



The GRAND

Watershed Report

Environmental news for the residents of the Grand River watershed • Distribution 210,000 copies

Putting the Grand on a diet

By Katherine Balpataky
GRCA Communications Specialist

Gerald Tetreault tears a strand of river weeds off the end of his paddle as he canoes the Grand River near Blair, west of Cambridge. It's June and already the fish biologist is surrounded by mats of rotting weeds, known as cladophora.

The green mess signals that these waters are overfed with nutrients — phosphorous and nitrogen from the 12 municipal sewage treatment plants, farm fields, forests and the urban development located upstream of where he's dunking his line.

Use up oxygen

The weeds make it difficult to enjoy a day on the water. Fishing lures get tangled and it's a challenge to spot rocks just below the surface. The weeds are also a problem for the fish — using up the oxygen they need to breathe.

An oversupply of nutrients is hurting water quality in the Grand River system

It's the sixth year that Tetreault has observed the nuisance algae, but if the fish could talk, they would say the problem has been around much longer than that.

The Grand River watershed has been fat with nutrients for many decades and has long contributed to nutrient issues in Lake Erie. By the 1960s, conditions were so bad in the Great Lakes that the issue became a national priority. In 1972 Canada and the U.S. signed an agreement to put the Grand, and all the other watersheds that drain into the Great Lakes, on a

nutrient diet.

The nutrients entering the watershed are found in human and animal waste, fertilizer from lawns and fields; they also occur naturally in soil, a by-product of the decay of leaves and other organic material.

Sewage treatment removes a lot of nutrients from sewage but there is always an amount in the treated effluent released into rivers and streams. Some of what

goes into the river is cleaned up by natural processes in the water, but some also goes into feeding algae and aquatic plants.

By the 1960s, municipalities started treating sewage to reduce nutrients. Upgrades became mandatory in the 1970s as a result of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which had been implemented to save the lakes dying from the nutrient overload.

Shortly after, governments on

both sides of the border banned phosphates in laundry detergent which also led to a big reduction in nutrients levels.

Meanwhile, numerous farmers across the watershed have adopted new practices to reduce the chances of nutrients washing off their land into rivers.

For years, farmers, municipalities, government agencies, non-

Continued on Page 3

Grand prize



An angler casts a line into the Grand just as the sun rises over Caledonia. This was the top prize winner in the GRCA's photo contest. To see more winning photos, go to Page 6.



A busy year on the Grand

There's a lot of diverse things going on at the GRCA over the course of the year.

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Award winners

The GRCA honours volunteers who put in a lot of time and effort to environmental action.

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Factory floor to outdoors

Toyota has a long history of supporting activities to make the outdoors more welcoming.

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The GRCA

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A Message From the Chair



Jane Mitchell
Chair

I recently visited the new Three Gorges dam on a private visit to China. This huge dam supplies green power to Chongqing, the biggest city in China, and places as far away as Shanghai. China's many coal plants are big contributors to climate change.

While the dam does prevent some flooding, it is controversial due to the huge numbers of people moved, other environmental concerns and the loss of heritage sites.

The seven main dams along the Grand are very different. They are tiny in comparison to the Three Gorges and were built to improve the river. In the 1930s, the Grand was a cesspool that either flooded or had too little water in the summer. The Grand

dams were built to control flooding and protect public health with low flow augmentation. Water needs to flow in the Grand to dilute the treated water from the sewage plants. It is important to remember that what goes in the water will be used and, after treatment, drunk by those living downriver.

Controversies in the Grand watershed occur with the tiny legacy dams along creeks and rivers. When an old mill pond is removed, the stream becomes fresher and cooler. It's better for fish and the Grand itself. But neighbours often like things to stay the same.

A successful example of a creek reclamation occurred a few years ago. The old Chilligo Dam in Cambridge broke. The residents wanted it replaced as they liked the pond. Instead the city and GRCA worked with the residents to create off-line ponds and a better stream. Now the naturalized area is beautiful and beneficial.

