

GRAND

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ACTIONS

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Grand River
Conservation
Authority



The Grand:
A Canadian
Heritage River

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Cover photo

*The Mill Creek Rangers
(left to right) Silvie Van
Twest, Chris Zulinov,
Helena Krolak and
Danielle Campbell make
repairs to an existing
waterway improvement
which has improved fish
habitat and deepened
this section of Mill
Creek in the Bond
Tract, just east of
Cambridge. (Photo by
Ray Martin, Cambridge
Times.)*



Learning on the job

Students learned environmental lessons
while improving health of Mill Creek

By Ray Martin
Cambridge Times Staff Writer

Danielle Campbell and her colleagues were the guinea pigs in a new experiment that could see significant improvements in water quality and fish habitat across Ontario.

The 17-year-old Cambridge student was part of a team of four 17-year-olds and a team leader

who were pioneering the Mill Creek Rangers project.

Robert Messier, technical advisor for the project, explained that the ranger project on Mill Creek was far more than a simple summer works project designed to keep the teens busy over the summer.

"This project is more than just simple grunt work. There is also an opportunity for enhanced

learning,” he said.

The students selected for the project came from across the Grand River watershed with representatives from Cambridge, Guelph, Kitchener and Erin.

Each of the students was interested in pursuing a career in environmental studies.

Team leader Ben McGill hailed from Hanover, but recently moved to Kitchener after completing his fish and wildlife technician studies at Sir Sandford Fleming College.

“This has been an excellent experience for me,” he said. “I’ve been involved with the construction and placement of in-stream enhancements and doing a lot of stream rehabilitation. It’s also provided me with supervisory experience.”

The Mill Creek Rangers project has been created through a three-way partnership between the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) and the Friends of Mill Creek, a community group made up of environmentalists, property owners and business people living and working along Mill Creek.

“Unlike the provincial rangers program, the Mill Creek Rangers aren’t restricted to working on public land,” Messier said. “The work being done here is being done on both public and private land with the permission of the owners.”

Though the Friends of Mill Creek, the rangers project was able to access equipment, materials and insurance from the GRCA, as well as acquire some funding from the businesses involved. The community group helped the rangers gain access to private property to implement stream improvements.

For its part, the MNR assisted by sending McGill to health and safety courses in Dorset with its ranger trainees.

“The partnership has really worked out well and it’s allowed us to focus the money we have on ground enhancements,” Messier said.

The Mill Creek Rangers got their feet wet at the beginning of the summer doing a cleanup at the mouth of the waterway in downtown Galt.

“They worked in the area from Main Street to Soper Park. The park is in great shape, the city has done a great job there, but we pulled all sorts of stuff out of the creek below the park.”

In addition to working south of Soper Park, the crew also did a cleanup further upstream between the dam at Shades Mills and Franklin Boulevard.

“I couldn’t believe the things they were pulling out of that short stretch of creek. There was an old toboggan, 14 tires on their rims, an alternator, shopping carts and all sorts of litter,” he said.

The rangers took on another job set out by the Friends of Mill Creek. Working just outside Cambridge in the Bond Tract, the students thinned the cedar forest, bundled together the trees they cut and then strategically placed the trees along the banks of the creek to create shade and habitat for young fish as



Rangers Silvie Van Twest, Helena Krolak and Danielle Campbell bundle fresh cut trees for installation on Mill Creek.

(Photo by Ray Martin, Cambridge Times)

well as catch excess sediment in the water. The work was also designed to narrow the creek’s channel and eventually deepen the watercourse cooling its water.

“The one thing that is great about this work is you know if you’ve got it right almost immediately,” Messier said.

While up the MNR and conservation authority has been able to improve the creek along the publicly owned stretches of the cold water stream, the partner-

ship with the Friends of Mill Creek provided new opportunities to make improvements to other sections of the creek, which meanders from Aberfoyle to the Grand River in Cambridge.

