

GRAND

THE GRAND STRATEGY NEWSLETTER

ACTIONS

Volume 16, Number 1 - Jan-Feb 2011



Grand River
Conservation
Authority



The Grand:
A Canadian
Heritage River

INSIDE

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Cover photo

Two eastern wild turkeys in winter. The snood is the flap of skin that hangs over the turkey's beak and the caruncles are growths in the throat region. The beard is the tuft of feathers that hangs down from the chest area.

Photo by John Dykstra



Turkeys make a comeback

By Janet Baine
GRCA Communications Specialist

What bird living in the Grand River area has a beard, snood and caruncles?

Wild turkeys of course.

They were eradicated from this area, the province and many states by 1909 due to unregulated hunting and the loss of native forests that were cleared for agriculture. Now they are back in the Grand River watershed by the thousands. They are especially noticeable in winter, because they gather into large groups and move around together in their quest for food. At night they roost in trees.

"The reintroduction of wild turkeys is a real success story," says Art Timmerman, management biologist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Eastern wild turkeys from several states including Missouri, New Jersey and Tennessee were released at 15 sites in the Grand River watershed between 1986 and 2002.

This was carried out by the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and the National Wild Turkey Federation, an American organization with several local chapters.

First Grand River release in 1986

The first release in 1986 was near Glen Morris south of Cambridge. By 1989, the number of turkeys had increased to the point that the first spring turkey hunt in the Grand River watershed was held. The first fall hunt took place in 2009. The Ministry of Natural Resources keeps track of the numbers harvested during the hunting season. Wildlife Management Units 80 and 87, which are within the Grand River watershed, reported a harvest of 577 wild turkeys last spring. During the spring hunt only male (bearded) wild turkeys can be harvested.

But before this successful reintroduction came many years of failed attempts, because the first turkeys to be released were not truly wild.

Ontario's turkey release program benefited from the experience of other programs that had already taken place south of the border, Timmerman says.

While driving past Shade's Mills Conservation Area on the outskirts of Cambridge just after Christmas, a flock of 10 wild turkeys were seen crossing the road. A resident of Grand Valley reports that he has a group of turkeys at his feeder regularly during winter and another person saw 20 parading around near Breslau. On Highway 24, just east of Guelph, a group of turkeys has been spotted so often this winter that carpoolers have started to call the area "Turkey Fields."

Improved turkey habitat

Turkey habitat has improved — turkeys need forested areas and they have also adapted well to agriculture. They eat the waste grains after the harvest season and during the winter. Due to the influences of forestry, agriculture and milder climatic conditions, the range of wild turkeys in Ontario is now considerably larger than it was thought to be historically. Conversely, the intensification of agriculture in some parts of southern Ontario has prevented the birds from uniformly filling the entire landscape of their former range.



One of the turkeys about to be released in the Grand River watershed.

Photo courtesy of MNR



Two young male turkeys.

Photo courtesy of the National Wild Turkey Federation



DID YOU KNOW?

Some turkey facts

- Nests are shallow depressions formed mostly by scratching, squatting, and laying eggs rather than by purposeful construction.
- Hens lay a clutch of 10 to 12 eggs during a two-week period, usually laying one egg per day.
- Wild turkeys have excellent vision during the day but don't see as well at night.
- They can run up to 40 km/h and can fly as fast as 90 km/h.
- There are five subspecies of turkey in North America, but only the eastern turkey is native to Ontario.
- There are now an estimated 90,000 turkeys in the province.
- A male, called a tom or a gobbler, can be up to four feet tall at maturity and weigh more than 20 pounds, while a mature female, called a hen, may be nearly as tall but is usually lighter, weighing between eight and 12 pounds.
- Ben Franklin proposed the turkey would make a better symbol for the United States than the bald eagle. Eagles were scavengers which would take a fish from a hawk, while turkeys are courageous, he said.

Citizen birders wanted

The GRCA is interested in hearing about sightings of rare and unusual birds that in the Grand River watershed, especially in or near GRCA property.

The GRCA website has a checklist of 192 bird species that can be found in the watershed.

There is also a rare birding form for reporting unusual species. Check the Birding section of www.grandriver.ca.

Do you have eagle eyes?

If you are one of those folks who enjoys getting up before dawn to go outside and scan the sky for eagles, consider joining the eagle monitoring program.