It's important to remember that there are many reasons why rivers and streams may be dammed. The main dams along the Grand are working well to keep the residents of the watershed safe and healthy.

A Message From the CAO



Joe Farwell
Chief Administrative Officer

The Grand River watershed is full of beautiful and inspiring landscapes – broad forests, deep river valleys, clear streams, wetlands and prairie grasslands – that make it a special place.

Here at the GRCA we work co-operatively with municipalities to manage the water and natural resources in the watershed.

But we see increasing pressure on these special places.

To make sure we do the best job possible to protect our environment, we have developed a new Strategic Plan, which you can read about on Page 7 of this issue of The Grand.

It was developed during a year-long process involving the members of the board of the Grand River Conservation Authority and its staff. In addition, we used information gathered during public

consultation processes in recent years to help set our five objectives and strategic priorities.

The Plan reflects the realities we face today in the Grand River watershed: growing population, uncertainties about climate change, the need to protect the environment and the growing demand for outdoor recreational opportunities.

It is important, too, that we do this within a sound fiscal framework.

The Strategic Plan outlines the objectives we have set in order to address those issues, and the steps we will take to reach them.

From the time of its founding almost 80 years ago, the GRCA has been a partnership of municipalities dedicated to addressing their shared environmental issues and concerns.

The Strategic Plan builds on the successes of the past and prepares us for a future in which we tackle our common challenges to ensure the environment of the watershed is healthy, vibrant and resilient.

I would encourage you to spend some time getting to know this special watershed with the knowledge that there are many people working to keep it that way.

Who speaks for you?

Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, East Luther Grand Valley, Melancthon, Southgate: Tom Nevills

Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North: Pat Salter

Township of Centre Wellington: Joanne Ross-Zuj

Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch: John Brennan

Regional Municipality of Waterloo (Cambridge, Kitchener, North Dumfries, Waterloo, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich): Les Armstrong, Todd Cowan, Jan d'Ailly (GRCA 2nd vice-chair), Rob Deutschmann, Jean Haalboom, Ross Kelterborn, Geoff Lorentz, Claudette Millar, Jane Mitchell (GRCA chair), Warren Stauch

City of Guelph: Bob Bell, Maggie Laidlaw

Municipality of North Perth, Township of Perth East: George Wicke

Regional Municipality of Halton (Halton Hills and Milton): Barry Lee

City of Hamilton: Jeanette Jamieson

County of Oxford (Blandford-Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, Norwich): Bruce Banbury

City of Brantford: Robert Hillier, Vic Prendergast (GRCA 1st vice-chair)

County of Brant: Brian Coleman, Steve Schmitt

Haldimand and Norfolk Counties: Lorne Boyko, Fred Morison

Water plan will tackle nutrients

Continued from Page 1

government groups and conservation authorities have been working together using cost-sharing programs such as the Rural Water Quality Program to help farmers to voluntarily undertake actions which are expected to lead to a reduction in the amount of nutrients entering water systems.

Controlling manure use

They are spreading manure or fertilizers more carefully and only using as much as needed so it's taken up by plants, not washed off the land. They are keeping animals out of streams, which keeps manure out of streams and prevents unnecessary erosion. Some are changing their drainage techniques to make sure they only drain water off land that will be productive. Many farms also have manure storage tanks which have

River Water Management Plan is underway to draw all these efforts together to improve water quality. Lowering nutrient levels in the Grand River system will be part of this solution.

The Water Management Plan is being developed by municipalities, federal and provincial agencies, First Nations and the GRCA to develop an action plan to address water quality, water supply and flooding issues for the next 35 years. It's scheduled to be completed in 2013.

Fortunately, there is a strong commitment at the local level to address the nutrient challenge for the health of Lake Erie, the health of the watershed and to preserve the quality of life as the watershed population grows toward one million people.

The first tenet of a good diet is to know your calories. To find out where nutrients are coming from,

researchers look at the changes in nutrient levels in the river over the course of the year and in different weather conditions.

