

GRAND

THE GRAND STRATEGY NEWSLETTER

ACTIONS

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Grand River
Conservation
Authority



The Grand:
A Canadian
Heritage River

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Cover photo:

*David Lamble removing
a juvenile great blue
heron from its nest at
Luther Marsh to band it*

Follow us on...



Lamble has banded 140,000 birds

By Janet Baine
GRCA Communications

David Lamble is many things — a retired chemistry teacher, a solo singer and a master bird bander.

A love of birds brings him to Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area about 200 days each year. He enjoys spending an entire day hunting for birds and banding them, recording what he finds and especially inviting others to help and learn.

"I think Luther is one of the most wonderful places on the entire planet. It is so diverse," he says.

Bird banding is a way of keeping tabs on the number of wild birds. When this meticulously collected information is gathered year after year, it leads to a better understanding of populations and the habitat needs of each species.

Lamble began bird banding in 1978 and by 1999, he had banded 60,000 birds and received a

GRCA Watershed Award for this work. Now he has more than doubled that and has banded 140,000 birds.

Master bander

"It is the highest quality science that he gives us," says Rob Messier, terrestrial ecologist at the GRCA. "It guides and influences a lot of our management at Luther. His observations have been translated into actions to improve bird habitat."

Lamble has helped to make some educated guesses about what changes can be made to improve habitat so that in future years, more birds will find a home at Luther.

"I have made suggestions and they have been implemented. Eagles are now nesting at Luther, osprey numbers have increased due to additional nesting platforms. Now we're increasing prairie grasslands and that is starting to bring back some species. I'm quite tickled that I have been a tiny little part of that," he says.

He operates three banding stations at Luther. In June, he bands herons, capturing the young ones just before they are ready to leave the nest. In July it is osprey and after that waterfowl and then grassland birds such as bobolink. There is a seasonal rhythm to the banding and collection of information.

Each January Lamble sends out a letter about his activities during the previous year. In 2010, he banded 15,036 birds of 101 species. The most numerous were 8,101 snow bunting, 1,549 tree swallows and 1,000 bobolink. One snow bunting banded near Arthur in January was seen near Oqaatsut, Greenland in April, so it travelled nearly 3,300 kilometres.

He believes that eastern bluebirds have rebounded in the Grand River watershed, because he has noticed an increasing number of them and banded 519 during 2010.

"There's no need to get concerned about them anymore," he says.

Lamble has taught about 1,000 young people between Grade 2 and university about birds over the past few years. He bands strictly as a volunteer. Each year at Youth Outdoors Day (youthoutdoors-day.com), kids crowd around him as he offers them the opportunity to hold a bird and check out his tools, some of which he has designed himself. A tough teenager's heart can soften as he holds a small bird in his hand and feels its warmth.

"Once someone has captured a bird



A Horned Lark

and then let it go, they have a much better understanding of how fragile they are. Education is extraordinarily important. I have the utmost faith in humankind after working with young people," Lamble says.



LOOK WHO'S TAKING ACTION

Helping young birds

By Janet Baine
GRCA Communications Specialist

This is the 20th year that Joe Kral has been building nesting boxes for young bird families and he has seen 24,400 young birds fledge from his boxes.



Joe Kral hadn't successfully nested at Guelph Lake before. This captured my heart and truly revealed nature's beauty," Kral says.

His interest in birds dates back to his childhood in the Czech Republic. Kral builds, paints and puts a number on each box, recording its location. He visits regularly and repairs or replaces any boxes that are vandalized.

His work at Guelph Lake is self-funded for the most part. Last year the Guelph Field Naturalists donated a new band saw to help him with his work.

'My old saw was broken and I mentioned it to someone who told someone else. I was very surprised when it was given to me at the University of Guelph Arboretum,' Kral said.

In the spring he is like a proud dad when he finds babies inside his boxes.



Eastern bluebird on a bird box.

Last year, 2010, was the first year he saw more than 2,000 young birds fledge from his boxes. This included 1,713 tree swallows, 162 house wrens, 112 eastern bluebirds and 43 chickadees. Native birds such as these need help because house sparrows and starlings, which are not native to Canada, are stronger and are pushing them out.

Once the young birds have left, Kral checks and cleans the boxes, which also means clearing out hundreds of wasp nests.

He can be seen in the park in every season and at any hour. He estimates he spends 700 hours a year on this project. When he retired from his job as a tool and die maker at Blount Canada Ltd., it became easier for him to find the time to be a steward of the birds at Guelph Lake.

