

Opportunities



2021-2022 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Grand River Conservation Foundation 2021-2022 Report to the Community

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Photo Credits

Front cover: Fishing the Nith River

Inside front cover: Guelph Lake sunset

Pages 4-5: Shade's Mills flowers - Judith Lefebvre

Page 7: Grand River Geese - Derek Harris

Page 20: Luther Marsh Canoe - Tina McAuley

Page 23: Tree Swallow - Brenda Doherty

Page 25: Grand River Bridge - Judee Richardson Schofield

Page 26: Grand River Deer - Dan Baskin

Page 27: Grand River Elora - G. Rosema



Paul Salvini
Chair, GRCF



Samantha Lawson
CAO, GRCA

As spring turns to summer and nature's resilience is on full display, I have learned that the only constant in this world is change. And that change is paralleled with our ever-changing Grand River watershed. I feel fortunate to be a part of this special group; I spend much of my time recreating outdoors and share gratitude that we all have such a special connection to this area.

Continuous protection of a healthy watershed has an endless list of benefits, ranging from a healthy ecosystem to fighting climate change. Then there are the layered economic benefits to maintaining a healthy watershed and its tributaries.

I get out in the watershed on the managed trails and reservoirs for various activities. I continue to appreciate seeing so many other happy faces on people and families who take the time to enjoy the nature and beauty that this watershed, and the Grand River Conservation Authority's managed trails, recreation areas, and conservation lands have to offer.

Paul Salvini, Chair
Grand River Conservation Foundation

This year brings a sense of renewal for the Grand River Conservation Foundation. Since 2020, our Foundation has proven its resilience through the positive efforts of our volunteer Directors. Our watershed communities have demonstrated a stronger desire to be out in the natural environment and enjoying the GRCA's managed properties and trails.

The GRCA is working towards implementing various legislative changes and continues to focus on its core mandates by helping to protect people and property from the risk of natural hazards, as well as drinking water source protection.

The Grand River Conservation Foundation and its many

thoughtful and caring donors act as stewards of the environment through fundraising efforts in support of the GRCA's programs and services that do not receive funding from municipal taxes. With strong dedication from each one of our donors, it is easy to see the positive impact that ongoing support plays on our watershed.

Through all of the GRCF programs, I am grateful for this Foundation's commitment to empowering the GRCA to achieve conservation results through recreation, education and restoration.

Samantha Lawson, Chief Administrative Officer
Grand River Conservation Authority



Who WE ARE

The Grand River Conservation Foundation is a registered charity founded in 1965. The GRCF channels donations from individuals, foundations, groups and businesses to Grand River Conservation Authority projects.

More than \$13 million has been raised to educate kids about the outdoors, restore vital wetlands, create habitat that promotes wildlife diversity and offer opportunities for people to enjoy the natural environment.

OUR Mission

The mission of the Grand River Conservation Foundation is to support and advance the work of the GRCA in protecting, sustaining, and promoting responsible use of the Grand River watershed.

OUR Vision

We envision a community that is connected, inspired and engaged in achieving a healthy watershed where everyone can live, work, play and prosper in balance with the natural environment.



Who is the GRCA?

The GRCA manages water and other natural resources on behalf of 38 member municipalities. The organization is a partnership of these municipalities, and provides an avenue to work together, addressing environmental issues and opportunities that serve to benefit the entire Grand River watershed.

As a member of Conservation Ontario, the GRCA is one of 36 conservation authorities in the province.

GRCA'S *Vision*

A healthy watershed where we live, work, play and prosper in balance with the natural environment.

GRCA'S *Mission*

We will work with local communities to reduce flood damage, provide access to outdoor spaces, share information about the natural environment, and make the watershed more resilient to climate change.



Did you know?

