

# GRAND ACTIONS

THE GRAND STRATEGY NEWSLETTER

Volume 9, Number 2 - April 2004



Grand River  
Conservation  
Authority



The Grand:  
A Canadian  
Heritage River

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*Cover photo: Members of the Puslinch Lake Conservation Association include Dr. Hank Nykamp (left), Alan Tschanz and King Garrett.*



## Conservation winners

### Groups help to improve Grand River watershed

Each year the Grand River Conservation Authority recognizes the efforts of individuals and groups by presenting Watershed Awards for outstanding examples of conservation and environmental work.

For 2003, the winners of the Watershed Awards were the Puslinch Lake Conservation Association, Suncor Energy Products Inc. the Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival, the Walter Bean Grand River Community Trails Foundation, Walter Martin and Ontario Pork

They were honored at a special ceremony held in November. As part of the event, a slide show detailing the accomplishments of each winner,

was presented.

This article, adapted from the script for the show, highlights three award winners. An article about the other three appeared in the February issue of Grand Actions.

### Puslinch Lake Conservation Association

The Puslinch Lake Conservation Association is working to preserve and maintain its lake, located in Puslinch Township, just east of Cambridge.

The residents of Puslinch Lake are very fond of their beautiful lake. But there's some troubled

water under its shining surface.

Dr. Hank Nykamp is the chair of the association, and he and some other strong supporters on the Puslinch Lake Conservation Association are helping to preserve it.

What are the problems? Silt continues to deposit on the lake bottom and threatens the long term health of the lake. The average depth of the lake is now 10 feet, and without help it will continue to become shallower.

Another problem is the low oxygen levels in the water. Fish kills have been occurring.

What are the solutions? Residents are upgrading their sewage systems and reducing the use of fertilizers on their lawns.

For a while, the association dredged the lake and placed the silt in pits. The problem with the pits was that they didn't dry out and under the dry surface they stayed deceptively wet and dangerous. The silt in these pits is now being spread out to dry.

The association now has a pilot project under way to dredge the silt out of the lake and pump it to shore through a long pipe. The pipe delivers it to large porous geotex bags.

This delivery system gradually fills the bags with silt and water from the lake. The bags are porous enough to slowly release the water back into the lake. Then the tubes allow the silt to dry to an acceptable level.

The association intends to sell the peaty mix left behind to businesses who have expressed interest in purchasing it as topsoil.

Dr. Nykamp discovered this process on a U.S. website on the internet. It's the first time it is being tried in Ontario and one of the first times in Canada.

All of this work requires fundraising.

The Puslinch Lake Conservation Association's most successful fundraiser was the Lake Alive music festival in June. It drew large crowds from Puslinch Lake and other nearby communities.

For many years Puslinch Lake has had a strong and closely knit community along its shores.

In many ways, Puslinch Lake feels like one of those friendly lakes up north in cottage country.

It's also special in another way. It's the largest kettle lake in North America.

Puslinch Lake has a few problems, but it has a broad-based conservation association that has had one strong chairman after another and help from a thriving community living around the lake.

With all this help, the largest kettle lake in North America is pretty certain to survive.

## Suncor Energy Products Inc.

**S**uncor has been shedding some light on how industry can help to preserve our environment.

John Miltenburg is Suncor's retail territory manager for this area of Ontario.

He's proud of Suncor's record, helping to keep our air and water clean, especially on Earth Day.

Suncor has been funding Earth Day



*John Miltenburg of Suncor*

tree planting since 1995.

In addition to plantings in Kitchener-Waterloo, Suncor funds trees for Earth Day in communities such as Stratford, Hamilton, Newmarket, Windsor and Ottawa.

Locally the plantings involve school children. The work is so popular that there is always a waiting list of schools hoping to take part.

The results are impressive so far. For example, Earth Day trees planted in the Schneider Creek watershed are slowing runoff into the creek.

Many partners support Suncor's Earth Day tree planting. Miltenburg had especially warm words of praise for the GRCA's strong support over the years.

Suncor is involved in a few more environmentally friendly activities. They've developed low sulfur gas.

Their 10 per cent ethanol gas is the only fuel in the country to receive Environment Canada's Environmental Choice seal of approval.