For example, in the summer, when the river flows are low, nutrient levels are

highest directly downstream of sewage treatment plants. In winter and spring, when the snow is melting and running off the land, there's a sharp increase in nutrients downstream of areas that are intensively farmed.

Looking into the future

Figuring out what the water quality will look like decades from now has been an important step in understanding what needs to be done in the Grand River Water Management Plan.

A computer model was used to see how more people, more sewage, scheduled wastewater treatment plant upgrades and operational changes, seasonal water levels and temperature changes will add up to change water quality over the next 35

years in the central Grand. The conclusion is: water quality is set to improve.

But the assessment showed that wastewater treatment upgrades alone won't solve the problem.

The Water Management Plan aims to provide both a fitness test and training regime for the watershed. The partners to the plan are working together to compare their best practices, share knowledge and align efforts.

Taking action

Already, some partners to the plan are launching actions to clean the river system.

The Region of Waterloo is spending over \$585 million over nine years to upgrade eight sewage treatment plants — the seventh largest investment in wastewater treatment in Canada.

Municipalities, such as Brantford, Guelph and Haldimand, are also improving wastewater effluent quality by fine tuning the way their existing operations work, known as "optimization."

Discussions about ways to reduce water use, improve storm water and change the way the GRCA's seven dams are managed will also be part of the plan. The impacts of these combined actions on water quality will be significant.

The Water Management Plan will outline what impact these changes will have on nutrient loads and water quality, and what might happen if actions such as optimization are extended to other sewage treatment plants.

For the 70 to 75 per cent of the watershed that's farmed, the solu-

See the study

For more information about this water quality study, see the "Assimilative capacity technical brief" under the "Studies & reports" heading at: www.grandriver.ca/wmp



Gerald Tetreault hauls an algae covered stick out of the Grand River. A research associate at the University of Waterloo, he is working on a project that will look, in part, at the impacts of algae growth on water quality and living creatures. The study is funded by the Canadian Water Network.

tions are more complex. Over a thousand farms across the watershed have taken advantage of the Rural Water Quality Program.

More work to be done

But there's more work to be done. The projects already in place are an important demonstration of the commitment to farm the land responsibly, but there is recognition of the need for continuous improvement. Through the Water Management Plan, work is ongoing to find how and where to get the best bang for the buck from on-farm investments that protect water quality. It will look at ways to secure funding, monitor results and encourage landowners to take up voluntary projects.

Putting money behind the most

cost effective priorities is a chief focus of the Water Management Plan. Working collaboratively with the partnering municipalities, federal and provincial agencies and First Nations, farmers, non-government organizations and restoration groups will ensure that the results are achievable.

"It's not an easy task to find a common vision for water quality that everyone can agree upon," says Lorrie Minshall Program Director of the Water Management Plan. "But we've got all the right people working together. And this will be the first water management plan for the Grand that considers the health of ecosystems and the connection between the Grand and Lake Erie. We're making some important first steps."

“It's not an easy task to find a common vision for water quality that everyone can agree upon”

Lorrie Minshall
Plan director



replaced the exposed piles behind the barn to minimize seepage.

The work done is commendable, but the heavy growth of aquatic plants tells a story of a river system that is still overloaded. Sections of the Grand, Conestogo and Speed rivers and Canagagigue Creek have annual explosions of algae, which shows there is still an imbalance that is challenging the health of the river.

Efforts to improve water quality continue, with government agencies on both sides of the border setting water quality targets, identifying nutrient sources and developing plans to reduce nutrient loads.

But for the Grand, it's time to reassess its diet once again.

In this watershed, the Grand

Working to build a better watershed



Taking flow measurements at Parkhill Dam in Cambridge, where a new hydro plant is planned.

The Grand River watershed is a diverse place and it takes a diverse organization to manage its natural resources. The stories and photos on these pages offer some highlights of our activities from 2011.

Natural areas protected

The GRCA acquired land in two important natural heritage areas within the watershed.

