



GRCA to expand rural water program

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The Grand River Conservation Authority is expanding its programs for rural property owners, thanks to a \$100,000 grant from the RBC Blue Water Project to the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

The RBC Leadership Grant will help the GRCA provide advice to rural landowners — both farm and non-farm — on how to protect water quality on their land.

"When it comes to rural water quality, one of our biggest challenges is meeting public demand," said Tracey Ryan, GRCA's supervisor of extension services.

"People want to protect their waterways — it's simply a matter of having the resources to do so."

"With two-year support from the RBC Blue Water Fund, the GRCA will now be able to reach all rural landowners with advice and provide financial support for them to protect their part of the Grand River watershed," said Ryan.

The money will be used to increase capacity in the GRCA's Rural Water Quality and rural nonfarm programs.

It will be used to broaden outreach activities such as landowner contact and a series of five workshops for rural non-farm residents.

It will also allow the GRCA to extend the reach of its existing Rural Water Quality Program to parts of the watershed where it's not currently in place, such as Dufferin and Haldimand counties.

Farmers will be able to apply for grants to implement projects to protect water quality.

Rural non-farm participants will be introduced to the Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide which will help them evaluate the effect their property and actions have on the environment.

They'll receive advice on the value of upgrading wells, improving septic systems and planting trees for windbreaks.

Some landowners may be eligible to apply for grants to undertake these projects.

RBC has committed \$50 million to its Blue Water Project to provide grants over 10 years, supporting initiatives that foster a culture of water stewardship.

The program is designed to make measurable, meaningful differences to communities and the environment.

"RBC is proud to support watershed management, conservation and water treatment through our Blue Water program," said Jane Black, RBC Regional Vice President, greater Waterloo.

"We want to make sure the Grand River watershed continues to provide ecosystem services, such as drinking water supply, a critical habitat for plants and animals and an area of natural beauty for many years to come."

The Grand River Conservation Authority manages water and other natural resources on behalf of 38 municipalities and 925,000 residents.

The Grand River flows 300 kilometres through south-western Ontario, from the highlands of Dufferin County to Port Maitland on Lake Erie.

For more information, visit the GRCA's website at www.grandriver.ca

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