

GRAND TIMES



Newsletter Vol. 12, No. 2

Fall 2008

From the President's Desk:

Hi folks!

Isn't it a relief to get all those spring chores out of the way? We've planted trees, stocked fish, cleaned up roads, and now we're getting ready for the summer construction season.

Wouldn't it be nice if we got some time for fishing. But with the weather, even that has not been a lot of fun.

We meant to get a spring newsletter out, but our editor had three vacations to take, so things got behind. For that we apologize.

One celebration I wanted to tell you about was Craig Selby's retirement. Now he has more time for fishing, and hunting, and whatever else he's allowed to do.

Craig has been the district manager of the Guelph Ministry of Natural Resources office for longer than most of us can remember. An unflinching and unflinching supporter of Friends of the Grand and the whole notion of a strong role for volunteers in natural resources management, Craig goes out into the wide world with our heartfelt best wishes. We are pleased that we were invited to his retirement dinner and able to be part of the celebration.

We also have a new supervisor for MNR's Waterloo-Wellington area, Al Murray. Al has been in these parts for a long time and brings a lot of experience as a fisheries biologist to the position. More recently, he has been the coordinator of the Waterloo Stewardship Network out of the Guelph MNR office, so his understanding of the role of interest groups is not in doubt. We look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with Al.

Welcome to some new board members as of the spring AGM: Al Newsome joins us, along with Sandy Hale and Tim OSullivan.

Alistair hales from Port Perry but he, his wife and his trailer adopt Elora for the summer months. Sandy is a familiar face from his used-equipment sale at Grand Opportunities for many years, and Tim is a returning board member, a local resident and undisputed fishing and fly-tying expert. Welcome all.

Tight Lines and Best Wishes,

Larry R. McGratton

President

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Dates to remember:

Fall Gathering

Sunday, October 19, 2008

2 p.m. to 4 p.m.,

Belwood Lake Conservation Area office (County Rd 18, east of Fergus). A nice couple of hours to catch up with things. •

Board meetings

Our board meets on the last Thursday of the month. FOGR members are welcome to sit in. Call or e-mail first to confirm the date and place. •

Grand Times

Vol. 12:2

Grand Times is a publication of the Friends of the Grand River, an incorporated organization dedicated to environmental efforts in the Grand River watershed.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the organization's policies.

Your editorial team:

- Larry McGratton
- John Dadds
- Ian Martin

Contact can always be made by snail mail or through the web site. •

Don't flush them drugs

They only end up in the rivers

The following is a copy of a news release from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service issued in late March.

SAN DIEGO, CA – The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) today signed a formal agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) to help protect the nation's fish and aquatic resources from the improper disposal of medication. The campaign – dubbed “SMARxT DISPOSAL” – will inform people on how to safely dispose of medicines in the trash, and highlight the environmental threat posed from flushing medicines down the toilet.

“Trace amounts of chemical compounds often associated with medications have been increasingly detected in our waters, the very waters that support our nation's fish and other wildlife,” said Gary Frazer, Assistant Director of Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “While uncertainty still exists about the impact of these chemicals, USFWS, PhRMA and the APhA recognize the value of getting in front of the issue by passing along a few easy steps: don't flush those medicines, crush the medicines in a plastic bag, add coffee-grounds, sawdust or kitty-litter, seal the bag and put it in the trash. In other words, crush ... don't flush.”

The partnership was announced during APhA's annual meeting held in San Diego, California, one of the largest gatherings of pharmacy professionals and health services providers in the country.

“Medications play a vital role in our society,” added Dr. John A. Gans, Executive Vice President and CEO of APhA. “Consumers – and pharmacists – should be aware that it is important to take that extra step to protect our

families and our natural resources.”

“Proper disposal of medicines is important to America's families. PhRMA is very excited to be working on this initiative with the Fish and Wildlife Service and American Pharmacist Association that will educate all Americans on the safest way to dispose of unused medicines,” said Billy Tauzin, President and CEO of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association.

APhA, PhRMA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service say just three small steps can make a huge difference:

“Trace amounts of chemical compounds often associated with medications have been increasingly detected in our waters.”

1. **DO NOT FLUSH unused medications** or POUR them down a sink or drain. Consumers were once advised to flush their expired or unused medications; however, recent environmental impact studies report that this could be having an adverse impact on the environment. While the rule of thumb is not to flush, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has determined that certain medications should be flushed due to their abuse potential. Read the instructions on your medication and talk to your pharmacist.

2. **Dispose of Unused Medication in Household Trash.** When discarding unused medications, ensure you protect children and pets from potentially negative effects:

- Pour medication in a sealable plastic bag. If medication is a solid (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), crush it or add water to dissolve it.
- Add kitty litter, sawdust, coffee

grounds (or any material that mixes with the medication and makes it less appealing for pets or children to eat) to the plastic bag.

- Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash.

- Remove and destroy ALL identifying personal information (prescription label) from the medication container.

3. **Check for Approved State and Local Collection Programs.** In certain states, you may be able to take your unused medications to your community pharmacy.

4. Consult Your Pharmacist with any questions.

Editors' note: Maybe we should embark on a campaign to prevent the improper disposal of prescription drugs in Canada.

We are finding now that a number of common drugs, such as birth control pills, are excreted by the body and find their way into a sewage system that is not geared to remove them from the effluent.

Endocrine disrupting compounds are being increasingly studied by scientists interested in water quality. Residues as small as one part in a trillion can have an effect on fish populations.

One of the first signs of these effects came to light when anglers in the U.K. found coarse fish which had obvious problems. Scientists discovered that what they were seeing were fish with both male and female reproductive organs.