Nearly 40 hectares of Beverly Swamp in North Dumfries was purchased in May thanks to funding from the Ontario Heritage Trust and the Region of Waterloo Environmental Stewardship Fund. This is one of the largest wetlands in the watershed and is a protected Carolinian Canada site as well as an important recharge area.

Funds from the Ontario Heritage Trust were also used to purchase 20 hectares at Luther Marsh, which is the biggest natural area in the watershed. Luther Marsh is the GRCA's largest landholding and is one of the most significant natural areas in southwestern Ontario due to its diversity, size and location. These land acquisitions help build a stronger natural heritage network within the watershed.

Hydro plants upgraded

The GRCA produced over nine million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity, and consumed about four million kWh in 2011.

The five million kWh surplus is enough electricity to power 416 homes. Hydro revenue was nearly \$600,000. Some of this was used to pay down loans for hydro plant upgrades and the rest helped fund GRCA programs.

During 2011, two of the GRCA's hydro plants (Shand Dam and Guelph Dam) were upgraded to meet new meter requirements. This didn't result in more power production, but was a requirement to enter into a new 20 year contract with Ontario Power Authority and to meet new Hydro One requirements. The new 20-year purchase contract with Ontario Power Authority at Shand Dam will result in approximately a \$130,000 increase in annual revenue over that realized from the open spot market.

The GRCA is also taking steps to construct a new hydro facility at Parkhill Dam in Cambridge. It could result in an additional 6.6 million kWh annually. It will cost seven to eight million dollars.



Reducing water use was the topic at a one-day workshop.

Focus on water conservation

A workshop was held at the GRCA headquarters in September for representatives of about two-thirds of the municipal drinking water systems to discuss demand management.

Water demand management means adopting policies, programs and technologies that encourage reduced water use. This includes toilet rebate pro-

grams, higher water billing at certain times of the day and new ways to get residents motivated to use less water. It may also include new technologies and eliminating leaks in the water delivery system.

Workshop ideas will be used by the municipalities to develop their own strategies that will then be incorporated into the Grand River Water Management Plan.



Moritz Sanio with some wild Canadian rye seeds.

Harvesting native seeds

The GRCA is stepping up native seed saving so that native wildflowers and grasses can be used to restore native habitat. In 2011, about 55 kilos of seeds of 20 different species were harvested from nine GRCA sites.

These seeds would be worth

many thousands of dollars to purchase and are enough to cover 50 to 100 hectares of land.

It more than doubles the seeds harvested in 2010 and is ten times what was collected in 2009, the first year of this program.

Website aerial photos updated

Google isn't the only organization providing photographic maps of all the properties in the Grand River watershed on the Internet.

New high-resolution imagery of the entire watershed was added to the GRCA's website in 2011. The photos were taken in 2010 as part of a larger project encompassing all of southwestern Ontario and involving 70 agencies including conservation authorities, municipalities and the provincial government.

This is one of many layers on the mapping tool that is included on the Grand River Information Network (GRIN) section of the GRCA website. This new layer is called ORTHO_2010.

You can check what your property looks like from the sky, or find a recreational area such as a river access point, or GRCA rail-trail, or find the extent of a wetland. This system is used by planners and property owners across the watershed when they consider

new development, because it also shows the 31 per cent of the land that is regulated by the GRCA. The mapping tool is online at www.grandriver.ca/GRIN/GRIN.cfm.

2011: by the numbers

- 89,455 trees planted on GRCA land
- 356,000 trees planted on private lands
- 66 hectares of habitat restored
- 50,000 nature centre visitors for school programs including 13,700 for community programs and 2,000 for day camps.
- 7,000 kids attended two water festivals
- Worked with 350 landowners on conservation projects
- 1.1 million paid visits to conservation areas

\$600,000 research grant supports water quality work

The Canadian Water Network made \$600,000 available in 2011 to get a better understanding of water quality issues in the Grand River watershed.

The money is allowing researchers to better understand the factors affecting water quality and predict the impacts on river health of population growth and climate change.

