

GRCA Current



December, 2018 • Volume 23 Number 10

GRCA General Membership

Chair	Helen Jowett
Vice-Chair	Chris White
Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon and Southgate and Town of Grand Valley	TBA
Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North	TBA
Township of Centre Wellington	TBA
Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch	Chris White
City of Guelph	Bob Bell, TBA
Region of Waterloo	Les Armstrong, Jim Erb, Sue Foxton, Michael Harris, Helen Jowett, Geoff Lorentz, Kathryn McGarry, Jane Mitchell, Joe Nowak, Warren Stauch
Municipality of North Perth and Township of Perth East	TBA
Halton Region	Cindy Lunau
City of Hamilton	George Stojanovic
Oxford County	Bruce Banbury
County of Brant	Brian Coleman, Joan Gatward
City of Brantford	Dave Neumann, Vic Prendergast
Haldimand and Norfolk Counties	TBA

Conservation Area & Nature Centre Fees

GRCA conservation areas and nature centres review their fees annually. Nature centre programs are funded through these fees combined with budgeted levy support. Admission, camping and other fees cover the operating costs of GRCA conservation areas.

Nature centres and conservation areas face a similar challenge in providing affordable access to outdoor recreation and educational experiences, while ensuring enough funds are available to support infrastructure needs and capital improvements.

In 2019, fees for school programs, day camps, and other programs at GRCA nature centres will increase between three and 15 per cent. These increases will help ensure their sustainability, while remaining competitive with similar outdoor education providers in Ontario.

Unlike nature centres, GRCA conservation areas operate on a break-even basis. User fees are meant to generate sufficient revenue to offset planned expenses for the upcoming year. When the conservation areas generate a surplus, it is placed into a stabilization fund to be used for future park needs. Operating budget efficiencies are attained as a result of the integration of the conservation area program with other program areas such as water management, nature centres and property.

In 2019, most conservation area fees will remain unchanged; however, a few areas will be impacted.

Additional vehicles on a campsite will increase to \$14, matching the fee currently charged at automatic entry gates. Nightly camping fees will be standardized to eliminate price changes between peak and shoulder seasons. Pool admission fees at Brant and Byng Island will increase from \$1 to \$2 following changes to public pool operation regulations requiring a swim test to be administered to younger swimmers creating the need to hire additional lifeguards. Seasonal camping fees will increase by three per cent in 2019 to help support investment in park facilities such as washroom upgrades, roads and electrical infrastructure in these campgrounds.

Membership pass fees will remain unchanged at \$130. Individual Season Passes will be discontinued due to a significant decline in sales and reduced customer demand for this product.

All nature centre and conservation area fees can be found online at www.grandriver.ca.

Final GRCA Current

As 2018 draws to a close, we set our sights on the year ahead and look forward to changes that will help better support our diverse audience. Following a consultant's review of our communications practices and activities in 2017, a number of changes were recommended. One of these changes included the end of this publication.

Beginning in January 2019, we will no longer be publishing GRCA Current; however, we will continue to publish the Grand Actions newsletter. Through this publication, readers will receive the same great content and informative articles, with the goal of moving towards a fresh, engaging and more frequent online publication in the future. In order to keep our municipal partners up-to-date on the information received and any decisions made by the General Membership, the GRCA will be distributing a concise board meeting summary via email, shortly after each monthly board meeting.

CAO's Report

GRCA conservation areas continue to be a popular spot for both summer and winter activities with revenue at the end of October reaching \$9.05 million, surpassing the 2018 budget of \$8 million. This surplus will be used for future capital and infrastructure investment in the parks. A number of conservation areas remain open year-round, including Belwood Lake, Guelph Lake, Laurel Creek, Pinehurst Lake, Rockwood, and Shade's Mills.

Watershed municipalities are in the process of appointing GRCA board members to serve for the next four years. An orientation program is being developed for new and returning members, which





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will include an overview of the Conservation Authorities Act, GRCA by-laws, and the recently updated strategic plan. GRCA staff will also be making program area presentations in the new year to help familiarize new board members with the many areas of the organization.

Company Hired for LiDAR Mapping

The GRCA has hired Geomatics Data Solutions Inc. for approximately \$310,000 to use bathymetric LiDAR technology to map a number of riverbeds in the watershed.

Bathymetric LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology uses laser light to get geographical information about the ground surface underwater. Mounted in a plane, the lasers and sensors will capture topographical data on the Grand, Conestogo and Speed rivers and select tributaries.

This data will provide information about the depth and shape of the ground beneath the water surface, which change significantly along natural water bodies. This information will be merged with above water topographical LiDAR data that was recently acquired by the province, creating a seamless ground surface elevation model for the watershed. The derived data will be added to the GRCA's GIS mapping platform.

This project is part of the five-year forecast

to update floodplain mapping within the Grand River watershed that was presented to the GRCA board in 2017. The GRCA will cover half of the project cost, and the federal National Disaster Mitigation Program will cover the remaining half.

The field work for the project is expected to be complete by late December.

City of Hamilton Levy Update

At the hearing for the judicial review application in Divisional Court held on October 30, the City of Hamilton brought forward a new motion requesting that the judicial review be heard by a bilingual panel. This request is due to the City of Hamilton's contention that the French version of Section 27 of the Conservation Authorities Act is relevant and will assist the court in interpreting the meaning and legislative intent of the provisions under consideration.

The panel granted the City's request and a bilingual panel will be constituted. This matter will be heard at the next sittings of the Divisional Court in February 2019. As a result, the outcome of the proceedings will not likely be known prior to the final GRCA budget presentation and general levy vote in February 2019.

Source Protection Meeting Summary

The Grand River Source Protection Authority approved an update to the Lake Erie Source Protection Region Partnership Agreement that will help ensure the safety of municipal drinking water systems and that the duties and responsibilities of the Source Protection Authorities are clearly defined. These amendments include the provision that source water protection planning is incorporated in the early stages of the municipal drinking water supply process.

The goal of these changes is to ensure that municipal residential drinking water systems are protected before the water supply is provided to the public.

The amendments recommended by the Lake Erie Source Protection Region Management Committee incorporated Clean Water Act Section 48 considerations, specifically, additional responsibilities of the Source Protection Authority. These additional responsibilities include reviewing technical work for the purpose of identifying anticipated amendments to the source protection plan, issuing notices to the drinking water system owner, and ensuring data and intellectual property agreements are in place and maintained.

This issue of *GRCA Current* was published in December 2018.

It is a summary of the November, 2018 business conducted by the Grand River Conservation Authority board and committees, as well as other noteworthy happenings and topics of interest.

The Grand River Conservation Authority welcomes distribution, photocopying and forwarding of *GRCA Current*.

Next board meeting:
January 25 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre

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