- The Grand River watershed is larger in area than Prince Edward Island and home to approximately one million residents, primarily living in Waterloo Region, Guelph and Brantford.
- Established in the mid-1930s, the GRCA is the oldest water management agency in Canada and one of the oldest in the world.
- The GRCA owns, protects and manages over 19,000 hectares of land, and operates close to 2,200 campsites and 11 conservation areas.
- The GRCA operates a robust river flow monitoring network and flood forecasting system that works in conjunction with dams and dikes to manage high flows and help mitigate the impact of flooding.
- The GRCA has supported more than 7,000 voluntary projects by rural landowners through the Rural Water Quality Program. This has resulted in the establishment of 1,500 hectares of tree cover through riparian buffer, field windbreak, living snow fence and marginal land retirement projects.

Moving Forward

Moving Forward with the New Guelph Lake Nature Centre

We remain grateful to all donors who have contributed to the revitalization of the Guelph Lake Nature Centre (GLNC). With support from the community, the campaign has raised significant funds towards the development of a brand-new facility.

Building a properly-scaled, accessible facility will help ensure that no child is turned away from the opportunity to experience the GRCA's outdoor environmental education program. The redesign of the new facility maintains an emphasis on accessible spaces and incorporates the importance of new technology and evolving trends in outdoor education. None of this would be possible without the generous contributions of our donors and the strong support for outdoor education in Guelph and Wellington County.

To date, work completed at the new GLNC and Learning Grounds includes the pollinator gardens, a pond, an outdoor classroom and nature trails. The parking lot and road access point have also been started, and the septic system at the new Guelph Lake Conservation Area maintenance shop was sized to accommodate the new nature centre facility.

GRCA staff continue to work with +VG Architects, and are in the final stages of seeking planning and permit approvals with the goal of proceeding to tender the project in 2023.



Bosch supports outdoor education

In 2022, the GRCF received a grant from the Bosch Community Fund in the amount of \$45,000 USD to support the GRCA's Outdoor Environmental Education Program.

The funds were used to provide equipment to help support the aquatic ecosystems programs for students in Grades 6, 7 and 9, and the active living GPS navigation programs for students in Grades 7-9 and 11-12. In addition, the funds helped to provide accessible opportunities through the purchase of all-terrain wheelchairs for students requiring this support at the nature centres.

In partnership with four of the largest school boards within the Grand River watershed, the GRCA provides outdoor environmental education programs to about

25,000 students each year. Through its dedicated and enthusiastic outdoor environmental education staff, the program provides unique, curriculum-based, hands-on learning opportunities that teach environmental concepts and foster a love of the natural world.

The Bosch Community Fund awards grants focused on the enrichment of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, the advancement of environmental sustainability initiatives, and eco+STEM, a cross section of the two.

The GRCF and the GRCA are immensely grateful to the Bosch Community Fund for its generous support!

Notable Projects

Rockwood shoreline stabilization and accessible kayak launch

In 2022, the GRCA undertook a shoreline stabilization project with the support of the Gilbert MacIntyre and Son Funeral Home that included the installation of an accessible kayak launch within Rockwood Conservation Area.

Situated at a popular access point that allows visitors with various levels of mobility to enjoy up close views of towering limestone cliffs, caves, and glacial potholes on both sides of the Eramosa River.

This work will mitigate erosion along the shoreline and maintains access, while protecting sensitive natural areas.



Taquanyah Conservation Area restoration

In October 2022, the GRCF contributed funding from the Grand Champions undesignated fund to support restoration efforts at Taquanyah Conservation Area for invasive phragmites treatments over the next three years. Taquanyah's ecosystems are home to a wide variety of resident and migratory species including several which are at risk. The conservation area contains one of only two known Canadian populations of the endangered Virginia mallow plant. The GRCA created a management plan aimed at suppressing populations of invasive phragmites, which is a major threat to this plant. The work has included herbicide application, phragmites stem injections and/or cut-fill techniques within Virginia mallow patches, vegetation community surveys, and updated mapping on the property. Results over the past 5 years have demonstrated a significant reduction of phragmites and an expansion of the Virginia mallow population.



Grants and Scholarships

Each year, the GRCF and GRCA award Community Conservation Grants to groups and schools undertaking conservation projects in communities throughout the Grand River watershed.