People forget that birds eat deer flies, mosquitoes and blackflies. Kral estimates that the birds in his boxes consume more than 40 million insects during the nesting period.

Bringing back sugar maples

The beauty and bounty of the sugar maple tree is being replenished along some local roadways.

During the late 19th century, there was a government incentive program for farmers to plant maple trees from their woodlots along the roadways. For this reason, we see the red and orange canopy of leaves overhanging many



rural Ontario roads during the fall.

But these trees are now more than 100 years old — they are dying and they are rarely being replaced. The natural lifespan of a sugar maple is 400 years, but many are not surviving pollution, road salt and development stress. There are 10 native Canadian maples, including Ontario's sugar maple.

Genuine native Canadian maples are difficult to purchase. Many of the retail nurseries or garden centre maple stock is non-native. These trees come from the United States, Europe and Asia or are hybrid or cultivars crossbred from unknown seeds.

The GRCA is working with Maple Leaves Forever, a small registered charity to plant 480 roadside maple trees this spring, mostly on private land. These trees will be planted in eight locations in Brant, Waterloo Region and Mapleton Township thanks to a partnership between the GRCA and Maple Leaves Forever, a registered charity.

The GRCA's forestry specialists work with local landowners, select suitable sites and arrange for the planting of the maples. Half the cost of the trees is covered by the charity.

"We talk to the landowners. If they show an interest in roadside maples, we apply to this program on their behalf," said GRCA forestry specialist Jessica

Robbins. Maple trees are particular and need to be carefully planted at the right depth, with the right species selected.

A row of sugar maple trees were planted along Jones Baseline Road east of Guelph for the first time last spring and now the program has expanded.

Robbins said that maple trees grown in the GRCA's nursery at Burford are native and the nursery expects to be added to this list of certified nursery stock providers sometime in 2011.

For a list of certified nurseries and other information on this organization visit www.mapleleavesforever.com. If you are a property owner interested in roadside maples next year, call Jessica Robbins at 519-621-2763 ext. 2277.



MILESTONES

14th Heritage Day Workshop

By Barbara Veale

The 14th annual Heritage Day Workshop was another resounding success.

Held on Feb. 11 at the new community centre in Breslau, the event attracted over 250 people. The theme was *Culturally Created Communities: Rooted*

and Growing in the Townships. Hosted by Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich townships in partnership with Waterloo Region and the GRCA, the workshop focused on the economic and social values associated with rural community heritage. It started with a visual tour of the townships prepared by Andrew MacDonald, a co-op high school student working in the Region of Waterloo planning department. Using a mix of archival and contemporary images and music, the presentation captured the rural essence and social fabric of the area including festivals, historic sites and features, art, and businesses within the three townships.

Regional chair Ken Seiling challenged the three local mayors: Woolwich mayor Todd Cowan, Wellesley mayor Ross Kelterborn and Wilmot mayor Les Armstrong to a heritage trivia challenge. This generated lively stories and revealed a few little-known facts about township history.

Mark Reusser, vice-president of the Waterloo Federation of Agriculture, presented an overview of the evolution of agriculture in the area from pre-European settlement to the present day. He noted that current farming trends suggest that two types of farms will be prevalent in the future — large cash crop and livestock farms and small niche or specialty farms. He stressed that there is a need to protect valuable farmland to ensure that it can continue to provide local foods to watershed residents.

Participants were thoroughly entertained by members of the Elmira Theatre Company who portrayed women from the townships who assumed lead roles in community development in the early to mid-1900s. Actors included Deb Deckert, portraying Deborah Glaister, a notable family doctor in Wellesley Township; Julie Anne Herteis, representing Hazel Dreisinger from Elmira, one of the first women funeral directors in Ontario; Tracy Biggar, depicting Gladys Brandt Morden from Petersburg, a nurse



Bev Dietrich of the Elmira Theatre Company plays Laura Livingston of Castle Kilbride during the Heritage Day Workshop.

Photo by Doug Coxson, New Hamburg Independent

and health reformer; and Bev Dietrich speaking for Laura Livingston, daughter of James Livingston, Canada's "Flax and Linseed Oil King" from Baden.

The morning concluded with three panelists: Cheryl Peterson of the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival, Bob Reid of the Wellesley Apple Butter and Cheese Festival and Janice Harder of the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale. Each panelist spoke about the origin and evolution of the festival. The panelists stressed that community engagement, characteristic of Waterloo region's rural communities, is the key factor in the success of these festivals.