Flushing unused drugs will introduce a range of exotic chemical into our water courses. So preventing use of the old-time remedy of flushing unwanted drugs is a good first step.

Remember that drugs flushed in Fergus can end up in the drinking water of Kitchener and Brantford as both cities rely on river water for their residential drinking water. •

Web sites to watch!

Phantom fly tyer

Did you ever get up in the morning and see a fly in the vise and think, "I don't remember tying that one"? Maybe this is why. Check out: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkUQshzp-3I>

New fishy magazine

The U.S. Fish And Wildlife Service is offering this on-line magazine. In a word or two, a thumping good read. Try it <http://www.fws.gov/eddies>. The title is *Eddies: Reflections on Fisheries Conservation*, and it is dedicated to fisheries management with this mission statement:

Working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Darned junk mail

Ian Martin passed this one on. I tried it and it works!

Visit this web site: www.reddotcampaign.ca.

Download their red dot and stick it on your mail box to stop delivery of junk mail. There is also a letter to leave for the mailman with directions that you don't want unaddressed mail. You still get those MPs' letters though. I knew you would be anxious about that.

I made up a similar red dot on the computer for flyers. After all, why was I beating myself up drooling over power tools in the Canadian Tire flyer when I don't give a rat's *** about do-it-yourself stuff anyway.

Cancel the newspaper as well and you've reduced a lot of those man-chores to do with recycling.

Of course, now I've offended friends who work for the post office and the newspaper. Sorry, but it's made my life easier.

Chalk up another one to technology because I get my news there now, especially since the local paper stopped carrying their TV listings supplement.

I can get flyers on the computer, but what a pain that is, leafing through 24 pages of Home Hardware flyer on the computer to see if they've got light bulbs on special.

Weather questions

We all have questions about it. Well, the University of Waterloo weather station has some good answers.

Try out <http://weather.uwaterloo.ca/>. Updated every 15 minutes, there's also a short commentary (blog) on recent developments. For instance, right now there is a note on last night's rainfall — 23 mm in 15 minutes, the highest they have recorded in 10 years, and 34.4 mm in one hour, also the highest in a long time.

They also have temps, humidex, barometric pressure, etc. It's a useful site for a quick peek at today's weather.

GRCA also has some useful tables and graphs on temps and pressure, as well as river flows, over a short period at www.grandriver.ca.

Switzerland banning catch and release fishing

The European Fishing Tackle Trade Association is starting a campaign to get the Swiss government to withdraw legislation that effectively outlaws catch-and-release fishing.

Also banned are barbed hooks and the use of live bait. Swiss anglers must undergo a course for ethical handling of caught fish, which, according to the legislation must be dispatched by a sharp blow to the head. So the old English priest will be making a comeback.

The catch-and-release provisions are part of a wide-ranging piece of animal cruelty legislation. What is actually banned is going fishing with the intent to release fish, according to a news release from the association.

So far, arguments that catch-and-release fishing is an appropriate conservation measure are falling on deaf ears.

Recreational fishing is substantial pastime in Switzerland with 275,000 anglers contributing 30 million Euros into the economy each year.

Terry doing what Terry does best



It's Kids' Day at Belwood Lake and here's Treasurer Terry Ryckman gathering in the cash. It's not a profit-making venture for FOGR, quite the reverse. Kids eat free, as out guests, but grown-ups pay a few bucks for the privilege. Next year, come out and tie woolly worms with us.

Grand River Plan

The Grand River Fisheries Management Plan is now 10 years old. So now is the time to evaluate how things are working, and to celebrate the things that have worked.

The plan's Implementation Committee is setting up a series of evening open houses right through the watershed to tell the public what's been happening, how far the plan has progressed, and what still needs to be done.

Put down **Wednesday, January 7, 2009, 7 p.m.**, in your calendar as the date for the Fergus-Elora session.

The event will take place at the Wellington Museum, off County Rd. 18 between Fergus and Elora (down the road from the Trestle access point).

FOGR has been part of the plan movement since its inception. And now we are taking a lead in hosting a visit by the plan's guardians to the Centre Wellington area.

From the start, the plan has been managed by a committee comprised of MNR and GRCA as the lead resources agencies, supported by folks from DFO, retailers and members of outdoors groups. And FOGR has always been in the thick of it as an advocate for the upper stretch.

Coming out to the open house will be a good way of finding out what we've been doing with the river. •

Can you help?

The Grand River Fisheries Management Plan Implementation Committee is having a fund-raising and awareness-raising banquet and symposium on Saturday, January 31.

Ontario Steelheaders's Larry Mellors is heading up this initiative and is trying to get as many prizes as possible. They don't have to be fishing related. If you have some thoughts or can offer something, e-mail jdadds@golden.net. He can also put you in touch with Larry for tickets. They go quick. •

Sage Rod Draw winner



Photo: Clare McGratton

Congratulations to Jim Cunningham (right) of Drayton, the winner of the Sage rod draw. His name was pulled out of the jar at Grand Opportunities. He picked up his prize from President Larry McGratton and also made a donation to Friends of the Grand in appreciation. That's classy! •

Stocking the Conestogo



The stocking of the Conestogo is now complete with approximately 47,000 brown trout.

With the help of our Google.com friends and others, we stocked about 3,300 fish by canoe.

Last year we had about 10 volunteers and five watercraft. This year was close to 30 volunteers and around 15 watercraft.

I did not have anyone drown, but I did get them pretty wet, as you can see in the picture. •

Contributed by Brad Knarr