



Grand River Conservation Authority

Land Acquisition Policy

**Grand River Conservation Authority
Land Acquisition Policy
April 15, 2003**

**400 Clyde Road
P.O. Box 729
Cambridge, Ontario
N1R 5W6**

www.grandriver.ca

Grand River Conservation Authority Land Acquisition Policy

1 Introduction

The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) owns and manages approximately 19,000 hectares of land within the Grand River watershed. This represents 2.8% of the total watershed. In addition to natural areas and environmentally sensitive land, a portion is used for multi-purpose reservoirs and conservation areas. Conservation Authority lands were acquired for the following reasons:

- Water Management - lands for dams/water management reservoirs, erosion control projects and dykes
- Natural Heritage - lands that are environmentally sensitive (e.g. Provincially Significant Wetlands, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, source areas)
- Forested Lands - managed forests, Carolinian Canada forests
- Natural Hazards - lands that are unsafe for development (e.g. steep slopes, floodplains)
- Recreational Lands - lands that are used for recreation (e.g. conservation areas, rail-trails)

2 Policy Intent

As population growth and agricultural intensification continues at a rapid pace in the Grand River watershed, the need to acquire sensitive lands for conservation and protection has increased. At the same time, the cost of acquiring these lands has escalated. The Province no longer provides funding to Conservation Authorities for land acquisition. It is critical that the Grand River Conservation Authority continue its land acquisition program to ensure that future acquisition and protection is carried out on a priority basis and in a fiscally responsible manner.

This Policy provides guidance for the future acquisition and/or protection of lands by the Grand River Conservation Authority.

3 Goals

Through its programs of land acquisition and protection, the Grand River Conservation Authority has the following objectives:

- To protect exceptional ecosystems.
- To protect representative ecosystems.
- To protect natural heritage areas of national, provincial or watershed scale significance such as but not limited to Carolinian Canada sites, nationally rare prairie, provincially designated Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, provincially significant wetlands, and significant valley lands.
- To link natural heritage features and habitats such as wetlands and valley lands and to enhance their long-term integrity and ecological functions.

- To protect major water source areas.
- To protect hazard lands from development.
- To provide high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities and educational benefits.
- To increase public appreciation of conservation lands.
- To protect defined future reservoir sites at West Montrose and Everton.

4 Land Acquisition Policies

- 4.1.1 The GRCA will typically purchase lands within the Grand River watershed on a willing-buyer, willing-seller basis to meet its stated goals.
- 4.1.2 The GRCA may accept land dedications, land trades, donations and bequests and conservation easements to meet its stated goals on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.1.3 The GRCA may be required to expropriate lands for approved projects undertaken under the Conservation Authorities Act.
- 4.1.4 The GRCA will partner with member municipalities and other conservation agencies such as but not limited to the Grand River Conservation Foundation, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Eastern Habitat Joint Venture to acquire and/or protect appropriate lands.

5 Implementation

- 5.1.1 This Policy will come into effect upon approval by the GRCA General Membership.
- 5.1.2 A priority listing and five-year budget for land acquisition by the GRCA will be developed and updated periodically.
- 5.1.3 The GRCA will consult with the member municipality prior to acquiring lands in order to identify and resolve any municipal concerns.
- 5.1.4 The GRCA will acquire lands abutting existing land holdings identified in approved master/management plans as its budget permits. These plans include but are not limited to:
- Forest Management Plan for GRCA properties
 - Watershed Forest Plan
 - Grand River Fisheries Management Plan
 - Watershed/Subwatershed Plans
 - Natural Heritage Framework
 - Conservation Area Master/Management Plans