

GRAND

THE GRAND STRATEGY NEWSLETTER

ACTIONS

Volume 9, Number 4 - July/August 2004



Grand River
Conservation
Authority



The Grand:
A Canadian
Heritage River

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*Joan Hutchens of the
Ancient Mariners Canoe
Club paddles down-
stream on June 1, the
day the club members
paddled the entire river.*



A Grand day for Mariners

Cambridge seniors
canoe the whole
Grand – all in a day

By Lorna Ferguson
Ancient Mariners Canoe Club
Cambridge

For one day, June 1, the Ancient Mariners
Canoe Club "owned" the Grand River, from

Grand Valley in the North to Port Maitland in the south.

Teams of Mariners covered the river, sweeping down the watershed with their canoes sporting jaunty little white flags featuring the Heritage River and Ancient Mariners logos.

The river flow was perfect and the weather was their friend as heavy rains fell just around Cambridge and south to Paris and only after all the teams in those sections were safely off the



Members of the Ancient Mariners Canoe Club celebrate their day on the Grand River.

(Photo by Rainer Leipscher.)

river. Above Cambridge and south of Paris the sun shone on the Mariners as they swept past scores of herons and turtles and even deer that were sighted by the northernmost team.

This historic undertaking was the brainchild of long-time member Bill Law. The original concept was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Grand as a Canadian Heritage River by paddling its entire length over the 2004 canoeing season. But this has been done by others, including some Mariners, so Bill thought, "Why not do it all in one day?"

The idea took root and soon Bill and other members were involved in complicated logistical planning for 14 teams, 30 canoes, and 68 paddlers.

After high water kept them off the river on May 11, the Mariners were ready and raring to on June 1. At 8 a.m. all the teams set out from the Ancient Mariners Boathouse at Riverbluffs Park in Cambridge. Some had a short drive to their put-in points; others drove as far as Grand Valley and Dunnville to begin their sections.

Each team was equipped with a waterproof disposable camera and instructions to record their journey for posterity. More than 400 photographs were taken, providing a unique record of

a day in the life of a heritage river. These photos and journals of the trip contributed by the participants will form a permanent record of a remarkable day.

Organizers were delighted when the final team called in to say that everyone was safely off the river. The last of the Mariners arrived at GRCA headquarters at 6:50 p.m. to a tumultuous welcome by over 100 fellow paddlers and invited guests who had gathered for a celebratory barbecue.

It was a proud moment as everyone assembled in the auditorium. GRCA Chair Peter Krause and CAO Paul Emerson thanked the Mariners for their contribution over the years to the health of the river and their enthusiasm for canoeing the watershed. Grand River Conservation Foundation member Marilyn Murray expressed her appreciation for the Mariners. Club founder Eric Thomlinson thanked the foundation for a grant the club was awarded for canoe put-in improvements along the Grand

The organizers are particularly appreciative of the support they received from the GRCA's Barb Veale, Dave Schultz and Sonia Morgan in making this such a successful event.

Everyone cheered when 77 year-old paddler Margo Debruin had the last word. "We did it!" exclaimed Margo to

enthusiastic applause. And that said it all for the Mariners. It was a glorious end to a glorious day.

Opening of Elora Gorge park drew 500 visitors

By Steve Thorning

This is the second of two parts on the founding of Elora Gorge Conservation Area in 1954.

William Baker spent the last months of 1952 refining his report on the feasibility of establishing a major park along the Elora gorge. A consensus had been building that the Grand Valley Conservation Authority, rather than the provincial government, should undertake the project. When the authority's board met in March 1953, everyone had the examined the Baker report, and had been lobbied at least once by editor Kay Marston of the Elora Express, the most committed advocate of the project, and a member of the authority's new recreation advisory committee.

MPP W.E. Hamilton of Guelph had cut through red tape at Queen's Park.

Before the meeting, board members were aware that the park would qualify for a grant of half the capital cost. Officials were plowing new ground. The Elora park would be the first in the province to be started and managed by a conservation authority.