Their car washes are ecologically sound, using biodegradable soap and on-site reclamation systems

## Children's Groundwater Festival

**I**n the Grand River watershed, our children and our groundwater are so important.

The good news is that the Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival is putting one in touch with the other.

The five-day festival has been held every year at Doon Heritage Crossroads in Waterloo Region since 1996.

The Festival's enthusiastic coordinator is Susan Reid.

She organizes the 500 volunteers who help 4,000 school children learn about ground water and surface water over the course of one week each year.

So far, 32,000 children from all four school boards in Waterloo and Wellington have learned about the

waters of life.

The week-long programs are exhaustive. Children learn about the importance of surface water, aquatic life, the pipelines that deliver our water, storm drains and how they function and even what happens when we flush our toilets.

They also play the role of flowing water and discover what contaminants it may pick up along the way.

They learn about how groundwater is pumped out of the ground for our use, how it percolates through different types of soil, and how people used to dows for groundwater.

They also learn about the heritage of our water, how it used to be carried by hand by the pioneers, how our ancestors did their laundry and other chores by hand and how native people used water in their lives.

The children even divide into teams and compete in a game called Dripial Pursuit.

Our children reflect on these lessons at Doon, along the banks of Schneider Creek at the Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival.

In the Grand River watershed, children and groundwater go together like our children and our future.



*Susan Reid of the Children's Groundwater Festival*



*Bruce Hindley stands beside one of the white pine trees at the site of the first private-land tree planting.*

## Hindleys helped make history with first tree planting in 1954

By Michael Bradley  
Forestry Operations, GRCA

**E**ramosa Township landowner Bruce Hindley has always thought the 14 acres of evergreen forest on his farm were special.

After all, it was planted under the guidance of his father Earle, as a long-term commitment to land that had been owned by the Hindley family since 1874.

But Bruce didn't realize how special the forest was until recently, when staff from the Grand River Conservation Authority informed him that the planting of this forest in 1954 was the authority's first private land tree planting project. The GRCA is celebrating 50 years of private-land tree planting this year.

In fact, according to Mac Coutts, former GRCA general manager, the tree planting on the Hindley farm was probably the first of its kind in the province. Mr. Coutts recalled that the Grand Valley

Conservation Authority (the predecessor of the GRCA) provided the planting services free of charge, and that the Ministry of Natural Resources provided the trees, also free of charge.

To Bruce Hindley, however, the planting is a symbol of his family's love of trees and forestry. At 81, Bruce still

works regularly in the forested areas on his farm, thinning trees out for timber or firewood.

"Wherever Hindley's have lived, there have always been trees planted," said Bruce's wife Beth.

Bruce and Beth Hindley represent the third generation of Hindleys to live on the farm, located near the village of Oustic in Guelph-Eramosa Township. Bruce's father Earle, born in 1890, lived on the farm for his entire 94-year life.



Earle loved trees and forestry was an important part of life on the Hindley farm. Planting the 14 acres of land was Earle's idea, and he was always pleased with the success of the planting.

Bruce remembers the 1953 tree planting well. The land was gravelly with steep hills, hardly suitable for agricultural use. "You couldn't work this land," Bruce recalled.

About 12,000 trees were planted over three days, a mixture of white pine, Scots pine, and white spruce. Conservation Authority staff brought a crawler that towed a two-person tree-planting machine. Bruce helped with the planting and remembers riding on the planting machine.

"The hills were so steep, your guys didn't want to take the crawler on them," Bruce recalled with a smile. Bruce's father eventually used his own tractor to pull the planter up and down the hillsides. "He was used to the hills," said Bruce.

The planting has been very successful, with many of the white pine today surpassing 14 inches in trunk diameter.

"The spruce didn't do well," said Bruce, noting that the original intention of his father had been to thin out some



Earl Hindley



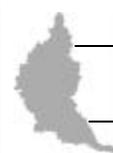
Bob Scott (right), coordinator for the Exceptional Waters program for the part of the Grand River between Paris and Brantford, talks to a conference delegate.

of the Scots pine for Christmas trees. The insect-prone Scots pine were often damaged and without needles by the time they were ready to be cut. Some of the Scots pine remain, but are dwarfed by the more vigorous white pines.