The GRCA and other agencies already study water quality in some detail. The research funding is helping them pull their information together and develop tools to analyze how

water quality may change in the future. That knowledge would give decision makers at the local, provincial and federal levels a way to assess the potential impact of investments or other changes in the way the river is managed.

The information will be used to help develop an updated Water Management Plan for the Grand River watershed. CWN is working with a consortium of 18 partner organizations to oversee spending of the funds. About \$200,000 will be available over each of three years.



An egret flies low over the water at Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area.

Canada's largest known egret roost at Luther

Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area, near the headwaters of the Grand River,

has the largest known roost of great egrets in Canada.

At dawn one August morning Chip Weseloh of the Canadian Wildlife Service and volunteer Linda McLaren counted 320 egrets leaving the roost.

All birds roost, meaning they have a period of inactivity similar to sleep in humans.

Some bird species roost alone while others, including some egrets and herons, roost communally. At Luther, the egrets roost in a small swampy area of

the Monticello Project where great blue herons, black-crowned night-herons and green herons nest. Egrets, which are a type of heron, are not known to nest at Luther, yet.

The egrets start to gather there in late June and remain through September before they head to the

Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of the United States for the winter.

Luther Lake and the wetlands that surround it were created in the 1950s when Luther Dam was constructed.



Workshop took a look at 'e-flows'

How much water is needed to maintain a healthy ecosystem in the Grand River and its tributaries?

That was the question that attracted about 130 people from across the province to a day-long workshop on environmental flows, also called e-flows.

Water managers have been working to improve their understanding of e-flows. This means taking a holistic look at natural river flows that support healthy aquatic ecosystems and human well-being. The healthy flow will vary at different times of the year.

The goal of this workshop was to bring together practitioners, researchers and water managers to talk about steps to integrate e-flow requirements into water management and planning in the Grand River watershed. This was the first time such an event has been held in Ontario.

A website section at www.grandriver.ca/eflows provides more information, links to resources and e-flow information for specific reaches within the Grand River watershed.



A crane lowers concrete to create blocks in the stilling basin.

Conestogo Dam improvements

Upgrades to the Conestogo Dam stilling basin were completed in 2011 at a cost of \$2.7 million.

This was a three-year project. The stilling basin is immediately downstream of the dam gates. Concrete blocks, walls and other elements "still" or calm the water as it surges out of the gates.

If the water is not calmed, it could rush back against the base of the dam and erode it, possibly causing the dam to collapse.

Four dissipation blocks were placed in the stilling basin and the

wing walls were extended.

The stilling basin can now handle twice as much water, or a flow of about 1,400 cubic metres per second, as a result of this work. That is equivalent of 90 per cent of the flow through the City of Cambridge during the 1974 flood.

The GRCA is investigating construction of an emergency spillway at this dam, which is a channel that would help accommodate even more extreme flows.

The GRCA is reviewing the capacity of the dam to handle flows from the largest storms.

Environment Canada backs study of Lower Grand River

The GRCA has teamed up with Environment Canada to study water quality in the Lower Grand and its impact on Lake Erie.

The federal agency supported installation of continuous water quality monitoring equipment at a GRCA gauge station in York, midway between Caledonia and Cayuga. The four-year project is being done under the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Meanwhile, the GRCA and other water management agencies are taking their own look at water quality in the same area to determine what is needed to support a healthy aquatic ecosystem. This work is being done as part of the



The York gauge station.

Grand River Water Management Plan.

Photo contest winners

The GRCA Photo Contest, which ended April 30, attracted more than 700 entries. In addition to the grand prize photo shown on Page 1, there were three other category prizes shown below. For more information and pictures see the GRCA website or visit our Flickr page.



Best People Picture: Chris Wilkinson of Rockwood took this photo of his children on a sled pulled by family dogs on the Elora Cataract Trailway.



Best Flora and Fauna Picture: Scott Bradford grabbed this shot of a low-flying goose while biking on the Cambridge to Paris Rail Trail.



Best Landscape and Waterscape: Dan Baskin of Kitchener took this photo on the Nith River near New Hamburg while he was kayaking.