Marston had orchestrated several press conferences, and these had made the story of the Elora park a familiar one across Ontario. In early March 1953 it was the turn of Reeve Norman Drimmie to answer questions. His remarks included a strong defence of public parks; he feared that the land along the Grand would soon be snapped up by speculators and developers if the authority did not act at once. He firmly believed that the gorge and the adjoining lands should be public space in perpetuity. Already, he hinted to reporters, several developers were sniffing around the area, attempting to buy up the property.

Though some board members still displayed some apprehension, the conservation authority authorized the park to proceed, based on Baker's report and on additional information provided by Marston.

The proposed park would comprise about 400 acres. Only about 10 per cent of the area was then under cultivation, the remainder being woodlot and scrubland. The assessed value totaled slightly over \$12,000, and both Baker and Marston believed it could be purchased for about \$15,000. Land acquisition was made easier by a 90-acre portion already owned by the Village of Elora. The village had acquired it for a sewage plant four years earlier, but that project had withered due to funding difficulties.

The GVCA added the park to its list of projects, and budgeted money for it. The first step, of course, was to secure the land. The authority purchased some easily, but several landowners held out. Backed by the province, the authority had the power to expropriate. Under that threat the holdouts capitulated, in a couple of cases reluctantly and with bitterness. By the end of summer the authori-



The opening of the Elora Gorge Park culminated a two-year campaign by Elora editor Kay Marston. Here, she accepts a gift from GVCA chairman Garfield Disher of Dunnville.

(Photo courtesy Wellington Advertiser)

ty had assembled most of the land.

Anxious to start work, the authority hired Vic Ross of Elora to prepare the site, removing unwanted trees and generally cleaning up the property. He would remain at the park as superintendent until his retirement. Initial plans for the park included a system of roads, a bridge over the Grand River, parking areas and picnic lots.

The conservation authority held a general meeting in Elora on Oct. 16, 1953, which included a tour of the future park and a look at the work done so far by Ross and his assistant, Pat Brennan. About 50 people took part in the day's events.

The park being developed downstream from Elora was only one phase of the plans developed during 1953 for the Elora area by the authority and officials from the province's planning and development branch. There was a proposal for a 34-acre park development along the Irvine from Elora to Salem, and another of 84 acres along the Grand between Fergus and Elora. In essence, those tracts took in all the land not yet occupied by buildings.

For reasons not entirely clear, the

GVCA never proceeded to acquire the two additional tracts, other than the land at the Elora quarry. Over the ensuing quarter century, almost all that land was gobbled up by residential development.

Including land acquisition costs of \$15,500, the authority spent \$31,900 on work at the Elora park in 1953. Additional expenses would accrue in 1954.

By the end of 1953, Marston was spending far more time on the park than on her editorial duties, lobbying fellow members of the conservation authority, producing promotional copy for other newspapers, and making plans for the Elora park and others along the Grand. In February 1954 she replaced O.J. Wright of Conestogo as head of the authority's parks and recreation committee.

Boldly, she and her fellow members presented a parks budget of \$68,000 to the directors of the GVCA. Measured against their other activities, that was a huge sum, even taking into account the 50 per cent covered by Queen's Park. Only two years earlier, the authority's entire budget totaled less than \$100,000. Of the amount she and the committee sought, \$15,000 was for work at a second park, in Galt.

Marston's astute strategy to begin at once with planning for other parks helped make the concept palatable to cautious board members, and showed that the park concept was not simply an Elora venture. The mayor of Kitchener, which paid the largest share of the GVCA cost, strongly supported the vastly increased budget, explaining that new recreational facilities in the area were vital for the growing population.

The big-ticket item for the new Elora park was a large pavilion, 100 by 40 feet, to accommodate events in inclement weather. It would have open sides and a concrete floor. The facility would also house kitchen facilities and washrooms, served by a new well and a septic system. Contractor Fred Prentice submitted the low bid of \$16,250.



William Hamilton, Guelph MPP and Minister of Reform Institutions, addresses the crowd at the newly constructed pavilion on July 24, 1954. He secured the 50 per cent funding formula for the capital costs of parks to be set up by the conservation authority.

