

GRAND

THE GRAND STRATEGY NEWSLETTER

ACTIONS

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Grand River
Conservation
Authority



The Grand:
A Canadian
Heritage River

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These kids get right down to the serious business of learning about a river environment at a Grand River watershed nature centre.



RIVER KIDS

By Dan Schneider, Grand River
Conservation Authority

What's the best way to learn about our natural environment? By getting right into it. That's exactly what students do when they visit nature centres along the Grand River and its tributaries. These centres are designed to get kids outside, for hands-on learning about our precious natural resources.

With the guidance of experienced naturalists,

they catch crayfish, frogs and other water creatures in rivers and creeks, and learn how to assess water quality by identifying the animals that live there. They plant trees, and learn how our forests help to reduce flooding. They track wildlife, and learn how living things are all linked in food webs. They drill through ice on lakes, and learn how our water systems are managed to maintain a good water supply. All studies focus on our natural environment, highlighting the base of all life: water.

These studies fulfill important requirements of the education curriculum. A visit to a nature centre is often a culmination of what has been learned in the classroom, adding real-life experiences to theoretical work. But

the value of the visits goes far beyond immediate academic results. During these studies, the students themselves become linked to nature. By being part of the outdoors for a day, their memorable experiences will equip them for making wise decisions about our environment in the future.

Many people are surprised to discover what can be taught in the out-of-doors. Let's take a river study, for example. Students learn math by measuring the river's width, current speed and volume of flow. They learn chemistry by using

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kits to test water for pollution levels. They learn geography by examining how huge rivers from melting glaciers scoured out the river valleys. Identifying and classifying river animals that the students capture themselves fits right into biology. Natural areas are also powerful settings for developing visual and language arts skills, and for physical education activities to improve students' health.

In short, virtually every subject can be studied outside. Is it quality learning? Research indicates that classes learn better in a natural setting than an equivalent class studying inside, even when considering conventional core subjects like math and grammar. Perhaps this discovery isn't so surprising. Natural habitats and living things are real; there's nothing fake or representative about them. Boredom is reduced, and students can immediately apply what they know in a real setting.

To allow students to learn about our resources in a natural setting, the GRCA operates four nature centres: Apps' Mill Nature Centre, located on the bank of Whiteman's Creek near Paris; Shade's Mills Nature Centre, in Cambridge; Laurel Creek Nature Centre, in Waterloo; and the Guelph Lake Nature Centre. Each year, about 40,000 students in our watershed become river kids when they visit GRCA nature centres. These centres also offer outdoor, hands-on environmental programs to community groups, holiday day-campers, and conservation area visitors.

Many would agree that, as our watershed grows in population, and as technology reduces our connection to the natural world, it is becoming increasingly important for children to connect to nature. Ironically, funding environmental field trips has become more and more challenging for schools in recent years. Often, even when modest, even the cost of bussing to a

natural area is prohibitive.

To help more children learn about our natural environment, the Grand River Conservation Foundation has initiated a Children's Outdoor Education fund-raising campaign. The Foundation's aim is to have every student in our watershed visit a nature centre at least three times between kindergarten and grade eight. Each year, the fund will support environmental, outside learning for 31,000 students from the six boards in our watershed. This will cost approximately \$1 million over the next five years. The Foundation is also establishing a \$1 million endowment fund to support long-term environmental education.

A healthy environment is one of the greatest gifts we can leave for our children. The Foundation's Children's Outdoor Education fund-raising campaign will help teach them to pass on a healthy watershed to their children.

To find out more about GRCA Nature Centres and the Grand River Conserva-

tion Foundation contact Ralph Beaumont. Phone: (519) 621-2763, ext. 271. Email: rbeaumont@grandriver.ca

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Happy Anniversary Guelph

Guelph was 175 years old on April 23, 2002. To mark this milestone, Guelphites enjoyed a week of special events that included the City Hall Open House, the Guelph Historical Society's tree planting ceremony, and the 175th Anniversary Scholarship Dinner. The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Hon. James Bartleman, visited Guelph on the 23rd to share in the festivities. After addressing students at Our Lady of Lourdes High School, he met with City staff and



This spring, the Elora Cataract Trailway Association received a grant of \$74,905 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. In partnership with the GRCA, and the Grand River Conservation Foundation, the Association will use this to resurface the section of Trailway from Belwood village to east of Orton. From left to right, Tom Skimson, of the Elora Cataract Trailway Association; Ted Arnott, MPP Waterloo-Wellington and son Phillip; and Jim Gibbons, Trillium Foundation Representative for Wellington area.

council members and raised the official Citizen's Flag at City Hall. In the evening, the Lieutenant Governor was guest of honour at the gala dinner. At the dinner, representatives from Canada Post unveiled the official commemorative envelope. The envelopes feature images of the Church of Our Lady, a log building erected by John Galt, and the City of Guelph crest, and can be purchased from Canada Post for \$2.00.