“What this project is allowing us to do is develop linkages between the publicly held sections of the creek, which will improve this cold water stream,” Messier said.

In previous years GRCA staff electroshocked one small section of the creek and found a single brown trout. They then made a series of improvements to the section of the creek. Five years later another fish count was made and 300 brown trout of various sizes were found in the same area.

“I’ve learned a lot about this creek and trout this summer. It’s been real education,” Campbell said.

Silvie Van Twest, another Mill Creek Ranger from Guelph said, “It’s been a lot of fun. We’ve learned a lot about environmental conservation. The one thing I found was that electroshocking fish is not quite as dangerous as I thought.”

Messier believes the Mill Creek Rangers has the potential to grow from a pilot project into a long-term program.

“Right now we’re talking with the Puslinch Optimist Club about creating some sustainable funding for the next two years,” he said.

“The potential is there that this could end up being a model for thousands of creeks across the province.”



*Carl Hiebert flies his ultralight over the Grand River watershed to collect photos for his new book *The Grand River – An Aerial Journey*.*

New book offers a unique view of the Grand River watershed

Read the standard-issue biography of Carl Hiebert, and you'll learn that he has been "confined to a wheelchair" since 1981 after a hang-gliding accident.

"Confined" is hardly the right word to use to describe Hiebert.

Little confines this Waterloo resident, who has made a name for himself as a pilot, photographer, adventurer and motivational speaker.

Hiebert has operated his own flight school, crossed Canada in an ultralight — the first person to do so — and published books on topics as diverse as the seldom-photographed beauty of Haiti and a photographic essay on the children of Mennonite country.

Hiebert's latest adventure took him from Dundalk to Dunnville as he followed the many twists and turns of the Grand River along its 300-kilometre trip from the Dufferin Highlands to Lake Erie.

The voyage has been captured in his fifth book, *The Grand River: An Aerial Journey*, which has been published by the Grand River Conservation Foundation as a fund-raising project. Proceeds from the sale of the book will support the foundation's Living Classroom Campaign for

Outdoor Education.

The book will be formally launched at a concert of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony at the Centre in the Square on Nov. 2. (The book is available in stores or on-line at www.grandriver.ca)

Hiebert flew during all four seasons in 2002 to capture the 150 images in the book.

Open any page and you'll see the Grand River as you have never seen it before. The pictures show the grandeur



Hiebert signs books during a recent visit to the GRCA head office in Cambridge.

of the river and its people from new perspectives, depicting its scenic landscapes, historic sites and thriving communities. Above all, the book celebrates the creativity, passion, work and wit of the people of the Grand.

"The river, over the course of the summer, became a metaphor for my own life," said Hiebert. It starts small, as "two streams trickling out of a bush lot," and gradually grows and gains in stature and experience.

The two streams flowing through Hiebert's life — flying and photography — came together he was an adult, although they trickled out of his childhood experiences.

"As a child, my mother would often find me in a tree or on the top of a roof," said Hiebert. "I had an inherent fascination with seeing the world from that perspective."

He has vivid memories of his first plane ride as a five-year-old, watching the "rhythmic patterns of the waves along the shoreline."

It was decades later that he took up hang gliding and flying. And it was while sitting in the seat of his ultralight plane that he started to become a serious photographer.

"God gives us our talents," said Hiebert. "Our job is to get in touch with those abilities and fine tune them."

He put both talents on display in 1986 when he crossed Canada in his ultralight, after which he produced a photographic record of the trip in his book, *Gift of Wings*.

But even though he has flown hundreds of times, and had seen most of Canada, he still found something new to record during his 2002 journey along the Grand River.

He was surprised by the wide variety of the landscapes of the Grand River watershed. He's most familiar with the central section, particularly Waterloo Region, where he has lived most of his life. The rich, fertile farmland of the central Grand gave birth to the burgeoning cities of Guelph, Kitchener, Waterloo,

Cambridge and Brantford.

