

# Sustaining Our Future - *Together*

GRCA presentation to  
City of Guelph Council

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Photo: GRCA/C. Snider

# About the GRCA

- **Local** agency organized on a watershed basis
- **Integrated** watershed management
- **Balances** human, environmental, and economic needs



*Photo: GRCA/B. Doherty*

# About the Grand River Watershed



## Water Management Plan

- Provides a framework for collective and collaborative action
- Goals are to ensure water supplies, improve water quality, reduce flood damage potential, and build resilience to climate change

# GRCA Strategic Plan

## Our Vision:

A healthy watershed where we live, work, play and prosper in balance with the natural environment.

*Photo: GRCA/S. Hannaford*

# GRCA Strategic Priorities

1. Protect life and minimize property damage from flooding and erosion.
2. Improve the health of the Grand River watershed.
3. Connect people to the environment through outdoor experiences.



*Photo: GRCA/C. Snider*

# GRCA Strategic Priorities

4. Managing landholdings in a responsible and sustainable way.
5. Compliance and implementation of the amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act.
6. Enhance Indigenous awareness, understanding and relationships.



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## Water Management & Infrastructure

- Seven dams and reservoirs actively managed to reduce flood damages and maintain flows
- Flood peaks reduced 50 per cent or more; minimum flows maintained in dry months
- Completing an Asset Management Plan for Major Dams and Dikes



**Protect life and  
minimize property  
damage**

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**Protect life and  
minimize  
property damage**

## **Planning and Permits – Role in Development**

- In 2023, 27 permits issued; Q1 of 2024, 11 permits approved
- GRCA staff participating on the Expanded Project Team and Technical Advisory Group for the City-led Clythe Creek Subwatershed Study
- O. Reg. 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions, and Permits now in force



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## Water Quality Monitoring

- GRCA maintains 2 continuous water quality stations on the Speed River that monitor temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, pH, and turbidity
- GRCA collects monthly samples from sites on the Speed and Eramosa rivers up and down stream of the City as part of the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network



**Improve watershed  
health**

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## Wastewater Optimization

- The Guelph Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) achieved a Silver Award Category for the Watershed-wide Wastewater Optimization Recognition Program in 2022
- Guelph WWTP achieved voluntary total phosphorus and total ammonia nitrogen targets in 11 of 12 months (92%) in 2022



**Improve watershed health**

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## Drinking Water Source Protection

- Ensure Guelph's drinking water supplies are protected now and in the future
- In 2023, GRCA coordinated engagement to protect Guelph's drinking water from overuse due to activities under the Permit to Take Water Program and Aggregate Resources Act



**Improve watershed health**

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## Rural Water Quality Program

In the last 5 years in the City's WHPAs :

- 227 projects
- \$416,000 in grants
- Total investment in water quality - \$680,000



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**Connect people to  
the environment**

## **Guelph Lake Conservation Area**

- 12.7 km of trails
- 300 camp sites
- Hosts large events, e.g. Hillside Festival, Triathlons, etc.
- Rowing and Sailing Clubs
- 2023 – 66,000 day use visitors

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## Guelph Lake Nature Centre

- New nature centre now under construction – to be completed by 2025
- Provides outdoor education programs to students and community groups from the City of Guelph as well as Wellington County

**Connect people to  
the environment**

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A photograph of a person walking away on a dirt path through a dense, green forest. The path is made of reddish-brown earth and is flanked by tall trees and thick undergrowth. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt, dark shorts, and a hat. The overall scene is bright and vibrant, representing a natural, sustainable environment.

**Responsible and sustainable land management**

## **Conservation Lands**

- 48,000 acres of land, consisting of 430 parcels
- Current initiatives include preparation of a Conservation Area Strategy and Land Inventory

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Compliance and implementation of the amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act.

- GRCA staff updating and developing policies and guidelines; work plans underway to ensure the completion of regulatory deliverables

Enhancing Indigenous awareness, understanding, and relationships.

- Working with our First Nations partners to facilitate mutual learning, sharing of information, and establishing stronger working relationships



# Sustaining Our Future - *Together*



- Our programs **balance** human, environmental, and economic needs
- We **build relationships and trust** with our watershed partners to achieve our **common goals**

# Questions?