In 1957 the Hindley farm was the site of a province-wide forestry workshop, where forestry experts collected to discuss current forestry issues. The planting was no doubt a topic of the workshop.

The planting on the Hindley farm was the pioneer project of what would become one of the GRCA's longest running and most successful programs. The GRCA has since planted millions of trees in cooperation with private landowners. The success of Earle Hindley's planting is paralleled by the success of the GRCA program, which has played an important role in increasing forest cover in the Grand River Watershed.

The foresight of Earle and the continuing stewardship of his family on this land is a testament to the role that rural landowners have played in improving the environment of the Grand River Watershed over the past 50 years.



## MILESTONES

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

### Heritage Workshop provides insight into industrial history

Each year the Grand River Conservation Authority and its partners on the Grand Strategy Heritage Working Group have hosted a successful heritage workshop for Grand River watershed residents. Through these workshops, residents learn more about the river's fascinating history.

The Seventh Annual Heritage Day Workshop and Celebration attracted 225 people to hear presentations, listen to music and see exhibits on the theme "Grand Legacies: Boom, Bust and Beyond." Speakers provided insights and highlights about the area's industrial past and the role it played in shaping settlement within the Grand River watershed.

The workshop was held on Feb. 16, Heritage Day, at the Paris Fairgrounds.

The event commenced with great aplomb when David McKee, Brantford town crier, launched the event in fine form.

Barbara Veale, from the Grand River Conservation Authority provided an overview of the exciting successes that have transpired since the Grand and its major tributaries were declared Canadian Heritage Rivers in 1994. The designation has motivated watershed residents to collectively undertake actions and activities to strengthen heritage awareness and appreciation and to improve the overall health of the watershed's natural resources.

Dr. Peter Farrugia provided a history of the farm equipment industry in the



Peter Farrugia

City of Brantford with an emphasis on the Cockshutt family and their central role in community life.

Bruce Hill spoke about the Grand River as a link for transportation, commerce, and economic development. The morning session was rounded out with Ian Bell performing entertaining songs about the Grand River from yesteryears.

Participants had an opportunity to exchange information and ideas over lunch. A number of displays featuring the heritage of Brantford and the County of Brant were available for viewing.

The afternoon session was opened in style by town crier, Larry Davis from the County of Brant.

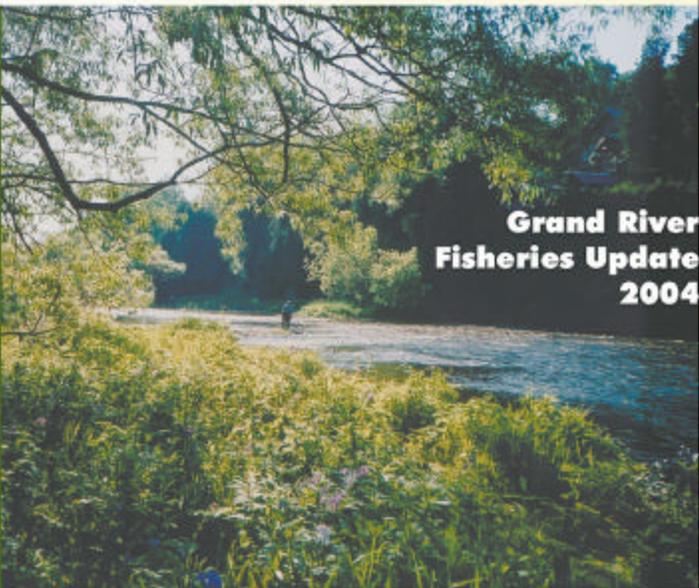
Dr. Grant Head outlined some of the history associated with the old mills on the Grand River, followed by Jean Farquharson who provided a fascinating account of the development of gypsum mines along the Southern Grand. Susan Sager of Brantford Tourism stressed the value and importance of our Grand heritage in attracting visitors and newcomers to the area.

Next year's event is tentatively set for Feb. 21, 2005.

Grand River Fisheries Management Plan Implementation Committee Newsletter

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New Trout Fishing Opportunity on the Conestogo River



The existing brown trout fishery on the main stem of the Grand before the Sand Dam has a similar temperature regime to this. This initial stocking was just the start of a five year MNR plan to add brown trout to the species mix on the Conestogo.