On Saturday, April 27, the 11th Field Regiment re-enacted the "Freedom of the City" parade. Led by a pipe and drum band, the regiment marched through the downtown after Mayor Karen Farbridge granted it the ceremonial freedom to do so. The Mayor was also the guest of honour at the Regiment's "Castle Gala" ball on Saturday evening.

A commemorative publication, "Guelph: A People's History" was produced by the 175th Anniversary Steering Committee and was delivered to all homes in the city. Citizen's flags and other souvenirs are also available as part of the celebrations.

Although the official Birthday Week is over, celebratory events will continue throughout the year. Many community groups have registered their events with the Steering Committee, and these events will be promoted for the remainder of 2002.

Businesses Protect Groundwater

Businesses in Waterloo Region are starting to buy into a program designed to protect the local groundwater supply.

In 2000, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo implemented its wellhead protection policy, which essentially sets out what types of new business development can occur near the region's 120 groundwater wells. To complement these policies, the



This stained glass "quilt" was created by local artists in celebration of Guelph's 175th Anniversary. Each panel represents a memory or a part of Guelph that is of special significance to the artist.

Region, in consultation with local businesses, developed the Business Water Quality Program (BWQP) that provides financial incentives to businesses to implement measures to protect groundwater, surface water and sewers. The Ontario Centre for Environmental Technology Achievement (OCETA), a private sector, non-profit consulting group, delivers the program on behalf of the Region and its other funding partners, Environment Canada and the Ministry of Environment.

The BWQP provides cost share grants for facility assessments and to implement projects to protect water quality. Any company getting involved in the program is given a choice of four local environmental consulting firms for the assessment. Grants covering 50 per cent of the cost up to \$4,000 are available for the reviews. To help increase small business participation, grants to cover 75% of the cost of the facility review are available where the total review cost does not

exceed \$1,000. In addition, once a review is complete, there are grants available for companies to implement improvements. Grants cover 50 per cent of the implementation cost of an improvement up to \$14,000.

During the review process, the consulting staff looks over a company's operation and makes an inventory of toxic and hazardous chemicals. An assessment is done to ensure proper storage and containment measures. A priority list is made for improvements and changes that can be implemented as the company's finances permit.

Similarities in many commercial and service sector businesses may present an opportunity to conduct "group audits". A group audit assesses similar operations simultaneously and divides the total cost of the audit between participants. To reduce costs, one consultant designs the sector approach and conducts the audits. Each business participates in an

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individual and confidential audit based upon the sector approach. Group audits provide a low-cost, low-risk approach to identify and prioritize pollution prevention opportunities. Currently, group audits have been designed and are available for Waterloo Region dry cleaners and auto body refinishers.

Eleven companies from Cambridge, Kitchener and Elmira are now involved in the individual business program. The first company to complete the review was the Dana Wix Filtration Products plant in Cambridge. This facility produces 20 million oil and air filters annually for light cars and trucks and employs 240 full time staff.

Dana Wix completed a facility review and assessment and acted on the recommendations with the assistance of the grant funding available. A newly formed emergency response team has been trained, emergency spills kits purchased, and floor drains have been tested and capped in areas of the plant where there is risk of water pollution. The company received \$14,000 in cost sharing grants.

Future plans include implementing other best management practices, starting an oil recovery and re-circulation project, and transforming a former maintenance room to a chemical and hazardous waste storage area. Dana Wix is seeking additional grants for these projects.

Grant availability attracts companies to the Business Water Quality Program, but the big payoff to participating companies is long-term economic and environmental gains. The big payoff for the community is the protection of our vital groundwater resources.

