

INFORMATION ITEMS

Week Ending February 19, 2016

REPORTS

1. None

CORRESPONDENCE

1. GRCA *Current*, February 2016
2. AMO re: Request for Council resolutions to support AMO/LAS request for broader municipal investment powers

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

1. None

ITEMS AVAILABLE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

1. None

GRCA Current



February, 2016 • Volume 21 Number 2

GRCA General Membership

Chair Helen Jowett

Vice-Chair Chris White

Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon and Southgate and Town of Grand Valley
Guy Gardhouse

Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North Pat Salter

Township of Centre Wellington
Kelly Linton

Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch
Chris White

City of Guelph
Bob Bell, Mike Salisbury

Region of Waterloo
Les Armstrong, Elizabeth Clarke,
Sue Foxton, Helen Jowett,
Geoff Lorentz, Jane Mitchell,
Joe Nowak, Wayne Roth,
Sandy Shantz, Warren Stauch

Municipality of North Perth and Township of Perth East
George Wicke

Halton Region Cindy Lunau

City of Hamilton George Stajanovic

Oxford County Bruce Banbury

County of Brant
Brian Coleman, Shirley Simons

City of Brantford
Dave Neumann, Vic Prendergast

Haldimand and Norfolk Counties
Bernie Corbett, Fred Morison

New chair and vice-chair

The GRCA board of directors elected Helen Jowett as the new chair and Chris White as the new vice-chair, each for a one-year term.

Jowett has been a member of Waterloo regional council representing Cambridge since 2014. White is the mayor of Guelph/Eramosa Township and a councillor in Wellington County. Both Jowett and White joined the GRCA board in 2014.

Elections for both positions are held at the first board meeting each year.

In her remarks, Jowett expressed her gratitude to GRCA staff, volunteers and fellow board members and noted that waterways and sensitive lands are the very sustainability of life itself.

She replaces Jane Mitchell, another Waterloo regional councillor, while White replaces Brantford representative Vic Prendergast. Both Mitchell and Prendergast served in their positions for five years and will remain on the board.

The 26-member GRCA board is composed of representatives appointed by the municipalities within the Grand River watershed.

New 3D mapping complete

New mapping of the Grand River watershed shows the path of all 10,000 km of waterways in 3D.

While the GRCA doesn't own the waterways or the land around it, this information is key to the daily work of the organization. Some of the older watercourse maps dated back 30 years and are no longer accurate due to changes on the landscape.

The update to 3D digital maps took a few years. It is based on high-resolution aerial photography. Using digital stereo imagery and specialized geographic information system (GIS) software, the mapping of the waterways was created by GRCA staff.

The new, more up-to-date mapping means better decisions can be made by the GRCA and its partners due to the more complete and up-to-date information. It has already been used to improve

outcomes by the GRCA's rural water quality program staff, who work directly with landowners to solve water problems on their land.

The mapping is expected to be posted online later this year at <https://maps.grandriver.ca>.

2015 busy year for planners

It was a busy year for the GRCA's planning staff in 2015 with a record number of permits processed.

A total of 791 permits were received in 2015, and 806 were processed. This exceeds the GRCA's previous record of 753 permits received in 2013, and is 100 permits more than 2014.

There are many reasons for the high number of permits, although the numbers tend to go up and down from one year to the next.

Major projects such as wind farms in Haldimand and Dufferin counties require a permit for each turbine. Initiatives such as infrastructure funding programs also result in an increase in permits. When the economy is good, more building takes place.

Permit numbers are only part of the story. A major project, such as a bridge, and a small project, such as a new garage, each require one permit.

In 2006 the province provided a new regulation for use in the Grand River watershed. Since then, the GRCA has been working to improve mapping for the regulated area.

Forestry work underway at Conestogo Lake

The GRCA is improving the forest plantations at Conestogo Lake Park.

The project is expected to take four to six weeks to complete, but may continue up until mid-March.

Crews are thinning the forest plantations north-west of Conestogo Lake, between Side Road 6 and Wellington County Road 10.



River Festival
2000
For excellence in river management



Conservation Ontario
Natural Champions



Heavy equipment is crossing one of the main snowmobile trails in the area and warning signs are posted. Snowmobilers are asked to use extra caution and to slow down in the vicinity of the work.

The work is part of the GRCA's long-term management program to convert conifer plantations to more natural forest lands.

A plantation contractor will be harvesting trees marked for removal in order to improve forest health and create more varied habitats that support a greater mixture of plant, animal and bird species.

Seasonal temperatures in January

Precipitation was close to the long-term average with both rain and snowfall events in January.