Fish plan success outlined in report

The Grand River watershed has a growing reputation as a great place for sport fishing, and the story of that growth is told in a new report.

The 2004 Grand River Fisheries Update reports on the significant progress made in all parts of the watershed in recent years, from brown trout stocking along the Conestogo River to the effort by volunteers to improve walleye stocks in the Grand near Dunnville.

The eight-page, tabloid newspaper, also reports on the efforts to protect rural water quality, rehabilitate coldwater streams and naturalize riverbanks – all actions that lead to better water quality and better fishing. It contains maps of several parts of the Grand system showing new and improved access points.

The report is a project of the Grand River Fisheries Management Plan Implementation Committee, which represents anglers, government agencies and environmental groups from across the watershed. Stories were provided by the members of the committee.

The newsletter reports on the

progress in implementing the Fisheries Management Plan, which was approved in 1998 after several years of work by representatives of the GRCA, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and 14 other groups, including many community-based environmental and angling organizations.

The fisheries plan outlined 42 “best bets,” which were projects that could be implemented over time to improve the fishery and the natural habitat.

One of the most recent projects was the stocking of brown trout in the Conestogo River downstream of the Conestogo Dam and reservoir. The cool water coming out of the reservoir creates a habitat suitable for brown trout, a favorite of anglers. The water in this stretch of the Conestogo is clean enough to support the trout because of the investment in Rural Water Quality Program projects in the area.

Other projects described in the new report include:

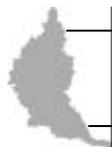
- The Exceptional Waters Program for the Grand River between Paris and Brantford. This stretch of the river has been judged an exceptional water because of its historic, natural and recreational characteristics. A community-

based committee is developing an access and signage program, as well as a report on the state of the resource.

- Efforts to clean up several creeks, including Mill Creek near Cambridge and D'Aubigny Creek in Brantford. School groups, stewardship ranger crews, service clubs, businesses and community groups have worked to clear debris, plant trees and rehabilitate the natural habitat.

- Research on the Southern Grand to learn more about the movements and breeding pattern of walleye, a prized sport fish that inhabits both the Grand and Lake Erie. Researchers hope to use the fish studies to gain a better understanding of the connection between the river and lake ecosystems.

About 25,000 copies of the eight-page, full-color newsletter have been printed and are being distributed through local tourism offices, outfitters, provincial government offices, GRCA facilities and other locations. A PDF version of the report will also be posted on the GRCA website.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

### Sunoco Earth Day offers family fun

Spring is finally here and it's time to get out enjoy some free family fun. There is no better opportunity than the Sixth Annual Sunoco Earth Day where you can help the local environment while you're having fun!

This year's event is on Saturday April 24 at RIM Park in Waterloo from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The main event will be the planting of about 1,000 trees and shrubs around a stormwater management pond at RIM Park. The trees and shrubs will provide habitat to birds and animals and shade the pond to improve water quality.

But the fun doesn't stop with the tree

planting. There will be something for the whole family. Come and learn about the environment and play some games. Find out what to do with old videocassettes and other household cast-offs. Take some time to learn about the water cycle, go on a guided nature hike or create some crafts from natural objects. The program also includes a puppet show, the Awesome Snake Show and some amazing drumming by the Fletcher Valve Drummers.

There will also be chances to win environmental prizes such as a mountain bike, a rain barrel, and a composter. All schools that bring out more than 20 people will win a \$50 voucher from John's nursery for trees and plants for their schoolyard naturalization projects. The school that brings the most people will receive a voucher for \$500.

The Suncor Energy Foundation and Sunoco are sponsoring this Earth Day Canada event at RIM Park. The City of Waterloo, together with the Grand River Conservation Authority and the Region of Waterloo, are hosting this popular community event.

### Registration now available for River Heritage Conference

Registration for the Fourth Canadian River Heritage Conference and more detailed information about the conference program is now available on-line at [www.riverconference2004.ca](http://www.riverconference2004.ca). Registration forms are also available from the Grand River Conservation Authority.

The Conservation Authority, along with Parks Canada, Ontario Parks, and other partners, is hosting this national gathering at the University of Guelph from June 6 to 9. This event celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System and will chart a course for the stewardship and management of Canada's important rivers.