The afternoon session featured another panel with company founders Vernon Erb of the Erb Group of Companies, Rick Martin of Wallenstein Feed and Supply Ltd. and Terry Davis of Home Hardware Stores Limited. Each of these businesses has a national presence. The panelists agreed that the most important factor for locating and staying in the rural townships is the loyal and dedicated staff who have supported them since their respective companies were founded.

No Discernible Key, a traditional folk music band, provided a toe-tapping musical interlude. The group specializes in Canadian traditional and folk tunes.

Dr. Marlene Epp from Conrad Grebel University College provided an overview of the varied background and heritage of the Mennonite communities in Waterloo Region. Even though Mennonites come from all corners of the globe, they share common values around worship, peace and relief work. The slogan created for Waterloo Region which unites the Mennonite groups is "to remember is to work for peace."

A reception was held at the Waterloo



Tree coalition plant in Brantford.

Wellington Flight Centre at the Region of Waterloo International Airport. Flight Centre staff provided tours of their newly-renovated facilities and a brief history of their school.

Check the Heritage Day Workshop link on www.grandriver.ca for more information.



WATERSHED AWARDS

Chuck Beach makes Earth Week a success

By Janet Baine

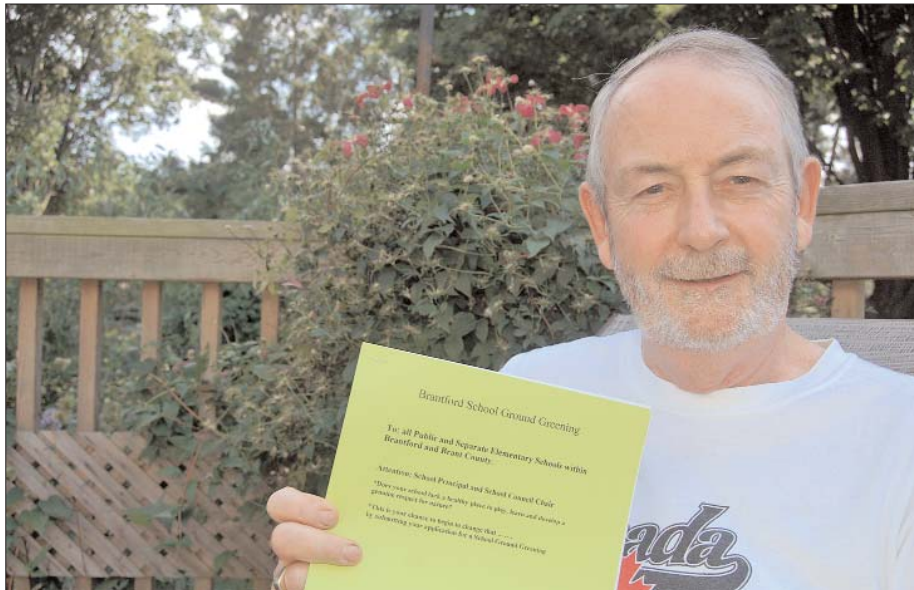
GRCA Communications Specialist

Chuck Beach is rallying people and organizations to ensure the environment is a top concern for everyone in Brantford.

He received a 2010 Grand River Conservation Watershed Award, given to organizations and individuals that have made an outstanding contribution to conservation through environmental work.

Before retiring from his position as vice-president of S. C. Johnson and Son in 2004, Beach's responsibilities included the company's environmental department. He led Johnson's effort to obtain ISO 9002 and ISO 14001 certification, stringent international quality and environmental standards. He played the lead role in reducing the environmental footprint of his company and now he has turned his attention to reducing the environmental footprint of his community.

Beach has served many local organizations: he is treasurer and past president of the Brant Waterways Foundation. He is a member of the Grand River grant review team of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and is on the steering committee of the Brantford/Brant Children's Water Festival. He was also the first chair of Brantford's standing environmental policy advisory committee.



Chuck Beach chairs the Earth Day Events committee in Brantford.

Photo by Janet Baine

“Chuck has been a catalyst for environmental change, encouraging building of river trails, protecting water sources and increasing the tree canopy along the Grand River,” said Joanne Lewis, of the Brant Community Foundation.