Interested birders are needed to join the eagle watch in the area of Guelph Lake and Belwood Lake. Eagles are known to be in these areas, but no one is currently monitoring them regularly.

The eagle watch is on the following Saturdays: Jan. 29, Feb 12 and 26 and March 12 and 26.

The central and southern Grand Rivers are already well covered by volunteer eagle watchers. If you are interested in monitoring eagles in these areas, contact Tony Zammit at tzammit@grandriver.ca or call him at 519-621-2763 ext. 2246.



Bald eagles now live year round in the Grand River watershed.

Photo by Lara Fox



A Green Legacy volunteer at work in the tree nursery.

Green Legacy has planted more than a million trees

Wellington Green Legacy started in 2004 with the simple idea that it would plant 150,000 trees in Wellington County that year to help celebrate the county's 150th anniversary.

The anniversary is long gone, but Green Legacy has continued to grow and plant trees to become what the county believes is the largest municipal tree planting program in North America. On Oct. 3, it celebrated the planting of its one millionth tree. Green Legacy also received a 2010 Grand River Watershed Award, given by the GRCA to organizations and individuals that have made an outstanding contribution to conservation through environmental work.

"The Green Legacy program is making a difference by not only planting more than 150,000 trees annually, but also by engaging the hearts and minds of thousands of volunteers," said Tracey Ryan, supervisor of conservation services at the GRCA. "The County council showed tremendous foresight in developing this program." It was also recognized by the United Nations.

Wellington County has 17 per cent forest cover, which is about average for



Watershed Awards

the Grand River watershed. It is heading towards 30 per cent forest cover, which is recommended by Environment Canada for a healthy watershed. Each year Green Legacy plants 1,000 more trees than the initial 150,000 and the tally was up to 156,000 in 2010.

The county has operated a tree nursery at Little Tract County Forest in Puslinch Township just east of Cambridge since 2006. This former farm now has four greenhouses and a large walk-in cooler. Trees are also grown outside. The trees are a variety of native species and include seedlings as well as saplings. Interestingly, the property was planted with trees during an earlier reforestation project in the 1940s.

Green Legacy has school programs that fit with the provincial curriculum for students, but goes beyond this to include nature walks and other activities. A total of 6,000 students assisted Green Legacy this year. Those from kinder-

garten to Grade 3 grow trees from seeds in their classroom, those in Grade 4 to 6 help at the greenhouse and older students plant trees each spring. All schools in the county are invited to participate in the program.

"The Green Legacy is a community driven program. Its success would not be possible without all of our partners and volunteers," said Rob Johnson, Green Legacy tree Nursery manager. "Together we are all making Wellington County a little greener."

People need to learn why trees are important first — so they learn that trees provide shade, help clean the air and water, keep soil on the land and help mitigate the challenge of climate change. In fact there are many ways that trees boost the environment, biodiversity and the economy. Research even shows that a visit to a forest can boost a person's immune system.

People of all ages are reconnecting with nature by learning about and planting trees. Some individuals come to the nursery regularly, but other volunteers are from the community, including the correctional centre, exchange student programs, and half-way homes. Even the 2,600 Girl Guides from across Canada who were at Guelph Lake for a jam-boree this summer came to volunteer at the Green Legacy nursery. They are building skills and a better understanding of the environment.

All the trees are free. Landowners



Tree planting for Green Legacy.

can attend workshops and are also referred to Conservation Services of the GRCA and other conservation authorities if they need advice on where and how to plant trees.

Green Legacy is funded by local governments.

"It is an honour for the County's Green Legacy Program to receive this award from the Grand River Conservation Authority," said Wellington County Warden Joanne Ross-Zuj. "The GRCA has been an active partner and supported the Green Legacy since the beginning. Strong partnerships are essential to the success of this program."

To see a video about this and other awards, visit www.grandriver.ca and check the Watershed Awards section.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

GRCA board elects first woman chair

Jane Mitchell, a member of Waterloo Regional Council from the City of Waterloo, has been elected chair of the Grand River Conservation Authority.

She was elected by the GRCA board of directors at a meeting on Thursday, defeating Vic Prendergast of Brantford and Lorne Boyko of Haldimand County. The 26-member GRCA board is composed of representatives appointed by the municipalities within the Grand River watershed.