For more information on the Business Water Quality Program, contact OCETA at (519) 575-4787. Email: bwqp@oceta.on.ca

A Tool for Protecting Farmland

by Elbert van Donkersgoed

The Mountsberg Conservation Area between Hamilton and Milton was a pleasant spring setting for an Ontario Farmland Conservation Forum. Eighty leaders from the farming and conservation community spent a day in late April exploring ways to stem the tide of agricultural lands in Ontario going out of production. Is it time that Ontario had a vigorous farmland trust initiative?

Ontario already has 30 land trusts. Most of these focus on the conservation of natural and historically significant properties.

Ontario has lost a lot of its farmland. Reach back to 1941 for example, and compare the land in farm production today—forty percent has been lost from agricultural production. Some has been retired to conservation land or forestry because today's farming technology needs the better land if farmers are going to make their payments on their machinery. But much has disappeared under city sprawl and scattered countryside development.

Farmland trusts are a hopeful tool for protecting the best farmland and the farm enterprises on them. The trust concept is simple: property owners donate the right to change the use of their lands to a not-for-profit corporation that is committed to the long-term conservation of those lands for farming. They do not give up ownership of the land, just the potential of the land to be sold for some other use. Mind you, if the land is close enough to a city and you are giving up the right to change farmland into a subdivision, the loss of value can be significant. Most land trusts offer tax deductions in return for the donation.

By themselves, farmland trusts can accomplish very little if they only protect the use of the land. Trusts need to help farming get off the treadmill to ever-lower prices. Trusts must shorten the

food chain, add value, and support a full range of economic uses on the land, not just raw material production. In today's reality, the business of agriculture for many farm families has become a contribution to family income. A successful trust will help make the rest of family income possible. Farmland trusts need to be part of an alternative to the present pattern of change. Individuals or society will not go out of their way to protect the farmland so that the farm sector can follow an industrial blueprint or gear up for more exports. Food is cheap enough.

We don't need trusts to help us produce cheaper raw materials or become more efficient. We do need farmland trusts as part of a bigger vision that joins food production with great places to live, picturesque landscapes, environmental stewardship, community development and an economically viable countryside.

Elbert van Donkersgoed is the Strategic Policy Advisor of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario.

GRCA Goes Wild

Last year, a committee was formed to help develop a plan to naturalize the grounds of the GRCA Administration Centre in Cambridge. After several meetings and a tour of some other naturalized sites, a long-term plan was developed to bring nature back to the landscape at the Administration Centre.

On June 10, volunteer GRCA staff will plant over 75 individual native plant species in the existing flower and shrub beds along the front of the building. Existing exotic shrubs were removed and some were sold at the annual forestry tree sale to raise money for the project. Naturalizations themes for this area include a songbird and butterfly gardens, a native tallgrass

prairie garden and native woodland fern and forest wildflower gardens. A new wheelchair access ramp will be installed at the front entrance.

All of the preparation work for the project will be done by GRCA in-house crews, resulting in considerable cost savings. Many of the native plants to be used in the project were raised at Burford Tree Nursery. The next phase, installing theme plantings on the front lawn, will start this fall.

Watering Your Lawn

By Roger D'Cunha, Region of Waterloo

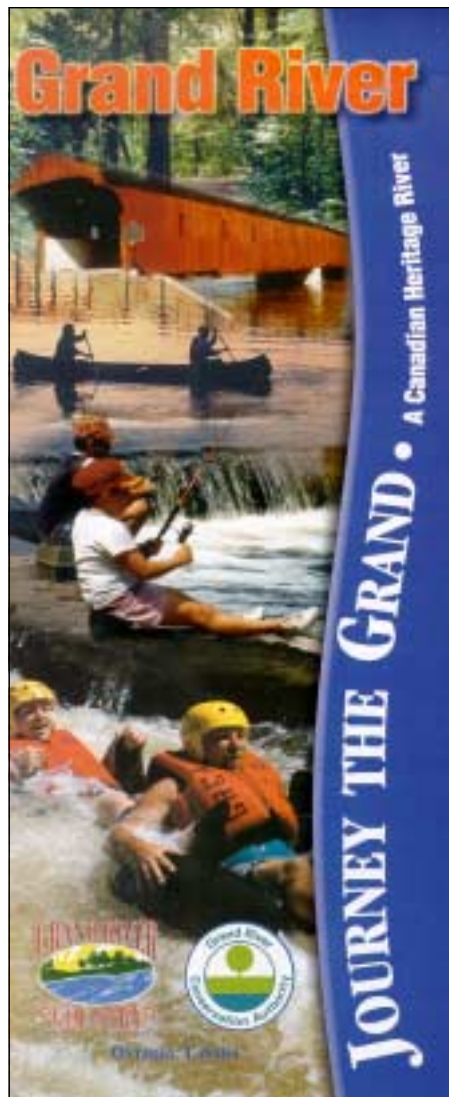
One of the most important issues surrounding outdoor water use is proper lawn watering. Most lawns receive far more water than they actually require to stay healthy. A lawn should be watered infrequently but thoroughly to achieve its healthy, green appearance. This practice will create a thick, well-rooted and deep root structure that efficiently uses water stored in the surrounding soil. Watering too frequently will cause your lawn to develop a shallow, weak root structure, making it more susceptible to dry conditions, diseases and pests.

