Vyrt Sisson, chair of the Brant-Brantford committee; Thomas Pick and Lloyd Gower, co-chairs of the Waterloo Region committee; and Allan Holmes, chair of the Guelph-Wellington committee.

THE *Living Classroom* CAMPAIGN FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION



MILESTONES

Milestones are progress or products of *The Grand Strategy* Joint Work Plan.

GRCA approves new policy to protect wetlands

On March 28 a wetlands policy was approved by the GRCA general membership. It outlines broad management principles, goals, objectives and policies that will guide GRCA programs and provides a proposed framework for implementation.

The policy encourages a stronger level of protection for non-provincially significant wetlands and unevaluated wetlands in the Grand River watershed and to complement the current Provincial Policy Statement regarding Provincially Significant Wetlands.

The GRCA, like other conservation authorities, has legal responsibility for implementing the provincial policies and regulations regarding wetlands.

This is carried out through its regulatory role, its advisory function to municipalities and other agencies, as well as its own programs, such as land acquisition and land stewardship.

The policy was developed through an extensive consultation process with watershed municipalities, community groups and the development industry.

As a result, most watershed municipalities have supported the policy and have indicated that they will develop a similar approach to all wetlands in their Official Plans, at next revision.

The GRCA will continue to work with watershed municipalities and others to develop implementation guidelines in support of the policy.

A copy of the GRCA Wetlands Policy and supporting materials can be downloaded from the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca

Public input sought on Heritage River status update

In 1987, the Grand River Conservation Authority spearheaded a participatory process to have the Grand River and its major tributaries declared a Canadian Heritage River.

This coveted status was achieved in 1994, based on the outstanding human heritage features and values and the excellence of river-related recreation opportunities found within the Grand River watershed.

The management plan that was tabled with the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board as part of the requirement for the designation was called *The Grand Strategy*. This document provided a framework for collective actions that strengthen the knowledge, stewardship and enjoyment of the heritage and recreational resources of the Grand River watershed.

Since 1994, greater awareness of the river's outstanding values has prompted residents to explore and enjoy its many natural and cultural resources, raised the level of concern for the way it is treated, and resulted in many individual, collaborative, and community-based efforts.

As part of the requirement for maintaining the Canadian Heritage River status, a 10-year monitoring report must be tabled with the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board. The report for the Grand River and its major tributaries is due to be tabled in June 2004. The GRCA is initiating another participatory process to develop this plan.

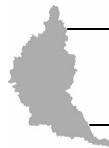
One of the requirements of the 10-Year Monitoring Report is to assess the status of the features and values for which the Grand River and its major tributaries were declared a Heritage River and to identify our successes and management challenges.

The GRCA will be hosting a series of public forums to get your input regarding the actions that still need to be taken

to ensure that the important values and features which support the designation are maintained or enhanced. These forums are tentatively scheduled for June in Grand Valley, Centre Wellington, Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge, Brantford, Six Nations and Haldimand County. More information will be provided in the next issue of *Grand Actions*.

We also encourage you to participate by completing a brief questionnaire that can be downloaded from the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca.

The questionnaire is also available in hard copy by contacting Barbara Veale at (591) 621-2763 or bveale@grandriver.ca



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Festival supports Puslinch Lake

The two-day Lakealive festival at Puslinch Lake will give visitors a chance to learn more about Canada's largest kettle lake, while taking in water shows, musical acts and plenty of family entertainment.

The event, which is being billed as "a



Natalie McMaster is one of the performers scheduled to play at the Lakealive Festival at Puslinch Lake in June.

weekend festival of perpetual motion" is scheduled for June 21-22 and the proceeds will be used to continue the restoration of the lake. The Puslinch Lake Conservation Association (PLCA) has been working towards the restoration of Puslinch Lake for six years.

Entertainers include national and international stars such Blue Rodeo, Randy Bachman, Natalie McMaster, Leahy, Doc Walker, and Danny Michel.

Local entertainers include The Kramdens, Richard Samuel and James Anthony.

In addition, there will be boat tours, beer gardens, artisans' displays, children's events, an auction sale and water-ski shows.