Mitchell is the first woman to chair the GRCA. She has been on the board since 2003 and has been first vice-chair since 2007. Mitchell, a partner in a web design firm, has a master's degree in library and information science and worked as a university librarian. Prior to her election to regional council she was a member of the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Prendergast was acclaimed first vice-chair of the board. Jan d'Ailly of

Waterloo was acclaimed second vice-chair. Elections are held for all three positions at the first board meeting of the year.

In her acceptance speech, Mitchell told the board that "the health and safety of our river system, both in water quantity and quality, is a pressing issue as we prepare for the effects of climate change and population growth."

She noted that the GRCA is working with municipalities, First Nations and federal and provincial agencies to develop a Water Management Plan that will outline actions to be taken over the next 25 years to address water quality, water supply and flooding issues.



Jane Mitchell

"We need to have defined goals and objectives for the watershed, then a plan to fund it," she said. "We also must have ways of reporting back and measuring our success in meeting our outcomes."

She said it will be important to work with the provincial and federal governments to ensure the GRCA has enough money to fulfill its mandate, particularly when it comes to maintaining critical flood-control infrastructure such as dams and dikes.

Prendergast, a representative of the City of Brantford, moves to first vice-chair after 10 years as second vice-chair. A board member since 1999, he is a retired management consultant and has been involved with many community organizations including Brantford General Hospital, the Alzheimer Society of Brant and Tourism Brantford.

D'Ailly, who is serving his first term on the board as a representative of the Region of Waterloo, was acclaimed second vice-chair. He served on Waterloo city council from 2003 to 2010. D'Ailly is chief executive officer of a company that develops clean energy from waste.

He has also served as a board member of the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery and the K-W Symphony.

Twelve of the 26 board members are new this year as a result of municipal elections and changes to appointments. These 26 people represent 32 local municipalities and 7 upper tier regions and counties. Smaller municipalities share one representative while larger ones have several.

Each member takes an active role in guiding the activities of the GRCA.

Allan Holmes sadly missed

The Grand River Conservation Foundation is gratefully accepting donations in memory of Allan Ross Holmes of Guelph, who passed away Jan. 20, 2011 in his 73rd year after a courageous battle with cancer.

Holmes served as CAO of the GRCA from 1991 to 2000. He set up this endowment fund when he retired. He remained an active volunteer with the Grand River Conservation Foundation until his death. Income from



Allan Holmes

this fund will be used according to the wishes he outlined to his family.

"Allan will be fondly remembered as a leader with great passion, commitment and integrity," said GRCA CAO Joe Farwell, adding that Allan will be sadly missed.

In September Allan received the highest honour awarded by the GRCA - the 2010 Honour Roll Watershed Award for his significant contribution to conservation during his lifetime. A story about him appeared in the September-October issue.

Donations can be made online at www.grcf.ca or by calling 519-621-2763, ext. 2372.

Second wave of water management plan for the Grand

By Katherine Balpataky
GRCA Communications Specialist

High population growth, intensive agriculture and climate change are putting greater stress on the Grand River watershed than ever before.

That's why the GRCA is updating the 1982 Grand River Water Management Plan. The update will be drafted by the end of 2012. The recommendations will then be implemented by the GRCA and partner agencies. The process is being led by a steering committee of municipal representatives, provincial and federal agencies and First Nations, and is supported by expert working groups. It will set out common objectives and measurable targets for the next 25 years of growth and development.

"An updated plan and framework is important to the City of Guelph," says Cameron Walsh, general manager of wastewater services for Guelph. "Not only in support of informing critical infrastructure decisions, but also in seeking to balance multiple, and sometimes competing water functions while aiming to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the Grand River system."

The first newsletter for this project is included with this issue of Grand Actions.

The three challenges addressed in the 1982 plan were to provide enough water in a reliable and efficient manner, improving water quality and reducing flood damages. This is also the focus of the new plan.

But individual community actions are not enough to ensure that the Grand River, its tributaries, connected groundwater systems, and flows to Lake Erie remain viable and healthy for generations to come. Coordination is needed to ensure that these efforts are mutually supportive and that tradeoffs related to economic cost and other environmental

effects are considered in this planning.

Meetings aimed at identifying priority areas for improvement will allow experts from across the watershed to share and evaluate the wealth of information that already exists. Pulling together these studies will provide clarity about trends in growth and economic development, as well as climate vulnerabilities, measures to enhance infrastructure and opportunities to increase water conservation.

"There is a long history of cooperation between upstream and downstream communities in the Grand River Watershed," says Lorrie Minshall, Project Director of the Water Management Plan at the GRCA, who will coordinate the process. "And a willingness to put planning to action."