But farming isn't as fruitful in the heavier soils of the north and south of the watershed and the result is sparser population and more Spartan structures.

One other thing that Hiebert learned on his journey – or, rather, re-learned – is the virtue of patience.

It's difficult enough trying to combine flying and photography, but it's all the more complicated when you also have to juggle a list of subjects and the vagaries of the weather.

The hot weather of 2002 meant there was often haze in the air on days when he wanted to fly, but he kept trying until he got enough good days to shoot all the photos he wanted.

He also spent the better part of a week grounded near York, in Haldimand County, as he waited for good weather so he could get into the air over the Southern Grand region.

The flip side of the coin, though, is that sometimes the best shots came without any planning.

A photo of farm irrigation guns firing high into the sky, creating a rainbow across the middle of the frame "came out of nowhere," said Hiebert.

Another photo shows trees along the edge of a farm field, with the morning sun "herd(ing) the frost-rimmed shadow back into the forest," as the caption describes it.

That shot came by chance, too. It was a cool day and Hiebert wasn't really dressed for it so he decided to call it a day.

"I was coming in to land when I went 'Look at this'," said Hiebert. "In 23 years I never saw it happen before."

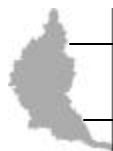
With the book on the stands, Hiebert is looking to a new adventure in a life that is already thick with experiences.

He's planning a trip to Southeast Asia to see the impact that AIDS has had on the children of the region.

"Life is a series of chapters. This has been a long one," he says of his experiences as a pilot and photographer. "But it's only one part of life."



Dr. Stephen Born of the University of Wisconsin discusses watershed management issues in a speech to the Third Annual Grand River Watershed Water Forum.



MILESTONES

Milestones are progress or products of *The Grand Strategy* Joint Work Plan.

Forum provides insights into watershed issues

In just three years, the Grand River Watershed Water Forum has become one of the most important events on the calendar for those with an interest in water issues.

This year the forum attracted more than 380 delegates to hear top provincial, national and international experts address issues ranging from nutrient management to worldwide water consumption.

The daylong event was held Sept. 12 under a marquee on the front lawn of the GRCA office in Cambridge. It was sponsored by *The Grand Strategy* Water

Managers Working Group, which is made up of municipal water system officials and representatives of provincial, federal and other organizations that deal with water issues in the Grand River area.

A highlight of this year's forum was the presentation of the first Grand River Watershed Report by **Paul Emerson**, the GRCA's chief administrative officer. The 16-page publication was distributed to 200,000 households in the Grand River watershed in mid-September.

Emerson told the audience the purpose of the report was to give the residents of the watershed an understanding of some of the most important issues facing the watershed and some of the steps being taken to address them. It provides information on key indicators of watershed conditions that will be updated in future annual reports.

He focused on water quality, water quantity and land resource issues, pointing out the improvements that have taken place in all three areas in the past

50 years. However, the pressures brought by population growth and agricultural intensification mean that the GRCA and watershed municipalities are going to have to maintain, or even increase, their efforts in all areas.

The Grand River watershed is not alone in facing these kinds of pressures, said **William Cosgrove**, the vice-president of the World Water Council. The world's population tripled during the 20th century but water use rose six times. Large portions of the world, in both developed and developing regions, face a water crisis, said Cosgrove. However, the World Water Vision, an analysis of the issues, suggests that by making changes in our approach to water issues the world can overcome the threats. Reducing the amount of water used to produce food, through better irrigation methods, and empowering local people and communities so they can act on water issues are among the steps that need to be taken, said Cosgrove.

John Mills, Regional Director General of Environment Canada's Ontario Region described some of the new approaches to tackle water issues in Canada. Environmental issues can't be considered in isolation and a more integrated approach is needed, he said. The process starts with the federal government, which is bringing together its various initiatives in the Great Lakes watershed to address issues. That will also make it easier to integrate federal, provincial and local initiatives to ensure programs are delivered with maximum benefit. A process called Integrated Water Resources Management will bring a "bottom up" approach to addressing issues, he said.