In 2007, Beach formed and chairs the local Earth Day Events committee. This is an umbrella organization that is turning Earth Day into a big deal in Brantford. It doesn’t necessarily get directly involved in all the events, but it supports the work of other organizations.

This past spring there were more than a dozen events that it helped promote. These included a speaker series, community clean ups, tree planting events and a ReStore spring clean up and sale. More than 350 students from six local high schools planted 5,000 native trees and shrubs in 2010.

Each year, Beach and the Earth Week committee members make a presentation to Brantford council to let them know about all the Earth Week initiatives in the city. The tree canopy in Brantford is a big issue, because in 2004, a GRCA report found that Brantford was the city in the watershed with the lowest canopy at 23.5 per cent and he set out to change that. In 2008, he worked with the GRCA to update the tree canopy study and an analysis found a 15.4 per cent tree

canopy. On behalf of the city’s Environmental Policy Advisory Committee, he spoke to council and the City of Brantford has set a goal of 40 per cent forest canopy.

Another annual project during Earth Week is providing one school each year with \$9,000 to green their schoolyard. This started in 2008 with partial funding for Ryerson Heights Public School. Then in 2009, Holy Cross School received funding and this spring it was Bellview School.

“It is now accepted that one in seven school children will develop some form of skin cancer,” said Beach. “So, the importance of well designed schoolyards must not be understated.” He and the committee thought this is an important issue and found corporate sponsors, including his former employer S. C. Johnson.

Another big success is the Brantford tree coalition tree planting which used to plant 1,000 trees annually and now plants 5,000 native trees.

“In the future, we hope to target plantings to fit with Brantford’s new waterfront master plan,” Beach said. “I think momentum is still growing and we’re always looking for more involvement.”

Brantford Earth Week:

April 17: Earth Week Speaker series. Solar Power for the Home Owner 1 p.m. E-mail jlewis.bcf@rogers.com to reserve a free ticket.

April 20: Great Earth Week Paris Downtown Cleanup. E-mail tara.topping@granderie.ca for more details on how to help.

April 20: Great Earth Week Brantford Downtown Clean up 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Harmony Square massive clean up by community members.

April 18 – 23: ReStore Spring Clean up / Sale. Clean out your closets and bring items to the store at 408 Henry Street. or buy and reuse items.

Details of the Brantford events are posted on www.brantford.ca.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

May 1 deadline for conservation grants

Applications are now being accepted from community groups and schools for Community Conservation Grants given out by the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

Each year the foundation awards grants of up to \$1,000 to qualified groups (must be a registered charity) or up to \$500 for elementary schools undertaking conservation projects in communities throughout the Grand River watershed. Eligible projects must be tangible and available for the use or benefit of the entire community.

The deadline for receipt of grant applications is May 2. The award recipients will be selected this summer with the cheque presentation taking place this fall. A final report may be requested of grant recipients within one year, or upon the successful completion of the project.

Applications can be downloaded from www.grcf.ca or by contacting the foundation in Cambridge at (519) 621-2763 ext. 2372 or by e-mail at foundation@grandriver.ca.

50 years of smooth sailing

By Allen Nichols, Jan d'Ailly
and Pat Aplevich

Imagine a sunny day at Conestoga Lake with a summer breeze rippling the surface of the water. Sail boats move across the reservoir as sailors from the Conestoga Sailing Club enjoy their 50th year.

Some members participate in regattas with the best sailors from the province. Others prefer club races, or a leisurely cruise. All work with the wind and the water to enjoy an environmentally-sustainable activity away from everyday cares.

The sailing season runs from late-April to mid-September. Evening and weekend lessons are offered for adults of all ages and abilities. Instructors are certified with the Canadian Yachting Association and use the club's fleet of 25 boats. Two boats are specifically built for handicapped sailors. This community fleet is also available to club members who do not own boats.

During the summer vacation, 200 nine to 18 year olds attend learn to sail and day camp programs. They discover how to detect wind direction from the ripples on the water and the flutter of flags along the shore. They trim sails to

get the wind to work to their best advantage. Junior sailors learn water safety, leadership and team work as skipper or crew. They may also compete at regional, national and international regattas.

The Conestoga Sailing Club enjoys a beautiful setting overlooking Conestoga Lake. There is a boat park, picnic area, a somewhat rocky beach, spacious clubhouse with full kitchen, as well as barbeque and washroom facilities. The club is about 30 minutes from Waterloo. Its cottage-like atmosphere encourages members to gather for social activities just as they did 50 years ago.