The GRCA will lead the process, and engage those in the community who are interested in the plan. This includes environmental organizations, the farmers, business leaders and others. It will ensure that the final recommendations



Cameron Walsh

will be relevant and practical, and will lead to commitments for action. But the ultimate success of the Water Management Plan will depend on the participation and willingness of all participating agencies to contribute and find common ground.

Fortunately the plan builds on a history of success. Severe flooding in 1974 signalled the need for the original Water Management Plan and was one catalyst. An impressive 84 per cent of the 26 recommendations in that plan were achieved.

Although the current challenges of climate change, population growth and agriculture are less obvious than the massive flood of 1974, they are a concern for communities. The updated management plan has the advantage of over 75 years of collaboration and research behind it. Motivation for the next round of recommendations will come from recognition of the value to the watershed communities, the economy, and the natural environment.

Meetings between city officials and stakeholder groups are ongoing and updates will be posted on the GRCA's website at www.grandriver.ca/WMP.



Above: 1919 Blair train derailment due to an ice jam on the Grand River. The GRCA donated a series of old negatives to Doon Heritage Crossroads.

At right is a photo of the clean up crew clearing ice off the tracks after the derailment.





A student feeds a chickadee at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre.

Students have chickadees eating from their hands

Dan Schneider
GRCA Senior Resource Interpreter

In the crisp silence of a winter morning, a class of Grade 7 students follows me through a sunlit forest.

The snow carpet reveals a tapestry of animal movement. Last night a mink had loped along the creek, furtively searching for mice, voles or any food to sustain it through the most challenging of seasons. A rabbit had crouched quietly under a protective shrub before bounding away, perhaps startled by a fox whose tracks punctuate the snow nearby.

High drama for sure, but these students are more impressed by what is happening now. As their naturalist guide, I lead them through the trees to the bird feeding station. The students are startled by the shriek of a blue jay, then a brilliant red cardinal, followed by the tapping of a downy woodpecker.

As we creep closer, most of the birds withdraw, but not a flock of black-capped chickadees. They actually seem glad to see these two-legged invaders. The chickadees weigh under half an

ounce, or less than two loonies.

Chickadees fluff their feathers to keep more insulating air within and spend the winter nights huddled in a family group. On very cold nights, they let their body temperature fall by as much as 8 C. to lose less body heat.



Dan Schneider

place protein-rich sunflower seeds on top of toques and on outstretched hands. The students are startled once again when the chickadees land on them, choose a seed, then whirl away to peck it open on a nearby branch.

Formerly filled with chatty, edgy energy, the entire class falls silent with wonder. In a world seemingly ruled by video games and shopping malls, chickadee encounters at GRCA nature centres demonstrate the connection that kids

have with the natural world.

When you are out for a walk in the woods, bring some bird seed. If you put it in your outstretched palm or on top of a hat and wait quietly, the chickadees will often accept your offering. It sometimes takes only a few minutes. Great places to do this are Starkey's Loop southwest of Guelph and Dickson Wilderness Area south of Cambridge. The best time to feed chickadees from your hand is mid-December to March.

This is one of the many experiential learning opportunities available at the nature centres operated by the GRCA, where experiencing the natural environment is a lesson learned. For more information, check the Nature Centres page of www.grandriver.ca.

Ice is nice for winter fishing

By Janet Baine
GRCA Communications Specialist

Have you ever driven past a lake or reservoir in the dead of winter and wondered what inspires people to sit on a windswept frozen lake to ice fish?

"I've asked myself that too," says Derek Strub, the superintendent of Belwood Lake Conservation Area near Fergus and an ice fisherman. "We live in the north and we have three months of the year when we might as well get outside and enjoy winter. It's exciting to have the possibility of catching dinner, as opposed to sitting inside and waiting for winter to pass. If you dress appropriately it's actually nice and peaceful out there."

A summertime fisherman who normally casts from shore can walk across the ice and fish in different locations. Cold is not necessarily an issue on warmer winter days when the sun is shining or when you are inside an ice hut.

During ice fishing season, the park's phone rings off the hook and a couple of hundred people stake out their spot at Belwood on the weekends. It's a big lake with lots of species of fish, including

perch, pike, walleye and a variety of panfish. The panfish (bluegill, black crappie and pumpkinseed sunfish) are small fish.