Two of the major issues facing Ontario were addressed by assistant deputy ministers from the provincial government. **Dr. Deb Stark** of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food provided an overview of nutrient management legislation, which regulates how nutrients, such as fertilizers and manure, are used on the farm. The regu-

lations, which are now starting to be phased in, will specify how, where and when nutrients can be spread in order to minimize the impact on watercourses and aquifers.

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment is working with conservation authorities, municipalities, industry, farm groups and others to develop a way to implement watershed-based source protection planning in Ontario, said **Doug Barnes**, assistant deputy minister. The report of the inquiry into the Walkerton tainted water tragedy recommended source protection planning as one method of protecting Ontario's drinking water. It involves protecting the sources of drinking water to keep the water from becoming polluted in the first place. Source protection planning is also cost effective because it is generally cheaper to protect water than to clean it up later.

Dr. Stephen M. Born, a professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, said the watershed-based approach is a relatively new, but increasingly productive way of addressing water and environmental issues. The reason that it has become so useful is that it addresses broader goals, enhances co-ordination of resources and information, results in shared decision-making and is action-oriented.

In the Grand River watershed, a great deal of progress has been made in watershed planning, reported **Lorrie Minshall**, the GRCA's manager of watershed resources. Much of the scientific study needed to support a watershed-based source protection plan for the Grand River has already been done or is in progress. The work has allowed researchers to identify source areas, determine how susceptible they are to pollution and to predict the impact of urban growth on water quality over the next few decades. This information will be helpful in establishing a foundation for a source protection plan.

One important part of the process of protecting water sources will be address-

ing nutrient management on watershed farms. **Stewart Cressman** of Crystal Brook Farms. Some farmers have expressed concerns about elements of the nutrient management regulations, he noted, and are looking for ways to implement them without undermining their ability to continue farming profitably. They are looking for practical and affordable standards that are consistent across the province with acceptable timelines for implementation.

Industries are also playing a critical role in addressing water quality and water supply issues. **Jerry Norskog**, president of McNeil Consumer Healthcare of Guelph described his company's efforts to reduce water use. Between 1990 and 2000 the company increased production 300 per cent, grew 40 per cent in employee strength and added 30 per cent to its buildings but managed to reduce water consumption by 75 per cent. The company is also promoting tree planting, reducing paper waste and taking other steps to reduce the corporation's "environmental footprint."

Trojan Technologies of London has become a world leader in development of water purification systems using ultra-violet rays. **Hank Vander Laan**, chairman of the company, described how changes in government regulations regarding water are providing opportunities for companies to develop new technologies. His company has invested more than \$45 million in research and development and has installed equipment in North America and Europe. UV rays can be used as an alternative to chemical-based water treatment systems.

Gord Miller, Environmental Commissioner for Ontario delivered a closing address summarizing the presentations.

Copies of the presentations will be posted on the GRCA's web site at www.grandriver.ca.

The Fourth Annual Water Forum is scheduled for Sept. 17, 2004.

Public input needed for heritage river assessment

The Grand River and its major tributaries, the Nith, Conestogo, Eramosa and Speed Rivers are Canadian Heritage Rivers. This status was achieved in 1994. Why? The answer is simple. The Grand River watershed tells the story of the history and development of central Canada in a way that is still visible and meaningful. Its rich river culture has been preserved in the landscapes, buildings, bridges, mills and settlement patterns that still exist today. The excellence and diversity of recreation opportunities associated with the Grand River also contribute to the designation. Water quality has improved significantly over the past 60 years. Watershed residents enjoy hiking, paddling and fishing the Grand. A spirit of cooperation among municipalities, agencies, GRCA, community groups and others is widespread.