The conference will provide many opportunities for participants from

Ontario, across Canada and beyond to discover and enjoy the Grand and other important Canadian rivers through unique tours, informative presentations, interesting exhibits and exceptional concerts. More than 500 people are expected to attend.

The kick-off speaker is Robert Kennedy Jr., the president of the Waterkeeper Alliance and chief prosecuting attorney for the Hudson River



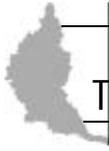
*Robert F. Kennedy Jr.*

Keepers. Kennedy will speak June 6 at the River Run Centre, 35 Woolwich St., Guelph. Also performing that evening will be James Gordon who was commissioned by the conference organizing committee to compose a music CD celebrating Canada's heritage rivers. Tickets for this event are available to the general public at the River Run Centre Box Office in Guelph, by phone at 1-877-520-2408 or [www.riverrun.guelph.on.ca/boxoffice/](http://www.riverrun.guelph.on.ca/boxoffice/)

Also associated with the conference will be an exciting celebration entitled A Grand Experience to be held at Guelph Lake Conservation Area on June 7.

This free event will showcase performances by outstanding artists from throughout the Grand River watershed and will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the designation of the Grand and its major tributaries as Canadian Heritage Rivers. The showcase begins at 6:30 p.m. Entrance fees to the conservation area have been waived for this extraordinary evening. Bring your entire family and join us in celebrating our heritage Grand River.

For additional information about the conference and associated special events, please contact Sonia Morgan, Phone: (519) 621-2763 ext. 279, Fax (519) 621-4945 or email [smorgan@grandriver.ca](mailto:smorgan@grandriver.ca)



## LOOK WHO'S TAKING ACTION

### Conservation grants given to six groups

Six groups in the Grand River watershed are sharing grants worth a total of \$10,000 given out under the new Community Conservation Grant program of the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

The foundation is a charitable organization that supports projects of the Grand River Conservation Authority.

The grants will be used for a variety of conservation projects such as tree planting, trail improvement, schoolyard naturalization, wetland restoration and river access improvement.

The money comes from the foundation's Grand Champions Endowment Fund and the GRCA's Thiess Riverprize Endowment Fund. The grants were awarded at the GRCA's annual meeting on Thursday, Feb. 26.

The Thiess Fund was created in 2000 when the GRCA won the Thiess Riverprize for River Management in a worldwide competition sponsored by Thiess Environmental, an Australian company. The interest earned on the \$85,000 prize is being used for the Community Conservation Grants.

The winners of the first Community Conservation Grants are:

• **Ducks Unlimited Canada** - \$2,000 to support the Healthy Wetlands for the Upper Grand project in Dufferin County. The project promotes wetland preservation by setting up a series of demonstration sites that illustrate the methods and benefits of wetland preservation.

• **Friends of the Grand River** - \$1,000 to support this group's stream enhancement work in the Fergus-Elora area. They will be planting trees along Swan Creek, an important coldwater tributary of the Grand.

• **Ancient Mariners Canoe Club** - \$1,800 to help this Cambridge-based



*Eric Tomlinson (left) and Barbara Stebbing of the Ancient Mariners Canoe Club receive their Community Conservation Grant from Tom Land (right), president of the Grand River Conservation Foundation.*

club improve canoe access points in Ayr, Cambridge, Kitchener and Glen Morris.

• **Upper Grand Trailway Association** - \$2,000 to plant trees and shrubs along a rail-trail in the Grand Valley area.

• **Ryerson Public School, Cambridge** - \$2,000 to help parents, staff and students with a schoolyard naturalization project that includes planting trees.

• **Brantford Community Foundation, partnered with the Brant Waterways Foundation and Trout Unlimited Canada** - \$1,200 for the Exceptional Waters program, which aims to develop improved river access and promote awareness of the stretch of the Grand River between Paris and Brantford.

### Grand Actions Registry Submissions

The Grand River Conservation Authority is now compiling submissions for the 2003 edition of the Grand Actions Registry. You are invited to submit a description of your achievements

by completing the form found on the GRCA website by June 30, 2004. If you are aware of others that have undertaken activities, please encourage them to submit as well.

You can now view the 2002 Registry on the Grand River Conservation Authority website at [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca). Limited hard copies of the Registry are also available by request.

