

## GRCA General Membership

<b>Chair</b>	Helen Jowett
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Chris White
<b>Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon and Southgate and Town of Grand Valley</b>	Guy Gardhouse
<b>Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North</b>	Pat Salter
<b>Township of Centre Wellington</b>	Kelly Linton
<b>Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch</b>	Chris White
<b>City of Guelph</b>	Bob Bell, Mike Salisbury
<b>Region of Waterloo</b>	Les Armstrong, Elizabeth Clarke, Sue Foxton, Helen Jowett, Geoff Lorentz, Jane Mitchell, Joe Nowak, Wayne Roth, Sandy Shantz, Warren Stauch
<b>Municipality of North Perth and Township of Perth East</b>	George Wicke
<b>Halton Region</b>	Cindy Lunau
<b>City of Hamilton</b>	George Stojanovic
<b>Oxford County</b>	Bruce Banbury
<b>County of Brant</b>	Brian Coleman, Shirley Simons
<b>City of Brantford</b>	Dave Neumann, Vic Prendergast
<b>Haldimand and Norfolk Counties</b>	Bernie Corbett, Fred Morison

## Grassland for bobolinks in the central Grand

A developer is contributing \$65,000 to improve grassland habitat at the Morton property beside Pinehurst Lake.

The Morton property was purchased by the GRCA in 2009 with a plan to transform the farmland into many habitat communities, including grasslands.

The developer has approval from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to develop 8.5 hectares (21 acres) of land that contains habitat for bobolinks. This songbird is listed as threatened in the Ontario Endangered Species Act, and loss of breeding habitat is considered a significant factor in the population decline. Provincial regulations may permit a company to undertake a project only if an equivalent amount of habitat can be created within the same region.

The GRCA submitted a compensation proposal to host a grassland enhancement project at a higher ratio than the habitat that was being lost. An agreement is being signed by the developer and the GRCA to improve 13.3 hectares (33 acres) of habitat that will support bobolink and other grassland species.

The developer is paying the full cost of the project for five years. This will include control of invasive species, prescribed burns and seeding native grasses. Annual vegetation and bird surveys will be undertaken so that staff can document and ensure the ongoing success of the grassland habitat. Work is expected to get underway this summer.

some sites receiving over twice the normal precipitation.

The highest precipitation was recorded at the Environment Canada station at the Brantford Airport, with close to two and a half times the normal March precipitation.

The average temperature in March was well above the long-term average. At Shand Dam the average temperature was 0.5 degrees, which is about 3.1 degrees above the long-term average. March is the sixth month in a row with above average temperature.

A total of eight flood messages were issued in March, with some minor flooding reported. The reservoirs were used to mitigate downstream flows and reduce flooding. They will continue to be operated carefully over the remainder of the filling season.

The level of Lake Erie is well above the long-term average and continued to rise in March.

## Queen's Park Day

The GRCA joined a day for MPPs at Queen's Park in March that was held by Conservation Ontario.

Senior staff from all 36 conservation authorities were invited to attend to showcase the wide array

## GRCA 50 years ago April 6, 1966

An Act of the Ontario Legislature was proclaimed law on April 6, 1966, resulting in the amalgamation of the Grand River Conservation Commission (formed in 1934) and the Grand Valley Conservation Authority (formed in 1948). The law brought the two organizations together to form the GRCA that we know today.

At that time, Guelph Lake, Brant Park, Shade's Mills and the Elora Quarry parks were not yet formed, while Laurel Creek was planned for 1967.

Elm trees were being removed during the winters due to Dutch elm disease.

## March was warm and wet

Precipitation in March was above normal throughout the watershed

Although March started out fairly dry, significant rain, snow and freezing rain fell during the second half of the month. By the end of March, the watershed had recorded more than one and a half times the normal precipitation, with



of conservation authority program benefits and to advocate for the MPPs' support for continued provincial funding.

There were displays about topics important to conservation authorities, such as the Great Lakes, source protection, climate change, flooding, information management, green infrastructure, and conservation areas.

Key people were in attendance, including the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and MPP Eleanor McMahon, who is leading the review of the Conservation Authorities Act.

The Grand River Conservation Authority has held two similar Queen's Park days in the past, and this is the first one hosted by Conservation Ontario.

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## Volunteer program

The volunteer program has really taken flight at the Grand River Conservation Authority thanks to four years of funding provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The GRCA now has a full-time volunteer coordinator, who is working with community partners and volunteers, as well as developing safe practices.

During National Volunteer Week — April 10 to 16 — GRCA staff are preparing for the busy tree planting season, which involves events in communities across the watershed. The first planting event gets underway April 17 at the New Forest in the City in Brantford and the last will be May 14 at Silvercreek Park in Guelph. For a listing of all these events, visit [www.grandriver.ca/events](http://www.grandriver.ca/events).

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## Tree planting events

The public is being invited to dig in for the environment at tree planting events across the watershed.

These take starting April 17 and continue to May 14 in a variety of communities, often with partner organizations.

The events provide an opportunity for residents from across the watershed to plant trees to benefit the natural environment and the watershed. The majority of plantings take place on GRCA or municipal property.

To date, the GRCA has planted 30 million trees. In 2015, GRCA staff partnered with community organizations including



Photo by Kevin Tupman

Bobolinks are threatened in Ontario. This summer the GRCA will begin work to improve breeding habitat for this songbird on the Morton property, in the Spottiwod Lakes complex near Pinehurst Lake. A similar project is underway at Conestogo Lake.

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companies to plant 20,000 trees at 28 events.

The full list with details about the 2016 community planting events is available online at [www.grandriver.ca/events](http://www.grandriver.ca/events).

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## Parks open April 30

Grand River Parks open April 30 and are gearing up for a busy summer season.

The Grand River Parks membership program is very popular. It is now easier to buy year-round passes online and at any park gate when a staff member is on duty. Passes are valid for one year and provide entry into all parks, as well as a coupon booklet with perks for activities that are free or at a reduced rate.

When it opens, Brant Park will have an automatic access gate. An automatic gate also allows year-round access to Shade's Mills Park.

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## Nominations due May 1

The annual call for nominations for watershed award recipients is underway with a nomination deadline of May 1.

Anyone can nominate someone who they think is deserving of an award — an individual, family, group or business — by

completing a simple one-page form. There are two types of awards — Honour Roll Awards for a sustained record and Watershed Awards for outstanding examples of environmental work. The winners will be honoured at a special event in October.

The nomination form and more information on the awards can be found at [www.grandriver.ca/awards](http://www.grandriver.ca/awards).

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

It is a summary of the March 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 distribution, photocopying and forwarding of *GRCA Current*.

### Next board meeting:

April 22 at 9:30 a.m.,  
GRCA Administration Centre.

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