Proper and consistent watering is the key to a beautiful and healthy lawn. Observe your lawn's condition to know when to apply water. Apply 2.5 cm or 1 inch of water to your lawn once per week or at the first signs of wilting or discolouration. Remember, your lawn needs only 2.5 cm or 1 inch of water per week to remain green and healthy.

Weather conditions play a vital role in how you water your lawn. During extreme dry conditions (summer of 2001), observe your lawn for changes and water no more than required. Lawns that appear to be brown are not dead but remain in a dormant stage until conditions improve. Once higher rainfall occurs, your lawn will recover in three to four weeks. Watering

during dry periods should be done carefully during times where evaporation is less likely, which is usually in the early morning or late evening.

Residents should refer to their municipal lawn watering by-laws to determine when lawn watering is permitted. If no by-laws exist, watering early in the morning or late in the evening and at no more than 2.5 cm or 1 inch per week are the best ways to ensure a beautiful and healthy lawn.



A new brochure, Journey the Grand, provides an all-in-one guide to tourist attractions and the communities of the Grand River watershed. GRCA's twelve Conservation Areas are also featured in this colourful publication.

Young Naturalists at Laurel Creek

The Young Naturalists' Club is looking forward to moving to a new home at the GRCA's Laurel Creek Nature Centre in Waterloo in September 2002. The Club is sponsored by the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists to promote the enjoyment of nature through hands-on activity, games, and crafts. The club is open to children seven to twelve years old and registration is necessary. Cost for the September to May session is \$20.00 per child and \$15 per additional child in the same family. Meetings are held on the last Saturday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the Laurel Creek Nature Centre. The program schedule and registration will be available in late August. For more information, contact Janet at 893-0490, or Pat at bigelow@sympatico.ca



NOW AVAILABLE

Journey the Grand

The GRCA and Grand River Country have teamed up to develop a new brochure, *Journey the Grand*, to promote the beauty and attractions of the Grand River watershed.

Grand River Country is an organization of community tourism groups within the watershed. It was created several years ago for joint promotion and marketing of the area. In the past both organizations published their own brochures; the GRCA's brochure featuring its 12 conservation areas, while the Grand River Country brochure detailed community tourist attractions such as the St. Jacob's Farmer's Market and the historic sites of the Six Nations.

By sharing costs and content, the two organizations were able to increase

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TRAILS MAP

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the press run and distribution range of the brochure and offer visitors an all-in-one guide to the Grand and its communities.

Ontario Trails Map

A new map of Ontario's recreational trails will be a hit with outdoor enthusiasts. The Ontario Trails Council's new map was formally unveiled at the Toronto Sportsmen's Show in March. The map provides an overview of all trails over 20 km in length and lists activities allowed on each trail as well as contacts for more information. It also shows the major snowmobile trunk routes and overlay systems, such as the National Hiking Trail. Maps are available at the GRCA Administration Centre, Cambridge, GRCA Conservation Areas, Nature Centres, and local Chambers of Commerce. The map is free at tourist information outlets but there is a handling charge for maps ordered from the Ontario Trails Council office.