The club holds races weekly during June, July and August. The Warm Water Regatta in June attracts sailors from across Ontario and Michigan. The mid-summer race around the arms of the lake and the year-end Club Championship make competition fun for the members. Friday night cruises and potluck picnics encourage camaraderie.

The club started in June 1961 - three years after the Conestoga dam was completed. It is a great example of recreational opportunities created by GRCA dams and reservoirs. Thousands of children and adults have learned to sail and taken advantage of employment and leadership opportunities.

Anyone with an interest in sailing may join the member-operated, non-profit club. For more information, visit www.kwsailing.org.

New McEwen scholarship

Post-secondary school students in the Grand River watershed interested in improving the environment are eligible for a new scholarship offered by the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

The \$2,000 McEwen Clean Water Prize is available to students who are pursuing a career in an environmental field. It's open to students registered at the Guelph, Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier (Waterloo and Brantford) and Nipissing (Brantford) universities, as well as Conestoga and Mohawk (Brantford) colleges. Students must be in second, third or fourth year or a graduate program in fields such as environmental science, engineering, emerging technologies, governance or education.

Preference will be given to students who have attended programs at GRCA nature centres.

Named after Murray McEwen

The prize is named after the donor, Murray McEwen, a businessman living close to the Eramosa River near Ospringe in the Town of Erin.

He worked with the GRCF to create the scholarship because of his life-long interest in water issues.

"Some good work can be done to help people solve water problems, around the world and in our watershed," he said.

The McEwen Clean Water Prize will be awarded by the foundation each summer. For more information about the prize, contact Doina Hartley at the Grand River Conservation Foundation at dhartley@grandriver.ca or at 519-621-2763, ext. 2372.



Members of the Conestoga Sailing Club are set to celebrate their 50th anniversary this year.

Watershed award nominations May 2

The Grand River Conservation Authority is looking for nominees for its 2011 environmental awards.

Each year since 1976, the authority has presented awards to individuals, families, organizations and businesses that have taken action to protect and enhance the natural environment of the Grand River watershed.

The GRCA presents two types of awards: the Honour Roll Award for a sustained record of achievement over an extended period of time and Watershed Awards for outstanding examples of conservation and environmental work.

Nominations can come from anyone in the watershed, so if you know a person, organization or business that you think deserves an award, please make a nomination. The deadline for nominations is May 2, 2011. A nomination form is available in the "Watershed Awards" section of the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca.

In 2010 six awards were given out, including an Honour Roll Award which went to Allan Holmes, who was the Chief Administrative Officer of the GRCA from 1991 to 2000.

Watershed Award recipients were: Chuck Beach, an environmental activist in Brantford; farmers Steve and Paul Cressman who have planted more than 7,000 trees on their two farms; Clare Rennie, the quiet leader behind the Guelph Rotary Forest; Wellington Green Legacy, an organization that has planted a million trees in Wellington County; and Ducks Unlimited Canada for more than three decades of returning lost wetland habitat to the Grand River watershed. Short video slide shows about each of these award recipients are posted on www.youtube.com/user/GrandRiverCa.

The 2011 winners will be selected by the Special Recognition Committee of the GRCA board and they will be honoured at an event in the fall.



Project Webfoot is allowing youth to learn about wetlands.

Photo by Louise Heyming

Project Webfoot offered at nature centres

A donation from S. C. Johnson and Son Inc. of Brantford is allowing Ducks Unlimited Canada to provide 50 schools in Brantford/Brant and Waterloo Region with hands-on wetland educational programs this school year.

Students come to a GRCA nature centre for a half-day program. The bussing cost is covered through the donation.

"This is the second year running these programs, which have been a huge hit with kids and teachers alike," said Ralph Beaumont, manager of environmental education and marketing with the GRCA.

Project Webfoot is DUC's international education program that introduces Grade 4 and 5 students to wetlands, teaches them about the impact wetlands have on their daily lives and the necessity of conservation initiatives. Over the last few years, this program has grown by 30 per cent, currently reaching more than 350 classes every year.

DUC also provides elementary classrooms across rural Ontario with kits filled with engaging in-class learning materials. Secondary schools interested in longer term enrichment and action projects focused on wetlands can partner with DUC to create a Wetland Centre of Excellence - outdoor classrooms that

offer a wide variety of cross-curricular activities, and enable students to become leaders in wetland education.