(Photo courtesy Wellington Advertiser)

For \$5,000, the authority purchased what was known as the “old pavilion,” in the existing park at the junction of the Grand and Irvine, a block from downtown Elora. The authority retained former owner Merv Rennick to operate the facility, but the long-term plan was to replace it later with a restaurant overlooking the gorge. The GVCA never carried out that part of the plan.

Along with the pavilion, Marston and her committee (which included O.J. Wright, Mac Coutts, Archie Beattie, Hugh Eliot, Garfield Disher and Charles Janzen) dealt with electrical service, internal roadways, picnic tables, fireplaces, paths and lookouts along the gorge, and a hundred other matters. During March and April the members met at the site several times.

Miraculously, everything was more or less finished for the official park opening on July 24, which then consisted of 270 acres of what would later become a 400-acre park. Inside the rustic gate there were signs along the roadways pointing to various attractions, and ample parking space in gravelled parking lots.

Marston served lunch at her Victoria Street residence for the dignitaries. Guest speaker was MPP W.E. Hamilton, who had worked to establish the funding formula for recreational activities of conservation authorities. Without the 50

per cent provincial grants, the park would never have been on the GVCA agenda.

Also present was John Fisher, perhaps best remembered today as “Mr. Canada” of the 1967 centennial. In 1954 he was a top CBC commentator. His broadcasts the next week carried the story of Elora’s new park and the new museum from coast to coast.

The opening ceremony, before a crowd of more than 500, was perhaps the proudest moment of Marston’s life. She had laboured for more than a year, first to persuade her fellow GVCA directors to undertake park construction, and then to bring Elora Gorge Park to completion. In the process she won admirers, and more than a few critics, whose toes she had stepped on, sometimes without apology.

She title her editorial the week of the opening, “Dream Come True,” and noted that her grandfather, William Snyder, had been one of those pushing the idea of an Elora gorge park in 1877. Rather than gloat, she mentioned the work of many others, and particularly emphasized the enthusiasm and goodwill of other municipalities in the Grand watershed.

Elora Gorge Park proved Marston and her colleagues had been right in promoting the park. Five years later, all 400 campsites in the park were booked all

summer, and 200,000 people passed through the gates annually. Further expansion and improvement followed. But that is a story for another time.

This article is reprinted from the Wellington Advertiser.



MILESTONES

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

River heritage, Grand anniversary celebrated in Guelph

Heritage, art, recreation, culture, science – they all came together at the Fourth Canadian Rivers Heritage Conference held at the University of Guelph from June 6-9.

The conference attracted about 250 delegates from Canada, the U.S. and beyond to discuss the state of Canadian rivers from almost every perspective imaginable.

Keynote speakers such as Robert F. Kennedy Jr. of the Riverkeepers Alliance, National Geographic explore Wade Davis, Six Nations Elected Chief Roberta Jamieson, river conservationist Mark Angelo and canoe expert James Raffan captured the imagination of the delegates and – via extensive media coverage – a larger audience beyond the conference centre.

The conference was sponsored by the GRCA, Ontario Parks and the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

The conference was also a celebration of several anniversaries: the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Canadian Heritage River System and the tenth anniversary of the designation of the Grand River as a Heritage River.

As part of the event, more than 600 people took part in an evening of song, presented by many of the top musicians of the watershed, at the concert stage at the Guelph Lake Conservation Area.



The Heritage Rivers Quilt, created by Judy Gascho-Jutzi of Kitchener, is unveiled by Adair Ireland-Smith, managing director, Ontario Parks and conference co-chair and Nik Lopoukhine, director general, National Parks Directorate, Parks Canada

Kennedy's speech, delivered to a crowd of more than 300 at the River Run Centre, attracted widespread attention with its call to action.

Kennedy warned that lax laws and poor enforcement allow too many corporate polluters to prosper at the expense of the health of the environment.

If manufacturers and other corporations were required to absorb the full cost of the environmental impact of their activities, then many of those practices would quickly come to an end.

In essence, he said, the costs of environment-damaging activities are passed on to society, a practice which helps the corporate bottom line, but leaves society with a huge bill to pay.

"Our children will pay the price of pollution-based prosperity," Kennedy said.

He advised Canadian to pay close attention to the activities of politicians at all levels of government to ensure that

they're enforcing existing laws and writing tougher ones.