Working in concert with the Grand River Conservation Authority, and other provincial ministries, the PLCA developed a restoration plan to dredge the lake several years ago. A dredge was purchased and a pilot project commenced in 1999. Several settling ponds were created, but the dredge produced more sediment than they could hold, and the PLCA did not have the funds to develop alternate solutions. Since then, an adaptive management plan, business plan, several applications for grants, and extensive research has been completed.

Sue Miller, a consultant of Miller Environmental Consultants, was hired by the PLCA to provide the expertise in project management, fund-raising, government ministry applications, and leadership that this multi-million dollar project needs.

When the restoration project is complete, Puslinch Lake will be returned to its natural state, as it was approximately 500 years ago. New fish spawning beds, native flora and fauna can eventually be re-introduced by the PLCA, and hopefully that will encourage other wildlife to return to the lake. Research and future accomplishments at Puslinch Lake may lay the groundwork for saving other kettle lakes.

Lakealive hopes to generate enough money for the PLCA to match dollars



available through government grants. Donna McKenna and Dave Taliano, chairs of Lakealive, are looking to the community for support. They are currently seeking sponsors to help launch the festival. Donations in kind and volunteers for both days are welcome.

If you need more information on how you can help, please go to www.lakealive.ca or oldmarina@aol.com or phone 658-1119 or 658-0367.

Tickets are on sale now. Advance price for the day is \$49 or \$86 for the whole weekend. At the door, the price increases to \$55 and \$95 respectively. Kids seven to 12 are \$11 and under the age of seven are free.

Trails workshop set for May 23

If you have an interest in planning, building, promoting or using local and regional trails, you will want to attend a trails workshop on Friday, May 23 at the GRCA Administration Office in Cambridge. The theme is "Trail Links for Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin."

The workshop will bring together trail groups, politicians, municipal and recreation planners, municipal engineers, healthy communities/animations, health care professionals and media to:

- explore the benefits, opportunities and challenges of developing an integrated land and water trail network within the Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin area.

- identify various ways to promote the benefits of land and water trails for wellness and quality of life.

- jointly develop an action plan for an integrated land and water trail network within the Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin area, interconnected to a broader network of trails in the Grand River watershed.

- provide opportunities for discovery, networking, exchange of success stories and debate regarding recreational trails in the Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin area.

The workshop is being hosted by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit, Waterloo Region-Wellington-Dufferin District Health Council, Region of Waterloo Public Health, Community Heart Health Network, Guelph Hiking Trail Club, City of Guelph, Cambridge Trails Advisory Committee, Wellington County Stewardship Council, and Grand River Conservation Authority.

The cost is \$40 (including lunch). Contact Julie Gillespie, Waterloo Region-Wellington-Dufferin District Health Council at (519) 836-7602 ext. 222 or 1-888-543-2266. Fax: (519) 836-7177. E-mail: jgillespie@wrwddhc.on.ca The number of participants is limited to 100 and registrations will be accepted until May 16.





LOOK WHO'S TAKING ACTION

Canoeists, firefighters use mock rescue as learning experience

By Ross Anderson
Ancient Mariners Canoe Club

The Ancient Mariners Canoe Club makes as many as 30 day trips on the Grand River and its tributaries between April and October each year.

Sometimes the fleet includes 20 canoes and 40 canoeists. As with any active outdoor sport, a certain number of risks are involved: cold water, hidden rocks, fallen trees, slippery banks. These risks have led to occasional incidents, but never, thanks to a regular program of training and careful planning, to a situation requiring outside assistance.

As part of the club's safety procedures, one canoe on every trip carries a member of the safety committee, a map of the area, a first aid kit and a cell phone. Since the summer of 2002 the safety canoe also carries a Global Positioning System (GPS) personal navigator.

After contacting the Cambridge Fire Department for advice, we learned that they, along with other jurisdictions in the Grand River watershed were in the process of fine tuning emergency response, also using a GPS system. It was already working on Highway 401 and the fire department was looking for an opportunity to test it on the river.



A Cambridge firefighter rappels down a riverside cliff during a mock rescue staged by the fire department and the Ancient Mariners Canoe Club.

The GRCA was informed and agreed to the project. Dan Oldride, communications officer for the Cambridge Fire Department worked with a group of Ancient Mariners – Don Taylor, Ross Anderson and safety committee chair Pat Mighton – to put together an action plan for a trial rescue.

Pat Mighton, chairperson for the Ancient Mariners' safety committee, an action plan for a trail rescue was prepared.