The Ontario Trails Council is a province-wide organization promoting use and development of recreational trails in Ontario. The Council's membership includes individuals, trail management organizations and major trail user organizations such as the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, Hike Ontario and the Ontario Equestrian Federation. The Council's membership includes about 250,000 individuals serving an estimated five million Ontario trail users. The Council's current focus is to recognize the best of Ontario's trails as elements of the Trillium Trail Network—a high quality trail system providing healthy recreation to people in every corner of the province. For more information, contact the Ontario Trails Council at 1-877-668-7245. Email: admin@ontariotrails.on.ca

LOOK WHO'S TAKING ACTION

Scout Trees 2002

Watershed Scouts lived up to their motto by being prepared for a cold weekend and hard work at Luther Marsh on May 4th. Despite low temperatures and the already soggy ground, 150 Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and their leaders planted 1,300 trees, mostly white pine, with some tamarack, supplied by the GRCA. Special arrangements were made for camping at the site for the 9th Guelph, 1st Rockwood, 29th Guelph, 26th Guelph, 2nd Guelph and 1st Hillsburgh groups. Other scout groups came out for the Saturday morning.

Plantings are to provide wildlife corridors north of the dam, and to patch up a machine-planted windbreak. Last year's plantings were also checked, with the encouraging news that there was a 75

per cent survival rate. The weekend was not all work as the scouts took advantage of the wild and beautiful area with stargazing, fishing, wildlife observations and other activities.

The Glass Quilt

The Glass Guild of Guelph celebrated the City of Guelph's 175th anniversary in a unique way. Guild members created a glass "quilt" with each of the "blocks" being an individual creation in stained glass. Each 8½ by 11 inch panel is based on some aspect of Guelph's natural and human history, architecture and special events. The colours purple and pink are used in the anniversary logo, and a special purple glass is incorporated into each panel and into the frame.

Twenty-four guild members participated in the project and also wrote a brief description of their panel and



Scouts, Cubs and Beavers are making a difference to the environment. These hard working youngsters were part of a Luther Marsh tree planting weekend in May.

why they chose that particular subject. Suspended and backlit, the “quilt” is an incredibly beautiful work that has special meaning for Guelph residents.

The Glass Guild of Guelph is an organization dedicated to the promotion and appreciation of glass art. It provides education, coaching, support and social interaction for people at all different levels of ability. The Guild is a member of the Guelph Arts Council.

New members are always welcome, and information about the guild can be obtained through the Guelph Arts Council. Email: glassgofg@netscape.net

Clarica Helps Rail Trails

Clarica, a member of the Sun Life Financial group of companies, has launched a new ink cartridge recycling program at its Waterloo facilities. This endeavour will help the environment as well as raise funds for the GRCA Rail-Trails Project. The project involves Greentec International’s “Thinkgreen” program, an environmentally friendly fundraising program offered to businesses, charities, and schools. Greentec, a Mississauga company, prepares the cartridges for reuse, providing up to \$5 for each cartridge and one tree seedling for every 12 cartridges.

Clarica hopes to collect approximately 2,500 to 3,000 recyclable cartridges, raising between \$5,000 and \$7,000, and has selected the Grand River Conservation Foundation to receive the donation. To date, the Foundation has raised more than \$1.5 million to both acquire and develop the GRCA’s four rail-trails, and this new donation will be used for their upgrading and maintenance.

In its first year the “Thinkgreen” program diverted 12,000 print cartridges from landfills, and through the TreeCanada Foundation planted 1,200 trees. More than 250 schools in the Greater Toronto and Kitchener-



Nick and Peggy Sadowsky take a photo break on their “dream trip” down the Grand River. Their trip will inspire others to become better acquainted with our diverse and scenic Grand.

Waterloo areas are participating in the program. For additional information, contact Nicholas Thomas at Clarica. Phone: (519) 888-3160. Email: nicholas.Thomas@clarica.com

Grand Paddling

Nick and Peggy Sadowsky long dreamed of paddling the entire 290 km length of the Grand River. The resolute members of the Ancient Mariners Canoe Club recently accomplished this in their 70s. Their odyssey was undertaken in several stages as water levels and weather allowed, and began at Riverview, a few miles south of Dundalk. Here the river is only a few feet wide and a few inches deep. The intrepid canoeists journeyed south through quiet villages and lush farmland. Rocky sections with fast flowing riffles and standing waves provided small challenges upstream of Belwood Lake, and strong headwinds almost pushed them backwards during the 11 km journey down the lake.