The GRCA offers ice fishing at two other locations. Pinehurst Lake near Paris is usually the first to open because it is a kettle lake and freezes over early in the winter. Panfish are available there. Pinehurst has been open for ice fishing for three years. It is a small lake and attracts fewer people for fishing, but it well protected and on the circuit for ice fishing enthusiasts. Most people catch and release the fish, but some may take home enough for dinner.

Shade's Mills in Cambridge has pike and some perch as well as panfish. This year, Shade's Mills has fishing huts for rent by the half-day or full-day, but people can also bring their own pop-up hut, or just sit out in the sunshine during nice weather.

Ice thickness is monitored by conservation area staff and they open when conditions allow.

On Tuesday, 34 students from Elementary School Two in Xi'an, a city of China, tried their luck at ice fishing at Shade's Mills Conservation Area. There is not much snow where they are from and they were delighted with the experience. They even caught a pike. (See photos: <http://www.facebook.com/grandriver-conservation>)

It doesn't take much special equipment — only an auger (\$60-100), a short rod or even a line on a stick and the right bait. If you don't have an auger, arrive mid-morning and you will likely find an abandoned hole or two left by an early riser or someone who has moved to a different location. Or, you can politely ask to borrow an auger from someone nearby, says Scott Parkinson, superintendent at Pinehurst and an ice fishing enthusiast.

It is important to remember that Canadians between 18 and 65 years old needs an Ontario fishing license and these are issued through the Ministry of

Natural Resources and are available at some hardware and fishing stores as well as through Service Ontario. You must have an Outdoors Card that is valid for three years and a validation sticker for the current year to fish.

If you don't have a fishing license, you can go ice fishing on the Family Day long weekend (Feb. 19-21), because this is also Ontario Family Winter Fishing Weekend. These are the only three days that Canadian residents can fish in Ontario without a licence.

It is important to remember that fish do not survive for very long out of the water. So have your camera ready for a very quick picture, then drop the fish back into the water.

Guelph Lake used to offer ice fishing, but it has not been available there since 2007.

(There is also a week during the summer when no license is required and this year it is July 2-10.)

"They may catch 30 or 40 fish in an outing and take home six or eight for dinner," Parkinson says. "How many they catch depends on the day and the skill of the angler. One fellow here yesterday caught about 50 or 60 fish," Parkinson said.

For more information, check Winter Activities on www.grandriver.ca.

Derby at Pinehurst Feb. 19

The second annual Ice Fishing Derby at Pinehurst Lake Conservation Area is Feb. 19 between 8:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.

This is a Catch and Release Panfish Derby. Tickets are available in advance or on the day of the event for \$18 per adult and \$10 per child (14 and under). There are lots of great prizes to be won. It is held during Ontario Family Winter Fishing Weekend so you don't need to have a license. Last year about 125 people participated, and about a quarter of them were trying ice fishing for the first time. For more information about the ice fishing derby, ice and fishing conditions, please call Pinehurst at 519-442-4721 or e-mail sparkinson@grandriver.ca.



Top three photos: Students from Elementary School Two in Xi'an, a city in China, try ice fishing for the first time at Shade's Mills Conservation Area in January.

Bottom: Some perch caught at Belwood Lake Conservation Area.

A big thanks to our newsletter readers

E-mails and forms are coming in daily and we appreciate your interest in taking the time to help keep our mailing list up-to-date.

We especially thank the many donors who are returning forms to us along with a donation. Through this annual campaign, donations ranging from \$10 to \$200 are given by readers. Thank you!

It is a great inspiration for the staff at the GRCA.

About Grand Actions

This newsletter is produced bi-monthly by the Grand River Conservation Authority.

Do you want to subscribe or change your subscription?

If you would like to receive this newsletter either by mail or e-mail please send your contact information. There is no cost to subscribe. Please ensure your contact information is complete and up-to-date.

Do you want to search for a past article?

Current and back issues are available online at www.grandriver.ca. Multiple copies may also be available for groups or schools.

Do you want to submit to Grand Actions?

Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of February, April, June, August, October and December. Submissions may be edited for length or style. Photos and event information is also welcome. We do our best to publish items, but we are not able to guarantee publication.

Contact information:

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This publication is printed on Rolland Enviro100, an FSC certified, environmentally-friendly paper. The paper is manufactured using 100% post-consumer fibre and is processed chlorine-free using biogas energy.