GRCA reduces spending in stand-pat 2012 budget

The Grand River Conservation Authority board approved a “stand pat” budget for 2012 calling for a small reduction in total spending.

Expenditures for this year are scheduled to be \$32.8 million, a reduction from \$33.6 million in 2011.

Much of the reduction is due to a scheduled drop in provincial grants for the Drinking Water Source Protection Program. The province has paid 100 per cent of the costs of the program, which is winding down this year as source protection plans are nearing completion. Last year the province spent \$3.2 million on the project while the 2012 cost will be \$2.6 million.

Most other areas of the GRCA budget are rising by enough to cover cost-of-living increases in salaries, benefits, utilities and other expenditures.

The budget covers the cost of programs that protect water quality, reduce flood damages, preserve and improve natural areas, support responsible development and provide outdoor recreation and environmental education.

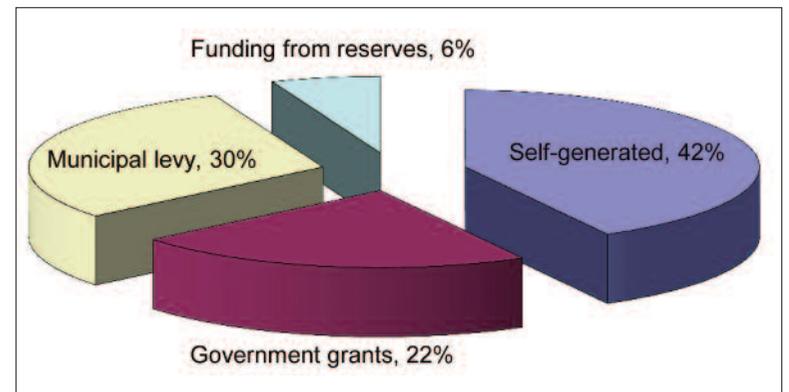
The budget was approved by the GRCA board at its annual meeting on Feb. 24. The board is made up of 26 members appointed by municipalities throughout the Grand River watershed.

Despite the drop in overall spending, the GRCA is carrying out some significant projects this year.

Major projects for 2012

- About \$725,000 will be spent in 2012 to continue developing of the Grand River Watershed Water Management Plan. This is a three-year effort to investigate ways to improve water quality, reduce flood damages, guarantee water supplies and address climate change. The GRCA and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment are splitting the costs of the project which will produce a report early in 2013.

- The reconstruction of the aging Drimmie Dam in Elora is



Revenue sources for the 2012 GRCA budget

scheduled to take place this year at a cost of \$1.1 million. The province is contributing half of the cost and the Township of Centre Wellington is paying \$200,000.

- \$275,000 for installation of a splash pad at Elora Gorge Conservation Area to provide a wet play area for children to

replace an old swimming pond recently removed.

- Restoration projects at several conservation areas including \$275,000 at Taquanyah (Cayuga), Conestogo Lake (\$110,000), Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area (\$178,000) and controlled burns worth \$23,000 at Apps' Mill west of Brantford and Pinehurst Lake near Paris.

Revenue sources

Watershed residents: About \$9.75 million will come from residents of the watershed who pay either through their local property taxes or their municipal water bills. That works out to about \$10.05 per person.

Self-generated revenues: The GRCA will bring in self-generated revenues of about \$13.8 million from fees charged for services ranging from camping to planning. The GRCA also raises revenue from land rentals, hydro-electricity generation, payments by school boards for outdoor education programs and donations from the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

Government grants: Government grants, mostly from the provincial government, will amount to \$7.1 million. The grants cover part of the cost of core programs such as flood warning and dam maintenance.

Transfers from reserves: The remainder of the budget, about \$2.1 million, comes from GRCA reserve funds which consist of money set aside in earlier years.