We will be celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Canadian Heritage River designation in 2004. Anniversaries typically cause us to reflect on the past and ponder the future so it is now timely to assess our actions and activities relative to the vision, values, goals and objectives contained in *The Grand Strategy*, the management plan that was tabled with the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board in 1994. In fact, a 10-year monitoring report must be tabled with the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board in May 2004 to maintain the Heritage River status.

The GRCA, with the assistance of the Heritage Working Group, a partnership of representatives from various heritage interests throughout the watershed, is developing the 10-year monitoring report. This report will assess the condition of the features and values for which the river was declared a Canadian Heritage River and outline a collaborative action plan to strengthen planning, management and decision-making

capacities around them. As such, an effective action plan cannot be developed without broad public input and participation.

In June, eight public forums were held in various communities throughout the watershed to reaffirm and update the watershed vision, values, principles, goals and objectives contained in The Grand Strategy and to discuss heritage and recreation issues, management opportunities and challenges. While dialogue was wide-ranging and passionate on many issues, only 75 people attended these forums.

Many individuals and municipal representatives have told us that the Grand River is a focal point for community revitalization, economic development and improving quality of life for watershed residents. As such, your input is key to putting together a meaningful action plan that provides a road map for us to work towards our common goals. Please demonstrate your interest by taking a few moments to complete our survey at www.grandriver.ca by Dec. 31.

If you have questions or would like to discuss your ideas please contact Barbara Veale at (519) 621-2763 ext. 274 or Sonia Morgan at ext. 279.

Heritage bridges of the Grand

The tenth anniversary of the designation of the Grand River and its tributaries as a Canadian Heritage River is taking place in 2004.

As part of the requirement for maintaining the heritage river status, a 10-year monitoring report must be tabled with the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board in May 2004.

One of the requirements of the report is to assess the status of the features and values for which the river system was declared a heritage river. In 2000, the inventory of key human heritage features and values compiled for the designation was updated with the assistance of heritage groups and knowledgeable individuals. Subsequently, the Canadian Heritage Rivers System finalized "A Cultural Framework for Canadian Heritage Rivers." This framework is built around the concepts of human use of rivers and the influence of rivers on human activities. In January the GRCA categorized the inventory according to the new framework and discovered it is not complete as it relates to bridges since only bridges listed under the



The Freeport Bridge in Kitchener, currently being refurbished, is one of several historic bowstring bridges spanning the Grand River. (Photo by Carl Hiebert)

Ontario Heritage Bridge Program were included.

In recent years, the issues of the functionality, safety and possible replacement of several historic bridges have been the subjects of public debate in several watershed communities. In some instances, the Grand River Conservation Authority has been asked by the federal Department of Canadian Heritage to comment on this matter relative to the Canadian Heritage River designation. In this regard, the GRCA has advised that, if listed under the Ontario Heritage Bridge Program, the heritage bridge would be a river-related feature that supports the Canadian Heritage River designation. As such, the GRCA, through its advisory comments, has encouraged municipalities to preserve the bridge if possible, respectfully acknowledging that decisions regarding the future of the bridge remain with the municipality.

Since a systematic evaluation of heritage bridges throughout the watershed has not been carried out to specifically determine those structures that are important to the Canadian Heritage River status, the GRCA is currently embarking on a bridge inventory as part of the 10-year monitoring report. This information will be the first step in determining, in consultation with our member municipalities and watershed residents, which bridges are significant to the heritage river designation in addition to those listed under the Ontario Heritage Bridge Program, many of which have already been replaced.

The Canadian Heritage River designation provides national and even international recognition and profile for the Grand River. While the Canadian Heritage River designation has no regulatory or legal restrictions associated with it, the intent of the designation is to encourage all stakeholders to preserve and interpret the important features and values, which support the designation. The loss of one feature or value does not in itself warrant the loss of the heritage river status. It is the cumulative effect



Robert Feagan of the Brantford Community Foundation's Environment Committee, presents a cheque to Brantford Councillor Marguerite Ceschi-Smith, Co-chair of the Brant Rural Water Quality Program, for tree planting to improve the quality of water entering streams in Brantford and Brant County from farmland.

of the loss of many of these features, which would cause the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board to re-evaluate the status of the Grand River. Identifying those heritage bridges important to the Heritage River designation provides a better context for consideration in this regard and will avert any debate about other bridges as they relate to the designation.