For more information contact Barbara Veale at phone: (519) 621-2763 ext. 274; fax: (519) 621-4945; email: [bveale@grandriver.ca](mailto:bveale@grandriver.ca)



## NOW AVAILABLE

### Update report on Heritage River status

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 outstanding river-related cultural and recreational values of national significance. The

management plan tabled with the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board as part of the requirement for the designation was called The Grand Strategy.

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 in May 2004. A draft of the monitoring report is now available on the GRCA website at [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca)

In addition to providing an assessment of the values for which the Grand River was declared a Canadian Heritage River, the 10-Year Monitoring Report builds on The Grand Strategy. It was developed with extensive public input. It summarizes the new and ongoing challenges, opportunities, and collabora-

## About this newsletter

This newsletter is produced bi-monthly as a communications tool by the Grand River Conservation Authority on behalf of the partners in *The Grand Strategy*. This newsletter can be seen at [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca)

### For information on

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Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of January, March, May, July, September and November. Submissions be edited for length or style. Tax deductible donations and sponsorships toward the cost of producing this newsletter are always welcome.

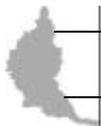
#### **Publications Mail**

Agreement #144871

tive actions required to strengthen planning, management and decision-making capacities about important heritage and recreational values. A revised vision for the Grand River watershed written as a "state of the watershed" report is also included.

The draft report is currently being reviewed. Comments will be received until April 13, 2004.

For information or to submit comments, contact Barbara Veale at: (519) 621-2763 ext. 274; fax: (519) 621-4945; e-mail: [bveale@grandriver.ca](mailto:bveale@grandriver.ca)



## The Grand Strategy Calendar

**Sunoco Earth Day – April 24, RIM Park, Waterloo. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** A day full of family fun with an environmental theme. Help to plant more than 1,000 trees and then take part in games, crafts, guided nature hikes, games and shows, including the Awesome Snake Show. Prize draws for a mountain bike, rain barrel and a composter. Sponsored by Suncor Energy Foundation and hosted by the GRCA, City of Waterloo and Region of Waterloo. Free.

**Mother's Nature Day – Saturday, May 8, Laurel Creek Nature Centre, 525 Beaver Creek Road, Waterloo. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.** A great way to celebrate the Mother's Day weekend. Birdhouse building, nature hikes, tree planting and a creepy creatures show. Sponsored by the GRCA, Grand River Conservation Foundation, Home Depot and The Record. Free.

**Heritage River Cleanup Day – Saturday, May 29.** If you have planned a river, trail or road cleanup on that day or any other day in 2004, the GRCA would like to hear about it. All cleanup activities, regardless of when they occur, will be acknowledged at celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the designation of the Grand River as a Canadian Heritage River. To register your event contact Sonia Morgan at (519) 621-2763 ext. 279 or e-mail [smorgan@grandriver.ca](mailto:smorgan@grandriver.ca)

**Children's Groundwater Festival – Monday, May 31 to Friday, June 4 at Doon Heritage Crossroads, 10 Huron Road, Kitchener. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** This fun and creative week-long event features a variety of interactive activities, demonstrations and displays challenging people of all ages to consider the source and importance of water to themselves, the environment and society. For more information go to [www.cwec.ca](http://www.cwec.ca). Regular admission for the public is \$6 for adults, \$4 for seniors and students, \$3 for children or \$15 for a family.

**Canadian Heritage Rivers Conference – June 6-9. University of Guelph. "Ribbons of Life: Celebrating Our Past - Charting Our Future."** A four-day event drawing delegates from across the continent to hear from more than 90 speakers on topics related to Canadian rivers. Keynote speaker at the gala opening on June 6 at the River Run Centre, Guelph, is environmentalist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. For information visit [www.riverconference2004.ca](http://www.riverconference2004.ca)

**A Grand Experience – Monday, June 7. Guelph Lake Conservation Area, Conservation Road, Guelph, 6 p.m.** A celebration of the Grand River on the 10th anniversary of its designation as a Canadian Heritage River. The event will feature performances by outstanding artists from throughout the Grand River watershed including Tamarack, Garnett Rogers, Nonie Crete and Elizabeth Hill. Free.