The Grand Strategy Calendar

Heritage Day Workshop, Friday, Feb. 11, Breslau 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The theme for the 2011 Heritage Day Workshop is Culturally Created Communities: Rooted and Growing in the Townships. The workshop is at the Breslau Community Centre at 200 Woolwich Street South. Visit the Heritage Day Workshop section of www.grandriver.ca for program and registration form.

Oral Traditions Along the Grand, Tuesday, Waterloo Regional Museum, 10 Huron Road, Kitchener, Feb. 15, 7:30-9:30 p.m. The Iroquoian Creation story will be shared in "Ojibway Storyteller" Aaron Bell's unique and memorable way. Hopefully, listeners will leave with an open heart, open mind and open spirit!. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors and students. For more information or to purchase tickets call 519-748-1914.

Second Annual Ice Fishing Derby, Pinehurst Lake Conservation Area, Saturday, Feb. 19, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tickets for this Catch and Release Panfish Derby are available in advance or the day of the event for \$18 per adult and \$10 per child (14 and under). For more information, check the ice fishing story.

The Return of Bigfoot, Feb. 27, 2 to 4 p.m., Guelph Lake Nature Centre. This is your last chance to strap on snowshoes and join us for an afternoon of great family fun. Remember that snowshoes are limited so please call the Nature Centre at 519-836-7860 to reserve space. Cost is \$10/adult, \$5/child, \$25/family of 4.

Deadline to order trees from the GRCA is March 1, 2011. This is for trees to be planted by landowners themselves. orders must be for 200 seedlings or 20 saplings or more. For more information, check the Forestry section of www.grandriver.ca, e-mail barmstrong@grandriver.ca or call 519-621-2763, ext. 2250.

Down by the old mill stream, Wednesday, March 23, 7:30 p.m., St. Jacob's Visitor's Centre. Warren Stauch will talk about the mills and mill ruins in the Grand River watershed. This meeting is being held by the local chapter of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario.

It's for the Birds, , Saturday, March 27, 2 to 4 p.m., Guelph Lake Nature Centre. A short hike to look for winter birds that will include a stop at the chickadee tree. Afterwards, build a birdhouse that you can take home. Cost is \$5 per person and \$10 fee/bird house. Bring a hammer and lots of muscle power. Birdhouses are limited so please call 519-836-7860 to register!

March Break Environmental Day Camp at Guelph Lake Nature Centre, and Laurel Creek Nature Centre, March 14-18. Please visit www.grandriver.ca or call Guelph Lake Nature Centre at 519-836-7860 or Laurel Creek Nature Centre at 519- 885-1368 for more information.

Note: Events at the GRCA's conservation areas and nature centres are listed in the calendar section at www.grandriver.ca.



Water Management Plan

No. 1 – January 2011

A new plan for the Grand

The Grand River flows through the heart of one of the richest, most diverse regions in Canada. Historically, the economic vitality of the Grand River watershed has been based on the area's abundant natural resources.

Much has been done in the past 100 years to protect and improve the natural environment. Many of those improvements came about through the implementation of various watershed management plans.

However, the 21st century has brought new challenges.

Population growth, intensive agriculture and climate change are all placing stress on the natural system, with implications for the continued health and prosperity of our communities.

A new plan to address existing and emerging issues is being developed by a broad group of agencies and organizations responsible for water issues in the Grand River watershed.