Dam, dike work planned

Work on flood reduction infrastructure such as dams and dikes planned for 2012 includes:

- safety review and upgrades to Luther Dam near Grand Valley (\$230,000)
- design an emergency spillway at Conestogo Dam (\$150,000)
- safety review of the Bridgeport dike (\$100,000)
- safety review of the Cambridge dike (\$50,000)
- study of the existing flood control berm in New Hamburg to assess maintenance needs (\$50,000)
- upgrade the elevator (\$250,000) and inspect three of the six gates (\$30,000) at Guelph Dam
- reconstruct part of the floodwall in Cambridge \$400,000



Watershed Award winners are congratulated for their efforts at a ceremony at the GRCA office in Cambridge. From left: Joe Farwell, GRCA Chief Administrative Officer; Jonas Duarte representing Cambridge WATERS; Jane Mitchell, GRCA chair; Joe Kidd representing the Fergus Lions Club; Barbara Kidd; Jim Phillips; and Archie McClarty representing CREW

Watershed Award winners

The 2011 Grand River Watershed Awards were presented to groups and individuals who have undertaken projects to enhance the natural environment in the Grand River watershed.

Community Conservation Grants are presented to community groups for projects to be undertaken in the coming year.

Award winners

Barbara Kidd: Barbara Kidd was known as the Green Queen at Arthur Public School until she retired last June. She rallied staff, students, parents and many community partners to undertake a multitude of projects to green up the school and also to establish outdoor spaces for kids to learn and play. In one year, Arthur Public School diverts 700 kilos of waste from landfill sites through the recycling and composting programs. There are several special outdoor gardens on the school ground and the students also help plant trees in the community.

Jim Phillips: While many local

landowners plant trees on their property, not many have planted 60,000 trees that will eventually grow into a large interior forest. Jim Phillips is following in the footsteps of his father, George who planted the first 10,000 trees with the assistance of the GRCA. Jim's company, Copernicus Educational Products, is based on Jim's property in Arthur. The company also gives out thousands of trees each spring to students and has undertaken many green initiatives.

The Fergus Lions Club: Ten years ago the Fergus Lions Club got the shovel in the ground to plant the first trees in the Grand River Arboretum in Fergus. This quiet area of remembrance beside the Grand River now has 350 trees with commemorative plaques to remember loved ones. There are also many benches for quiet contemplation. The group has held many work days and planting days to create this arboretum, which is now complete.

Cambridge WATERS: This group of volunteers tells Cambridge's water story to peo-

ple. The group formed in 1997 and was initially called the Water Guardians but today they are called Cambridge WATERS (Water Awareness through Education and Resource Stewardship). Nearly all of Cambridge's municipal water is from groundwater, which is a little mysterious to most people because it is hidden underground. This group has displays at special events, has created educational materials and oversees Cambridge's Yellow Fish program. It is made up of volunteers who often work behind the scenes and keep a low profile. It is a sub-committee of the Cambridge Environmental Advisory Committee.

CREW: A half dozen volunteers joined together to help create a brown trout tailwater fishery on the Conestogo River in 2003 and they've been dedicated to that task ever since. Over the years, the Conestogo River Enhancement Workgroup (CREW) has helped the Ministry of Natural Resources stock 300,000 brown trout in the river. They have planted 3,000 trees,

organized river clean ups and worked with landlords to create access points along the river. They are a sub-group of Friends of the Grand River.

Grant recipients

Each year, the GRCA and the Grand River Conservation Foundation present Community Conservation Grants to community groups and elementary schools for environmental projects.

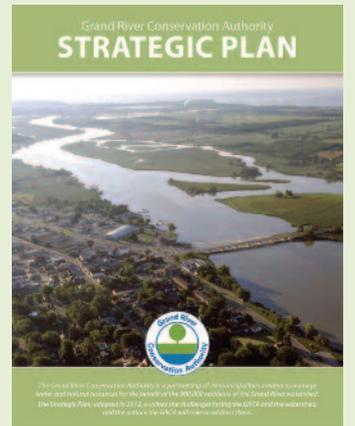
Community Groups

- Trees for Guelph for the Schoolyard Greening Program
- The Grand Valley Air Cadets for a trail improvement project

Schools

Each school received \$500 for school yard naturalization projects.