The trial involved four canoes, departing from Blair following the rules of a regular club outing. At a spot below the bluffs a canoeist went ashore to play the role of a person injured in a fall and unable to proceed. The trip leader, using the personal navigator and the cell

phone, identified the location and the emergency to a telephone dispatcher.

The caller remained in contact and responded to orders from the firefighters who approached the site by truck, from the road above and by airboat from the river.

Two firefighters rappelled down the cliff with rescue gear as the boat neared the shore. The "victim" was secured comfortably to a Stokes stretcher, lowered over the rocky shore to the airboat and delivered safely to the ambulance stationed at River Bluffs Park.

The "victim" recovered in record time and the training event was judged a success. The Ancient Mariners plan to have all their grandchildren grow up to be firefighters.

Region awarded for source protection

The Region of Waterloo is the recipient of the Exemplary Source Water Protection award for its Water Resources Protection Strategy. The region is the only Canadian organization among the three winners.

"Ground water protection has been very high in our priorities since we are so dependent on it and we know how easily it can be lost, said Ken Seiling, Regional Chair.

"We took the lead early and have been pleased to share the work we do with others. We know how important groundwater protection is to the health of our community and our environ-

ment."

The region's strategy, first implemented in 1994, is a comprehensive program designed to preserve and improve the quality of water resources and municipal drinking water supplies throughout the region.

The goal of the strategy is to minimize the impact to water resources from past and present land uses and to reduce the risk of impact from future land uses.

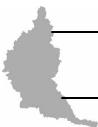
"The timing of this award couldn't be better considering the current efforts of the Ministry of Environment to develop a source protection framework to implement recommendations arising from the Walkerton Inquiry," said Eric Hodgins, regional manager of water resources protection.

The award recognizes the region's work to implement the main components of the strategy: land-use planning policies for new non-residential development; spill prevention and water quality improvement, incentives for farmers and businesses, and initiatives to reduce the impacts of road salt.

This year the water resources protection group will complete a second, ten-year implementation plan that will guide the strategy through its second decade.

The award, presented by the American Water Works Association for a medium-sized water system, recognizes organizations in North America that have developed and are implementing exemplary source water protection programs.

The Grand Strategy Calendar



Parks Research Forum of Ontario, May 8-10. A two-day conference on watershed planning, preservation of natural areas and conservation. London, Ont. at the University of Western Ontario. For information is available at the PRFO web site at www.prfo.ca

For the Love of Mom, Sunday, May 11 Apps' Mill Nature Centre, Brantford. Bring mom out for a relaxing guided hike through Apps' Mill Conservation Area. Our staff will point out the beautiful wildflowers that decorate our forest. Cost: \$5 per person. Pre-registration required. For more information please contact staff at Apps' Mill Nature Centre (519) 752-0655.

Walking Tour: The Slopes of the Speed, Guelph. Sunday, May 11. This tour explores the slopes of the Speed River between Norwich and Macdonnel Streets, where many of Guelph's largest and most distinguished historic homes are located. Tour begins at the Guelph Public Library, 100 Norfolk Street (at Paisley Street). 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Fee: \$2. Sponsored by the Guelph Arts Council

Trails Workshop: Trail Links for Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin. May 23. A meeting for trail groups, politicians, municipal staff and health promoters to explore the opportunities for trail development in the watershed. To be held at the GRCA office, 400 Clyde Rd., Cambridge. For information contact Julie Gillespie at (519) 836-7602, Ext. 222. E-mail jgillespie@wrwddhc.on.ca.

Children's Groundwater Festival - Monday, May 26 through Friday, May 30 Doon Heritage Crossroads is pleased to host the 8th Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival. This fun and creative week-long event features a variety of interactive activities, demonstrations and displays which challenge people of all ages to consider the source and importance of water to themselves, the environment and society. Over 4,000 school children will take part in the week long Festival. 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Regular Admission for the general public. Special Education rates apply for education groups.

About this newsletter

This newsletter is produced as a communications tool by the Grand River Conservation Authority on behalf of the partners in The Grand Strategy. This newsletter can be seen on the Internet at www.grandriver.ca

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Newsletter submissions must be made by the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be subject to editing for length or style. Tax deductible donations and sponsorships toward the cost of producing this newsletter are always welcome.

Publications Mail

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