Three key issues

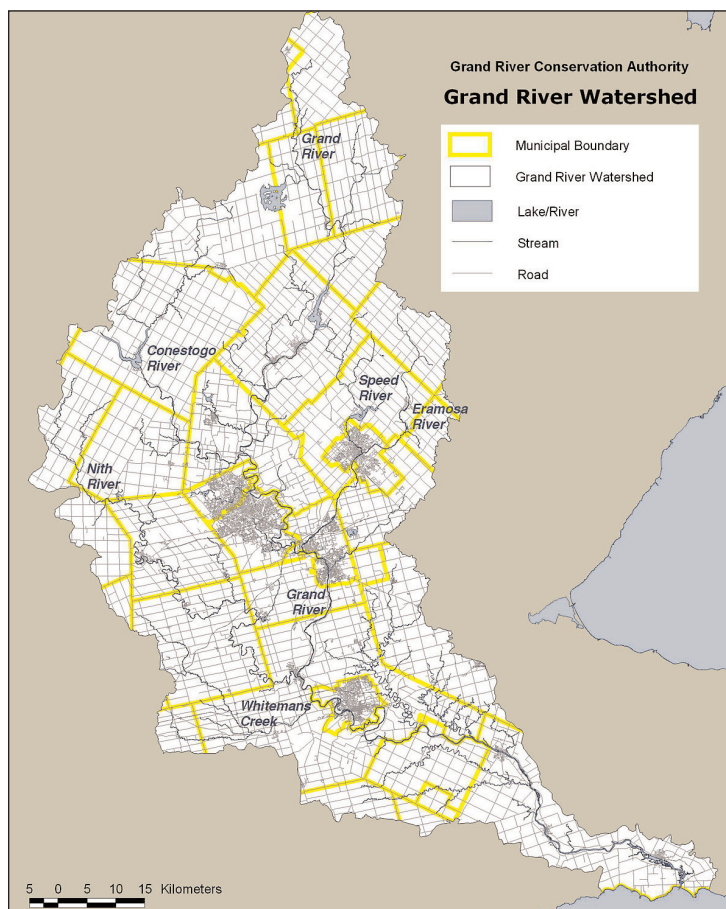
These issues are:

- Ensuring a sustainable water supply for communities and ecosystems;
- Reducing potential flood damages; and
- Improving water quality to maintain river health and reduce the Grand's impact on Lake Erie

The last comprehensive review was the 1982 Grand River



The Grand River at Dunnville, just upstream from Lake Erie.



Basin Water Management Study with 22 recommendations for action. Improvements included construction of dikes in Brantford and Cambridge, development of new water sources for the Region of Waterloo and Guelph, sewage treatment plant upgrades and other measures.

New study underway

Now, work has started on an action plan for the next 25 years and beyond. Representatives of the GRCA, municipalities, First Nations, provincial ministries and the federal government are working together to direct the development of a new Water Management Plan for the Grand River watershed.

Their goal is to create a new action plan by the end of 2012 to be implemented by the partner agencies.



Flooding remains an issue in some communities.

Managing the project

The project is guided by a Steering Committee made up of representatives of the organizations and agencies responsible for water issues.

The Steering Committee provides direction and guidance for the project. Committee members also raise understanding and awareness of the effort within their own agencies, acting as champions of the project.

Underneath the Steering Committee is a Project Team of technical experts assisting the steering committee.

They work with Program Director Lorrie Minshall to manage the studies and technical investigations.

Members of the Project Team also participate in Working Groups set up to examine specific elements of the project: water quality, water supply, flood control, Lake Erie issues and communications. The advice of outside experts will also be sought.

Partners

The Steering Committee and Project Teams include:

- Grand River Conservation Authority
- Municipalities
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Mississaugas of the New Credit
- Environment Canada
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Ministry of Natural Resources
- Ministry of the Environment
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Involving the watershed community

The goal of the Water Management Plan is to protect and improve the water resources important to the future of watershed residents and their communities.

Therefore, it's important that they be involved in the process.

A process is being developed to engage members of the public and key organizations in setting objectives for the Water Management Plan and developing ideas that can be incorporated in it.

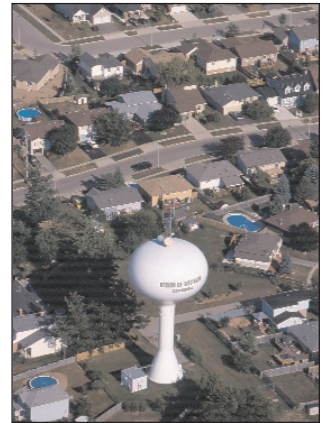
Check our website (see below) where information on activities and events will be posted as it becomes available.

Where to get more information

More information on the Water Management Plan can be found at the Grand River Conservation Authority website at www.grandriver.ca/wmp

The website includes an overview of the project, key documents that provide a more detailed look at the work, background reports, technical studies and more.

The website will be updated regularly with minutes, reports, news about public events and other information.



Future water supplies will be part of the study.

Program Director Lorrie Minshall

Lorrie Minshall brings more than 30 years experience in water issues to her job as Program Director for the Watershed Management Plan.

She has a degree in water resources engineering from the University of Guelph and a masters of business administration from McMaster University.

She has spent her career at the GRCA working in the areas of water resources planning, flood forecasting and warning, reservoir operations, policy development and land use planning.



Minshall

Prior to taking on this job, she was program director for the drinking water source protection program created to implement the Ontario Clean Water Act.