High water levels helped below the Shand Dam. The reaches near Fergus and Elora were especially scenic and enjoyable, despite portages through both towns and around the Elora Gorge. Here the water runs clean and clear enough to see fish darting under the canoe and, in some open sections, golf balls growing on the river bottom! The going was easy from the south end of Elora through to Kitchener and Cambridge.

Wildlife sightings were plentiful below Cambridge with lush Carolinian forest lining the riverbanks. In this stretch, the canoeists saw deer, wild turkeys, beavers, muskrats, and turtles, as well as osprey, herons and many other birds. Rocks and rapids provided a change of pace through Glen Morris down to Penman’s Dam in Paris.

The broad river reaches below the Six Nations lands presented a different Grand, with power boats plying the river, the occasional float plane, and

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pontoon dinner cruise patrons waving the paddlers on. Below Caledonia, gravel bars were navigated with care until the river became wider and virtually still above the Dunnville Dam. The marshes below Dunnville provided a bird and wildlife paradise until suddenly, round a bend, the travellers could see their destination—Lake Erie and the lighthouse marking the entrance to Port Maitland.

Members of the Ancient Mariners joined Peggy and Nick through some sections, and have shared with them some of the beautiful memories of their river adventure. For the Sadowskys, this was indeed a Grand journey.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In 1792, the Mississaugas surrendered land reaching from the present day Burlington to the headwaters of the Grand, to the British government for the sum of £1,180.7s.4d. sterling. This huge tract included present day Guelph. It took another 35 years for settlement to begin.
- John Galt, founder of Guelph, was a Scottish novelist, poet and biographer of Lord Byron.
- Galt's first trip to the proposed site of Guelph in 1827 was quite unpleasant. Galt and a companion, "Tiger" Dunlop, were separated from the main party soon after leaving the village of Galt (as Shade's Mills had been renamed in his honour). After being lost in the forest in pouring rain for several hours, they finally met up with their group. As darkness fell, a tree cutting ceremony was held to mark the site of the new town.
- The name Guelph goes back to mediaeval times when the Ghibelline and the Guelph parties contended for dominance in Italy. Descendents of the Guelph party leaders ruled as crowned heads in Europe, eventually producing George I, King of England.
- In 1834, a travelling show brought the first case of cholera to Guelph. Outbreaks of this dreaded disease

were frequent in Ontario in the early 1800s.

- James Logan, a Scottish visitor to Guelph in 1836 wrote "The road (into Guelph) was good, and the country well cleared on both sides... This village (Guelph) which has a population of about 700, is prettily situated on a sloping hill... There are three churches, all frame, an English, a Scotch and a Catholic...
- In September 1909, the new Guelph waterworks was opened. It operated by gravity and cost \$125,000.
- In 1909, gas was furnished to Guelph residents at "\$1 per thousand feet", and power was delivered from Niagara Falls at one half the price it was furnished to Buffalo.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is produced as a communications tool by the Grand River Conservation Authority on behalf of the partners in *The Grand Strategy*. This newsletter can be seen on the Internet at www.grandriver.ca

For information on *The Grand Strategy*

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For newsletter submissions

Contact the Editor, Liz Leedham, c/o Barbara Veale at the above address. Newsletter submissions must be made by the 15th of the month prior to publication, and may be subject to editorial change. Tax deductible donations and sponsorships toward the cost of producing this newsletter are always welcome.

Publications Mail

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THE GRAND STRATEGY CALENDAR

July 27 to 28, 2002, Grand River PowWow, Six Nations of the Grand River, at Chiefswood Tent and Trailer Park, Ohsweken.

August 2 to 3, 2002, Mill Race Festival, Cambridge. Traditional music and dancing. For information contact Brad McEwen at (519) 621-7135. Email: mill_race@yahoo.com

August 9 to 11, 2002, Brantford Riverfest 2002. Contact Leslie Rachar, (519) 758-5579. Email: les.koop@sympatico.ca

August 9 to 11, 2002, Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games, Fergus. Email: info@fergusscottishfestival.com for more information.

September 20, 2002, 2nd Annual Grand River Watershed Water Forum, 8:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the GRCA Administration Centre, Clyde Road, Cambridge. Registration \$50. For information contact Carol Bystriansky, (519) 621-2763, ext. 220. Email: cbystriansky@grandriver.ca