Wade Davis, an explorer-in-residence with the National Geographic Society presented a powerful story of another sort of loss that is affecting the world - the loss of the "cultural web of life."

He has coined the word "ethnosphere" to describe the human elements of the environment. In too many places, he said, human cultures have been driven to extinction by outside pressure.

Using pictures taken in exotic corners of the world, such as the Himalayas, Davis displayed some of the unique characteristics of these threatened cultures and said it is critical to find ways to help them survive and adapt in a modern world.

Six Nations Elected Chief Robert Jamieson picked up on a similar theme in her address, when she explained how the territory of the Six Nations of the Grand River has shrunk since the late

1800s. The Six Nations, originally from New York, were granted a swath of land, 12 miles wide, along the Grand River from its mouth to its source, to replace land they lost in the U.S. War of Independence when they sided with the British.

Some land was taken over by squatters, and in other cases land was sold but never paid for, she said. For several decades the Six Nations have sought to get an accounting of the lost land and missing money, but have been stymied by the federal government.

The cultural and artistic aspects of Canadian rivers were celebrated several ways during the conference.

At the opening gala the River Run Centre, Kitchener quilter Judy Gascho-Jutzi presented her Heritage Rivers quilt, which was commissioned for the conference. It was on display throughout the conference. A hand-carved 30-foot canoe by artist Ralph Ireland of Quebec was also exhibited in the main conference centre at Rozanski Hall at the University of Guelph.

Some of the premier performers of the Grand River watershed took to the stage at Guelph Lake Conservation Area for a special, free evening of music and poetry to celebrate the Grand River. Among the performers were James Gordon, Adwoa Badoe, Gwen Swick, Allison Lupton, Ian Bell, Garnet Rogers, Nonie Crete, Tamarack and Elizabeth Hill.



Gascho-Jutzi

At the concert, plaques commemorating the Heritage River status of the Nith, Conestogo and Eramosa Rivers were unveiled. They will be erected at spots along each of those rivers. Similar plaques are already in place on the Grand and Speed rivers.

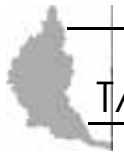
Barbara Veale, conference organizer and Coordinator of Policy, Planning and Partnerships with the GRCA said that "over the years, this special status has



Gwen Swick performs at the Guelph Lake Conservation Area.

provided a strong rallying point to bring people together around many issues related to the river."

"The river has become a focal point for recreation, tourism, and community economic development. Grand River experiences are the central thrust for tourism organizations that are jointly promoting Grand River Country as an interesting and exciting tourism destination."



LOOK WHO'S TAKING ACTION

Mill Creek Rangers are back on the job

A local youth employment and environmental education program got a major boost recently, thanks to a \$76,600 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Partners and supporters of the Mill Creek Stewardship Ranger Program gathered at the Puslinch Community Centre to celebrate the launch of the 2004 season. The event included a plaque presentation by the Ontario

Trillium Foundation, recognition of corporate sponsors, and a demonstration and overview of the results to date.

The ranger program provides high school students with summer jobs restoring the Mill Creek watershed south of Guelph. The Optimist Club of Puslinch coordinates the program along with a coalition group called the Friends of Mill Creek.

This July and August, a four-person ranger crew will maintain trails, improve wildlife habitat, and work on channel improvements to restore degraded sections of Mill Creek, which flows through Puslinch Township and the City of Cambridge. The students will also receive training and career guidance from biologists, foresters, and other environmental professionals.

"This program allows these young people to grow in their leadership and life skills," reflected Don McKay of the Puslinch Optimists. "It's perfect for students seeking careers in the environmental field and fits nicely with the Optimist mandate of supporting youth in the community."

This is the second summer for the program. The Grand River Conservation Authority provides supervision and administrative support for the crew leader and crew, while the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources provides safety and career training. The

Township of Puslinch and Wellington County Stewardship Council provide financial and logistical support. Last year, the salaries for the crew were supplied entirely by local business and industry partners. The provision of an additional \$76,600 in Trillium funding over the next four years will allow the program to reach its full potential.

"We appreciate the support from the industry partners who have been with us from the very beginning" said Friends of Mill Creek co-chair Mitch Wilson.