Congratulations to our 2021 winners, who were collectively awarded \$5,850:

Community Groups

Elmira District Community Living Reid Woods Group Home - Enabling Garden
Haldimand Horticultural Society/Caledonia Community Foundation - Nature Walk
Vista Hills Community Gardens - Native Pollinators Reintroduction
Waterloo Region Children's Safety Village - Pollinator Garden

Schools

Elora Public School - Yard Greening Project
Sheppard Public School - Ball Diamond Transformation
Rainham Central School - Trees for Learning
Westwood Public School - The Hive

Congratulations to our 2022 winners, who were collectively awarded \$6,000:

Community Groups

Arthur Trails Group - Pollinator Sanctuary
Vista Hill Community Gardens - Native Pollinators Re-introduction to Vista Hill Sundew Park
Ruthven Park National Historic Site - Soil Erosion Management

Schools

Country Hills Public School - Outdoor Classroom
Riverside Public School - Nature & Windbreak Area Phase 2
Sacred Heart (Rockwood) - Pollinator Garden/Green Space
Notre Dame Catholic School - Notre Dame Greening Project



Scholarships

The GRCF offers a selection of scholarships to post-secondary students who have shown excellence in environmental studies and who are pursuing careers in the environmental sector.*

SC Johnson Scholarship

This scholarship supports a full-time student who has completed their third year or sixth semester of an honours program at a university or college in the Grand River watershed (Waterloo, Guelph, Wilfrid Laurier) or second year of engineering at Conestoga College. The scholarship is funded by SC Johnson & Son Limited of Brantford, a long-time GRCF supporter.

2022 Recipient

Congratulations to Zachary Jones, the recipient of the 2022 SC Johnson Environmental Scholarship prize of \$4,000.

Zach is completing a degree in biological science at the University of Guelph, and demonstrated an ambition to pursue meaningful career goals in ecological and environmental sciences.

*The Allan Holmes Scholarship and McEwen Clean Water Prize are anticipated to resume in 2024 and 2025 respectively, and will then be offered in alternating years.



OUR *Donors*

Thank you to those who have made
an investment in our quality of life

The GRCF is grateful
to recognize the
many donors who
made donations
and future
commitments,
as well as to
conservation
partnerships in
2021 and 2022.

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Every effort has been made to ensure this list is up-to-date. We apologize for any errors or omissions.





Revenue

	2022	2021
Received donations	\$181,607	\$261,846
Non-received donations	152,629	91,235
Special events	-	-
Life insurance	615	615
Investment income	(9,311)	173,657
Other income*	2,224	(12,545)
Total	\$327,764	\$514,808

Expenditures

	2022	2021
Disbursements to GRCA projects**	\$500,532	\$167,566
Fundraising expenses	1,692	1,871
Special events	-	-
Staff support	8,809	27,635
General expenses	13,520	13,552
Other expenses	615	615
Total	\$525,168	\$211,239

*Includes interest income from the Kitchener and Waterloo, Cambridge & North Dumfries, Guelph and Brant Community Foundations. The GRCF has developed Grand River Conservation Funds at each.

**The GRCF's primary focus is project fundraising. Disbursements vary each year according to project timelines. With donor permission, funding for some projects is accumulated over a multi-year period and disbursed as needed.

Net Revenue & Fund Balances

	2022	2021
Fund balances, beginning of year	\$3,303,391	\$2,999,822
Current year net change in funds	(197,404)	303,569
Fund balances, end of year	\$3,105,987	\$3,303,391

All funds held within GRCF are restricted internally or externally for specific projects, with the exception of one undesignated fund which is allocated by our Board of Directors for the highest conservation priorities.



Our Leaders | Diversity & Strength in Leadership

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George Lourenco
Carolyn Weatherson
Ted Smith
Chris White (Ex officio)



A special acknowledgment for our board members who retired from the GRCF Board of Directors in 2021 & 2022:

James den Ouden
Paul General
Malcolm Matheson
Robin-Lee Norris
Richard Seibel

We are eternally grateful to the GRCF and GRCA boards of directors, past GRCF board members, GRCA staff, supporters and donors. Your expertise helps support our work in the stewardship of the land, water and ecosystems in the Grand River Watershed.





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