- Wellesley & District Public School, Wellesley
- St. Nicholas School, Waterloo
- Mother Teresa Catholic School, Cambridge
- Victory Public School, Guelph
- Oakland Scotland School, Scotland



Download a copy of the plan at www.grandriver.ca

Plan sets goals for the GRCA

The Grand River Conservation Authority has adopted a new strategic plan that will help it carry out its responsibilities to manage the resources of the Grand River watershed.

The plan sets five strategic objectives and the steps the GRCA will take to address them.

The objectives are:

- Protect life and minimize property damage from flooding and erosion
- Improve watershed health
- Connect people with the environment through outdoor experiences
- Maintain an organization with a focus on teamwork, development, engagement and positive change
- Deliver value and innovation to our watershed stakeholders

The plan is based on the GRCA's vision of "a healthy and sustainable natural environment in the Grand River watershed."

The plan was developed over the past year during a series of meetings involving members of the GRCA board and staff. The plan also draws on information collected from the public in various ways over the past few years.

GRCA management will be reporting regularly to the board on progress in implementing the plan.



The Grand River Conservation Foundation

From factory floor to great outdoors

For the second year in a row, employees from Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada (TMMC) have partnered with the GRCF and GRCA to hold a series of employee volunteer days to plant trees and improve trails across the Grand River watershed. This new partnership in volunteering evolved out of a decade-long donor relationship.



Since 2000, Toyota has been a lead donor to the GRCF, especially in outdoor education initiatives.

In that year the company supported the building of the Toyota Nature Centre and later the Toyota Trail, both at Shade's Mills Conservation Area.

Supported outdoor education

Toyota was also a major donor to the Living Classroom — Campaign for Outdoor Education

You can help, too!

For more than 40 years, the Grand River Conservation Foundation has improved our quality of life by enriching the natural values of the Grand River watershed and encouraging people to enjoy, and to learn from, the great outdoors.

For more information:

- Subscribe to RiverNews, the Foundation newsletter by signing up on www.grcf.ca
- To donate, visit www.grcf.ca
- Phone toll-free 1-877-29-GRAND
- E-mail foundation@grandriver.ca

An evolution in giving for Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada

which raised money to support environmental education programs for elementary school children.

Toyota supported the construction of a green roof at Laurel Creek Nature Centre and has been a regular sponsor of the Grand River Watershed Water Forum which focuses on our community's use and protection of water.

Donated \$100,000

In April 2012, the GRCA announced a new gift of \$100,000 from Toyota to support care for GRCA's many trails and natural areas, which provide a great, admission-free natural resource to the community.

President Brian Krinock commented: "Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada has enjoyed a long history with the Grand River Conservation Authority. Many of our team members look forward to relaxing with their families at the local conservation areas, and we hope that this donation will support the ongoing stewardship of the GRCA."

How did this strong donor-foundation relationship evolve into one that included a volunteer component?

In 2011, TMMC was looking for opportunities for large numbers of employees to give back to the community. The GRCA, with its many parks and trails, jumped at the opportunity. Within a week's time TMMC volunteer crews were painting buildings, planting trees and caring for trails.

The success of 2011's volunteer

days were so well received by the company and the GRCA that in May 2012 the volunteer program was re-created under Toyota's Community Support Program.

Between May 9 and 16 six teams of five people undertook trail work on the Cambridge to Paris Rail Trail and at the GRCA's Starkey Hill property, in addition to planting and protecting trees in Guelph.

"These volunteer days are just one more way that Toyota is getting involved in the protection of our natural world," said Sara Wilbur, executive director of Grand River Conservation Foundation.

"Their commitment is more than just a cheque," she said. "It's a wide-ranging philosophy. We are so pleased to have worked with Toyota for so many years."



Toyota employees trim trees on the Cambridge to Paris Rail Trail



Representatives of Toyota, the Grand River Conservation Foundation and the Grand River Conservation Authority get together in Glen Morris where Toyota staff were doing work on the rail trail.