"Now thanks to the additional support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation we have a stable funding base that will allow us to plan for multi-year projects.

Wellington-Guelph MPP Liz Sandals had praise for the partners who have come together in the community to achieve a common goal of environmental restoration.

"This project is local and manageable in its scope, but it will result in broad social and environmental benefits," she said.

Companies interested in sponsoring the Mill Creek Ranger Program are encouraged to contact Ron Van Ooteghem of Dufferin Aggregates at 519-763-0200. Landowners and individuals who want to get involved should call Larry Halyk of the Wellington County Stewardship Council at 519-826-4936.



MPP Liz Sandals and supporters of the Mill Creek Rangers Program: Ron Van Ooteghem of Dufferin Aggregates (left), Robert McFarlane of Puslinch Optimists MPP Liz Sandals, Mayor Brad Whitcombe of Puslinch Township, Mitch Wilson of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Jamie Couper of the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Hundreds join cleanup projects

The Grand Rivers and its tributaries are a lot cleaner this year thanks to the effort of hundreds of volunteers who took part in river cleanup days in the spring.

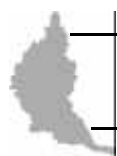
Community groups were urged to take part in cleanups to mark the tenth anniversary of the designation of the Grand as a Canadian Heritage River.

Many groups that had been conducting cleanups for years repeated their effort this year, and some new groups joined the list.

The groups were asked to register their cleanup with the GRCA so it could be recognized publicly.

Their efforts were applauded by the hundreds of people attending the Grand Experience evening at Guelph Lake Conservation Area on June 7.

Among those who carried out cleanups this year were: Whiteman Creek Youth Group of the Brant Rod & Gun Club, Waterloo Wellington Canoe Club, The Ancient Mariners Canoe Club, Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association, Homer Watson House and Gallery, Lock 27 Project, The Lower Grand River Trust Inc., Victoria Park Neighbourhood Association of Kitchener, Planning and Engineering Initiatives Ltd., Southern Grand River Tourism Advisory Board, City of Brantford, Woolwich Township and the Guelph Kayak Club.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Dombrowsky to speak at Grand River Water Forum

Ontario Environment Minister Leona Dombrowsky will be the keynote speaker at the Fourth Annual Grand River Watershed Water Forum in

Cambridge on Sept. 17.

The water forum attracts about 400 people from across the Grand River watershed and beyond to a one-day discussion about water issues. The theme this year is: "Who's water is it, anyway?"

It will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the grounds of the GRCA Administration Centre at 400 Clyde Road in Cambridge.

The minister will discuss the government's plans to protect *Dombrowsky* Ontario drinking water, especially through source water protection. The government recently unveiled draft legislation to implement source water protection planning across the province. The proposal has been posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights web site for a 60-day public comment period. (http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/ebc/english/index.htm)

Other speakers at the Water Forum are:

- Paul Emerson, Chief Administrative Officer of the GRCA who will be presenting the 2004 Grand River Watershed Report
- Dr. Judy Isaac-Renton, Director of Laboratory Services, BC Centre for Disease Control, who will be talking about the relationship between water pollution and human health
- Murray Charlton, project chief with the Aquatic Ecosystem Management Research Branch of Environment Canada, an expert on pollution in the Great Lakes.

The Water Forum will also include a panel presentation about the Grand River system featuring Dr. Don MacIver, Environment Canada and Deputy Mayor of Amaranth Township; Jack Imhof, Trout Unlimited Canada; Mike Murray, Regional Municipality of Waterloo; and Ron Donaldson, Water and Earth Science Associates Ltd. (WESA).

The forum wrap-up will be provided

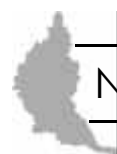


by Dr. Bruce Mitchell, professor of Geography at the University of Waterloo

Moderators for the event are Mayor Kate Quarrie of the City of Guelph and Mayor Mike Hancock of the City of Brantford.

The cost to attend the forum is \$75, which includes a buffet lunch. The student price is \$45.

Information on the program, registration, sponsorship and exhibit space is available from the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca.