The project Webfoot program was developed by DUC and is provided by GRCA staff with the actual programs being held at either Pinehurst Lake near Ayr, or Apps' Mill near Brantford. If space permits, limited programs are also offered at Laurel Creek Nature Centre in Waterloo.

Educating youth — who are tomorrow's decision-makers and conservation leaders— about the tremendous value of wetland habitats, is one of DUC's highest priorities. It hopes to foster a wetland conservation ethic that ensures these critical habitats remain healthy and vibrant well into the future.

The urban program of Project Webfoot incorporates wetland field trips into the program which focuses on getting students outside who might not otherwise have the opportunity to visit a local wetland.

SC Johnson has committed to a third year of funding these programs, and school boards will be officially invited to start booking classes in the fall of 2011, said Stephanie Walker, education specialist with DUC.

For more information visit www.education.ducks.ca.

History papers accepted until April 29

History papers will be accepted until April 29 for "History on the Grand," a one-day symposium at the Cambridge City Hall in downtown Cambridge.

The symposium is Oct. 22 to share research and discuss issues arising from the study of local history. This year's theme is People and Place. Please submit a minimum 500 word paper abstract and a brief C.V. Papers may be on a wide range of themes including the history of immigration and migration to Southwestern Ontario, the ethnic and cultural groups or traditions that make up our communities.

For information contact Jim Quantrell at the City of Cambridge Archives, P.O. Box 669, Cambridge ON N1R 5W8, or quantrellj@city.cambridge.on.ca.

About Grand Actions

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

To subscribe: 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.

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

Submission deadlines: 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.

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The Grand Strategy Calendar

Resilience 2011: A Community Festival on March 25 and 26, various locations in Guelph. This will coincide with the University of Guelph's Sustainability Week, World Water Day, and culminate with Earth Hour. Check www.resilience2011.ca for information.

Sharing Experiences, an annual capacity-building workshop, Saturday, April 9, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 917 Artaban Rd., Ancaster. The GRCA is a sponsor of this workshop for individuals and community groups that undertake environmental initiatives. Registration is free and lunch is provided. Interested people should contact Jaime Overy at Hamilton Conservation Authority at 905-525-2181 or by e-mail at joverly@conservationhamilton.ca. Lunch will be provided.

5th Annual Bloomin Earth Eco-Fair at Kitchener City Hall, Saturday, April 16, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. An outdoor market, free workshops, live entertainment and the RETHreaded fashion show and a recycled clothing challenge.

April is Healthy Communities month in Woolwich. This includes a Green Living fair and Alternate Technology tour, Saturday, April 16, 11:00 am-5:00 pm, St. Jacobs Arena, 29 Parkside Dr. As well as several Clean Waterways tree planting days, two hikes and a Taste of Woolwich event to spark interest in local produce. Visit www.healthywoolwich.org or call Joy at 519-664-3534.

Procession of the Species parade, Saturday, April 23, noon to 2:30 p.m., King St., Kitchener. People dress in costumes for this earth day based celebration. Free workshops beforehand. For more information, visit www.kwprocession.ca.

Upper Grand Trailway, Saturday April 30, 10 am to 1 pm, Grand Valley. Bring your family to plant trees along the Upper Grand Trailway. Meet at the Trailway Parking lot. Lunch to be provided by the Grand Valley Lions Club.

Guelph Rotary Forest Earth Day, Saturday April 30, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Guelph Lake Nature Centre, Guelph. Help plant 5,000 trees. Other activities include creepy creature shows, earth day crafts, music by the Funky Mammies and vendor tents. Planters are encouraged to bring their own shovel. Groups are encouraged to participate. There is no charge and there will be free refreshments. Parking is available at the Lakeside Church on Conservation Road. Transit buses will shuttle visitors from the parking lot to the Earth Day event and buses also leave from St. George's Square in downtown Guelph every 30 minutes.

Waterloo Earth Day, Saturday, May 7, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Laurel Creek Conservation Area, Waterloo. This is a free fun-filled day of family activities with an environmental theme. Join us to dig in and plant 1,000 trees and shrubs or enjoy a raptor show, some hands-on activities such as building a bird box and drumming with Creation Africa. School Challenge: Waterloo Region schools who register the most participants will receive an environmental prize for their school.

Note: Events at the GRCA's conservation areas and nature centres are listed in the calendar section at www.grandriver.ca. More Earth Day events are listed on www.earthday.ca.