

GRCA General Membership

Chair	Helen Jowett
Vice-Chair	Chris White
Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon and Southgate and Town of Grand Valley	Guy Gardhouse
Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North	Pat Salter
Township of Centre Wellington	Kirk McElwain
Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch	Chris White
City of Guelph	Bob Bell, Mike Salisbury
Region of Waterloo	Les Armstrong, Elizabeth Clarke, Sue Foxton, Helen Jowett, Geoff Lorentz, Jane Mitchell, Joe Nowak, Wayne Roth, Sandy Shantz, Warren Stauch
Municipality of North Perth and Township of Perth East	George Wicke
Halton Region	Cindy Lunau
City of Hamilton	George Stojanovic
Oxford County	Bruce Banbury
County of Brant	Brian Coleman, Shirley Simons
City of Brantford	Dave Neumann, Vic Prendergast
Haldimand and Norfolk Counties	Bernie Corbett, Fred Morison

Review of communications and marketing

A consultant has reviewed internal and external communications for the GRCA and the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

Enterprise Canada spent six months reviewing the GRCA's communications products, publications and survey results, conducting interviews and researching communications of other conservation authorities.

The consultant's summary report includes 48 recommendations to enhance GRCA communications and ensure alignment with the GRCA's strategic plan, which is being updated this year.

Overall, Enterprise Canada found that the GRCA enjoys a positive image and solid reputation among its closest stakeholders. At the same time, it recognized that GRCA communications structures, processes, strategies and tactics need to be modernized.

Once the GRCA's strategic plan has been approved by the GRCA board, the consultant's recommendations will be reviewed to ensure they remain in alignment. Any financial implications stemming from the implementation of the consultant's recommendations would be incorporated into the budget forecast and planning process for 2019.

Niska settlement

An appeal of a City of Guelph Official Plan Amendment regarding eight hectares of GRCA property on Niska Road was withdrawn on March 14 when a settlement was reached between a Guelph resident, the City of Guelph and the GRCA.

The appeal was brought to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to oppose the redesignation of eight hectares of a 65-hectare GRCA property for residential development. As a result of the withdrawal of the appeal, the eight-hectare property was redesignated as residential under the City of Guelph's Official Plan. The

property is currently being farmed under an agricultural lease.

A management plan is being developed for the entire 65-hectare Niska Road property, which will outline how the GRCA will manage the land going forward.

Once the plan is complete, the City of Guelph, in collaboration with the GRCA, will establish a joint working group to help determine public access to the GRCA lands within the city limits. The working group will include members of the public.

The GRCA has set up a Niska land holdings page on www.grandriver.ca in the properties section and people can subscribe to stay updated.

Comments on provincial watershed planning

A GRCA report commenting on a provincial draft document called *Watershed Planning in Ontario: Guidance for Land-use Planning Authorities* was sent to the Environmental Registry during the 60-day public review that closed recently.

The draft document is intended to help guide municipalities so they can meet new and existing provincial land use plans. These provincial plans include the 2017 *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, the 2017 *Greenbelt Plan* and the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement under the Planning Act*.

The GRCA would like the province to defer finalizing this guidance document to allow more consultation with municipalities, conservation authorities and other stakeholders. While it includes sections on municipal and provincial roles in watershed planning, the document doesn't include a section on conservation authorities. It underplays the history, expertise, roles and resources that conservation authorities contribute to watershed planning.

Since the 1930s, the GRCA has been engaged in watershed planning, including work over many years with partners on the Grand River Watershed Management Plan. Since the 1980s, the GRCA has



been working with watershed municipalities and other stakeholders to undertake subwatershed plans. More than 60 subwatershed and master drainage studies have been completed within the GRCA's jurisdiction.

Seasonal camping

The GRCA is exploring a standardized approach to seasonal camping at the seven Grand River Parks where seasonal camping is offered.

About one-third of the 2,200 campsites provided at Grand River Parks are used for seasonal camping, but the percentage of sites varies quite a bit from one park to another. Most of the sites have water and electricity and some also have sanitary hookup. They are available during the park operating season, May 1 to October 15.

The GRCA will be assessing its seasonal camping program throughout 2018 as part of the conservation areas business plan update. As part of the assessment, the GRCA will explore alternatives to balance the number of seasonal sites and nightly sites, to make more serviced sites available to the public and to consider other ways campers can stay for a longer time.

Any changes recommended through the business plan will be implemented in 2019 and a transition period may be applied to changes to this program when it is implemented.

Four Tier 3 water budget studies

GRCA staff and municipal partners have been working on four Tier 3 water budget studies as a part of the Lake Erie Region Source Protection program, which is outlined by the Clean Water Act, 2006.

All source protection areas across the province have completed either a simple Tier 1 study or a more complex Tier 2 study. The most detailed type of study is a Tier 3 study, which has the objective of finding out if current and future municipal water supply needs can be met.

Over \$5 million has been invested by the province and municipalities in these studies to improve understanding of the potential risks that may impact municipal water supplies.



A corporate group volunteered to build turtle nest protectors at an event last month through the GRCA's volunteer program. For more information about the program, see www.grandriver.ca/volunteer.

The four Tier 3 studies in the Grand River watershed are at different stages of completion. The Region of Waterloo Tier 3 was completed in 2014. The City of Guelph and Guelph-Guelph/Eramosa Township Tier 3 study was completed in 2017, after nearly a decade of technical work. Additional technical work and policy development related to this study are currently underway. The Whitemans Creek Tier 3 study began in 2015 and is nearing completion. The Centre Wellington Scoped Tier 3 study was initiated in 2016. In addition to the technical component, it includes a community engagement process for local stakeholders and residents.

The Tier 3 studies are expected to be completed by the end of 2018. For more information about these studies, see www.sourcewater.ca.

Dry March weather

Precipitation has been below the long-term average across the watershed since the mid-February watershed-wide flood event that resulted from heavy rainfall and ice jams.

February was wet, with 50 per cent more precipitation than normal. However, this trend has been reversed, as March was a relatively dry month.

The GRCA is hoping there will be enough precipitation this spring to fill the reservoirs before the summer. Fortunately, precipitation is predicted to be normal or above-average

over the next couple of months.

Changes to gate access at Laurel Creek

Changes are coming to Laurel Creek Park in Waterloo this spring that will allow visitors to enjoy the park year-round.

Automatic gates at the gatehouse will be activated May 1. There is also a small parking lot and a trailer staging area.

These improvements will enhance access to the park during the camping season and

This issue of *GRCA Current* was published in April, 2018.

It is a summary of the March 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:

April 27 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre

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