Grand Scale Sustainability

Sustainable Heritage Case Study
Class Presentation
Nov. 28, 2019

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System and the Grand River Watershed, Ontario

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Fig 1. "Then we took possession of the land" Meg Harder, 2017.
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Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS)

Description

Vision of the CHRS:

“The Canadian Heritage Rivers System is a model of stewardship, cooperation and participation; one that engages society in valuing the natural and cultural heritage of rivers and river communities as essential to the identity, health and quality of life of Canadians.”

Heritage Rivers System Principles, Procedures and Operational Guidelines, (2017), pg. 40

- Rivers are designated for their natural, cultural and/or recreational values
  - The Grand River designated for cultural and recreational values
- Grand River beginning of ‘second wave’ of CHRS designations
  - Not in National or Provincial Park
  - mixed urban and rural
  - Designation covers Grand + major tributaries (Conestogo, Eramosa, Nith, Speed)

The Grand Strategy:

“The area to be managed as a Canadian Heritage River will include the entire Grand River watershed”

Timeline

20,000-11,000 years ago Glaciers retreat

Pre-contact – Grand River watershed used by Anishinaabe

1784 – Haldimand Proclamation

1800-1850s – Early settlement of watershed

1832 – Grand River Navigation Company & Canal building

1934 – Grand River Conservation Commission

1966 – Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) created

1986 – Canada Heritage Rivers System established

1992 – World Heritage Committee adopts cultural landscapes

1994 – Grand River designated Canadian Heritage Rivers System

2000 – GRCA wins Thiess International Riverprize
Flooding in Cambridge at the Main St. Bridge 1948, 1974, and contemporary photos (Nov 2019)
## Stakeholders & Rightsholders

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand River Conservation Authority</td>
<td>Managing body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>Parks Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Government</td>
<td>Cost sharing and conservation authority legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Rightsholders</td>
<td>Mississauga of the New Credit, Six Nations of the Grand River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments</td>
<td>Municipalities, Regions &amp; Counties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Interest Groups</td>
<td>E.g. tourism groups or outfitters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Groups</td>
<td>E.g. local heritage or nature conservation groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Groups</td>
<td>E.g. MOAs with universities</td>
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Lessons

• Watershed approach
  – Designation area allows for holistic approach

• Hydrosocial relationship
  – “...inseparable social and physical dimensions of water” (Linton & Budds, 2014, pg 175)
  – GRCA has developed new programs and tools
    • E.g. 2003 & 2013 heritage bridge inventories

• Plurality of stakeholders
  – 1994 Grand Strategy had 200+ stakeholders represented
Natural/Cultural Heritage

- **Natural Heritage**
  - River and tributaries
    - Largest watershed in southern Ontario
  - Remnants of Carolinian forest
- **Cultural Heritage**
  - Long Indigenous use of watershed
  - Industrial use of watershed
  - Dams & historic water management
Shand dam (completed 1942) first multi-function dam in Canada. Built for water quality, flow, and supply.
Sustainability

Social
"strengthen... stewardship and enjoyment of heritage and recreation resources"¹

Environmental
"improve well-being for all life in the... watershed" ¹

Economic
"improve tourism and community economic development potential" ²

6.B “Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management”

11.A “Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning”

¹ Background Briefing (2014), pg 2
² Grand Strategy (1994), pg 7
Grand River at Fergus, Ontario
References

**Publications**

**Images**