Stephen Robinson and Tracie Seedhouse of Robinson Heritage Consulting have been retained to undertake the Grand River Heritage Bridge Inventory. They will be meeting with municipal representatives to gather information about the history and status of bridges that cross the Grand and its major tributaries. If you have stories about bridges in your community, your input would be most welcome.

For more information about the project or to provide comments, contact Robinson Heritage Consulting at (519) 624-4663 or e-mail: robinsonheritage-consulting@hotmail.com



LOOK WHO'S TAKING ACTION

Foundation supports rural water program

The Brantford Community Foundation has donated \$3,500 to support tree planting as part of the Brant-Brantford Rural Water Quality Program.

The foundation is making the donation out of the \$10,000 US donation it received from the Great Lakes Community Foundation Environmental Collaborative.

The Rural Water Quality Program is a partnership of the City of Brantford, County of Brant, the GRCA and local agricultural and environmental groups. It also receives money from the Healthy Futures program of the Ontario government.

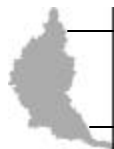
The program helps farmers adopt new farming methods that keep water clean. There have been 54 projects completed

and \$212,000 invested.

One major component is tree planting along streams and rivers, which reduces erosion, runoff of polluted water into streams and provides wildlife habitat.

Rural landowners from Brantford and the County of Brant can participate in the program by contacting Louise Heyming of the GRCA at (519) 621-2761 in Cambridge or by e-mail at lheyming@grandriver.ca

A portion of the Brantford Community Foundation's funds from the Great Lakes Community Foundation have also been allocated to the Grand River Conservation Authority for an aerial survey of the Exceptional Waters section of the Grand River between Brantford and Paris.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

A.D. Latornell Symposium

The A. D. Latornell Conservation Symposium is Ontario's most prestigious and well-attended conservation confer-

ence. It attracts over 600 delegates including international researchers and practitioners, conservation authorities, federal and provincial agencies, municipalities, university students, private businesses and community groups.

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of the Symposium. It will be held at the Nottawasaga Inn and Conference Centre in Alliston, Ontario from Nov. 12 to 14. The main sponsors for the event, Conservation Ontario and the Centre for Land and Water Stewardship, University of Guelph, partner with many other Ontario groups and agencies to organize and deliver a quality event.

The theme for this year's symposium is Protecting the Source...from Upstream to Downstream. As a result of the Walkerton tragedy three years ago, one of the leading priorities for Ontarians is safeguarding our drinking water. Plenary and concurrent sessions at the symposium will explore how to protect those sources using innovative approaches and new partnerships. This topic is particularly relevant for Grand River watershed residents since most of our drinking water is extracted either from local groundwater or surface water.

For more information about the

Symposium, visit the website at www.latornell.ca

Heritage Day Workshop scheduled

The industrial heritage of the Grand River watershed will be discussed at the annual Heritage Day workshop sponsored by the Heritage Working Group of *The Grand Strategy*.

The event is set for Monday, Feb. 16, 2004, which is Heritage Day.

The title of the day is Industrial Legacies: Boom, Bust and Beyond.

It will be held in the Brant-Brantford area. Information on registration and location will be in the next issue of *Grand Actions*.

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

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Newsletter submissions must be made by the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be subject to editing for length or style. Tax deductible donations and sponsorships toward the cost of producing this newsletter are always welcome.

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Members of the Old Salts seniors canoe club of Waterloo took a cruise down the Grand recently and brought home a lot of souvenirs, although not the kind you'd want to hang on to. They collected a lot of debris during their trip, everything from pants to an old tire. They found the jetsam between Conestogo and Kaufmann Flats.