The snowfall events tended to be localized, rather than watershed-wide. Laurel Creek received the most precipitation during the month while Shade's Mills received the least. During one storm towards the end of January, Conestogo weather station receive the highest snowfall, recording 22 cm of snow over two days.

In contrast, the southern part of the watershed received very little precipitation over the same period.

Temperatures were seasonal in January, averaging -6.3 C, after a very warm December. There is still a chance of above-average temperatures continuing.

The major reservoirs are slightly above normal for this time of year. Lake Erie water levels continue to be well above-average.

Stay off the ice at Guelph Lake

The GRCA warned people to stay off the ice at Guelph Lake Park, which is closed for the winter season.

Signs at the park's entrance indicate the ice is unsafe. The GRCA does not offer ice fishing as a winter activity at Guelph Lake.

Those who venture out onto the ice are putting their safety at risk. Guelph Lake is a working reservoir, and water levels can rise or fall quickly, meaning ice can become thin or unstable in a very short period of time and without warning. Ice thickness is not monitored at Guelph Lake and many of the roads within the park are not plowed. This



Photo by Ann Schletz

A den of five raccoons tucked into an old sugar maple in Kiera's Forest at the Guelph Rotary Forest at Guelph Lake was spotted by some visitors to the nature centre.

could make it difficult for GRCA staff or emergency services personnel to assist people out on the lake in the event of an emergency.

Avid anglers can go ice-fishing at three other GRCA parks when winter conditions allow: Shade's Mills in Cambridge, Pinehurst Lake near Paris, and Belwood Lake near Fergus.

Conditions are monitored daily at these locations to ensure the ice thickness meets safety requirements. When the ice is too thin, the program is suspended until it is safe to resume.

Apply now for grants

Applications are now being accepted for grants for schoolyard and community environmental projects offered by the GRCA and the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

The deadline for applications is Feb. 29. Community groups can receive up to \$1,000 for conservation projects that are tangible and available for public use. Elementary schools within the watershed can get up to \$750 to pay for natural elements (e.g. trees, shrubs, seeds and plants) for a schoolyard naturalization project. Grants will be distributed in the spring to schools and in the fall to community groups.

Money for the grants comes from two sources. The GRCA's Thiess Riverprize

Endowment Fund, which was established with the monetary portion of the GRCA's 2000 award for excellence in watershed management. It is also supported by the GRCF's Grand Champions Fund, established through private donations.

Details and an application form are available in the News section of the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca.

This issue of *GRCA Current* was published in February 2016.

It is a summary of the January 2016 business conducted by the Grand River Conservation Authority board and committees as well as other noteworthy happenings and topics of interest.

The Grand River Conservation Authority welcomes forwarding, distribution and photocopying *GRCA Current*.

Next board meeting:
Feb. 26 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre.

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<https://calendar.grandriver.ca/directors>

View coming events:
www.grandriver.ca/Events

Sample resolution for municipal councils related to broader investment powers

WHEREAS municipalities are required to invest their reserves in accordance with the Municipal Act, 2001 and Ontario Regulation 438/97 (as amended), which specifically outlines allowable investments;

and WHEREAS to ensure the sustainability and sound stewardship of the municipality's investments, the municipality is of the opinion that changes should be made to the Municipal Act, 2001 and Ontario Regulation 438/97 (as amended), to allow for the prudent investment of reserves, if those investments are professionally managed and part of a broader investment strategy;

and WHEREAS the Prudent Investor Standard is an industry accepted best practice in effectively managing a portfolio of investments, and the Standard applies to investments, not in isolation, but in the context of the portfolio of investments and as part of an overall strategy, that should incorporate acceptable risk and return objectives suitable to the stakeholders;

and WHEREAS the Province is conferring "Prudent Investor" status on the City of Toronto to enable greater diversification in portfolio management,

and WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Local Authority Services (LAS), and the Municipal Finance Officers Association of Ontario (MFOA), have long requested that the Prudent Investor Standard apply to all municipal investments that are invested with The One Investment Program;

and WHEREAS in 2005, municipalities were granted the ability to invest in longer-term corporate bonds and Canadian equity investments via only the One Investment Program, and the One Investment Program has demonstrated strong investment returns for municipalities within these 'new' investment sectors;

and WHEREAS the institutional portfolio managers utilized by the One Investment Program recommend that the Prudent Investor Standard approach is a more appropriate approach to investing;

and WHEREAS operating municipal investments under the Prudent Investor Standard is precluded by the Municipal Act, Eligible Investments, in its current form;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council support the request of AMO, LAS, and MFOA to amend Ontario Regulation 438/97 (as amended) of the Municipal Act, 2001, to allow municipalities to invest consistent with the Prudent Investor Standard, if such investments are through the One Investment Program.