NOW AVAILABLE

Update on Heritage River status now on website and CD

A report on the changes in the Grand River system during the past 10 years is now available in CD format.

It can also be downloaded from the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca

The report was written to mark the tenth anniversary of the designation of the Grand River as a Canadian Heritage River. The report supports the continued designation of the Grand and its major tributaries under the Heritage River program.

It reports on changes in heritage structures, the development of new river-oriented events and festivals and the growth of river-based recreation over the past decade.

The CD contains the complete report, as well the Grand River Watershed Bridge Inventory. That report contains a list of significant bridges throughout the watershed, and identifies their age, characteristics and historical significance.

The bridge report is also available from the GRCA website.

The CD is available from the GRCA by contacting Cathy Round at (519) 621-2761 Ext. 230.

Book covers the Grand

A new book entitled *Towards a Grand Sense of Place* provides a comprehensive look at the Grand River system from a variety of perspectives – human history, natural history, climate, water quality, water supply and more.

The book was edited by Gordon Nelson, a professor at the University of Waterloo, with assistance from Barbara Veal and Beth Dempster. More than 30 authors provided material for the book.

The book costs \$30 and is available from the University of Waterloo Bookstore.

Trail guide issued for Wellington, Dufferin

A 72-page pocket guide to 29 trails in the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph

area has been issued by the Community Heart Health Network.

The guide includes maps and descriptions of the trails in communities throughout the area, including Guelph, Fergus, Elora, Harriston, Mount Forest and Orangeville. There are also guides to natural areas such as the Luther Marsh, Hockley Valley and the Mono Cliffs.

For a copy of *Trails Discovery: A Guide to Trails of Wellington and Dufferin Counties*, call the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit 519-821-2370.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Rainbow trout are western trout that were introduced to Ontario from California in 1883.

- In February 1937, the Grand River

rose 12 feet in less than one hour in Fergus, flooding houses and factories.

- The Guelph Bicycle Club was organized in 1882, with “18 wheels.”

- In the early 1850s, Galt was self-styled as “the Manchester of Canada” as local businessmen worked to introduce a rail line to Guelph.

- In 1837, Thomas Langton wrote “The consumption of wood is awful. We burn...on the average, about two trees per diem.”

- In 1833, the population of Guelph numbered a thousand souls; mills and a bridge had been built; and several taverns and a ballroom provided local entertainment. Land prices jumped from 1s. 3d. an acre before development to 15s as the new town site grew.

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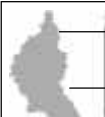
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Newsletter submissions must be made by the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be subject to editing for length or style. Tax deductible donations and sponsorships toward the cost of producing this newsletter are always welcome.

Publications Mail

Agreement #144871



The Grand Strategy Calendar

Grand River Watershed Water forum. Sept. 17. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. GRCA Headquarters, 400 Clyde Rd., Cambridge. Theme: “Whose water is it anyway?” Among the speakers: Leona Dombrowsky, Ontario Minister of Environment on water source protection planning; Dr. Judy Isaac-Renton, a B.C.-based expert on the relationship between water quality and the spread of disease; Jack Imhof of Trout Unlimited Canada; Mike Murray of the Region of Waterloo; Ron Donaldson of Water and Earth Science Associates; and Paul Emerson of the GRCA. Visit the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca for more information on the program, registration, sponsorship and exhibits. Price is \$75. Student price is \$45. Registration deadline is Sept. 10.

Cultural Heritage Landscapes Workshop. Sept. 16-17. This workshop will help planners, heritage advisors and policy makers develop the tools and guidance they need to implement policies and bylaws to conserve cultural heritage landscapes on public and private property. The workshop is sponsored by the Region of Waterloo and the Heritage Resources Centre. The price of \$85 covers the cost of meals, materials and a field trip. For more information contact the Heritage Resources Centre, University of Waterloo, (519) 888-4567, ext. 6921 or visit the website at www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/research/hrc

Laurel Creek Citizens Committee Workday, Sept. 25. Watershed Report Card Workshop. Get to know your stream! For more information and to register contact City of Waterloo at 747-8643 or by e-mail at partnersinparks@city.waterloo.on.ca