

Grand River Conservation Authority

Report number: GM-09-23-62

Date: September 22, 2023

To: Members of the Grand River Conservation Authority

Subject: Elora Quarry and Grand River Conservation Area Membership Pass Update

Recommendation:

THAT Report Number GM-09-23-62 - Elora Quarry and Grand River Conservation Area Membership Pass Update be received as information.

Summary:

As follow-up to [GM-06-23-49](#), staff were asked to report back to the General membership a solution that would permit Grand River Conservation Area membership pass holders to have some access to the Elora Quarry.

Additional background information that provides context about how and why capacity measures were determined at the Elora Quarry were shared with the General Membership in the following reports: [GM-12-17-124](#), [GM-12-18-119](#), [GM-11-19-109](#), and [GM-11-21-83](#).

A pilot project of a weekday Quarry experience will be available for GRCA membership pass holders starting in June 2024. The GRCA's Information Services and Technology (IS&T) department developed a solution to reconfigure the online Elora Quarry day use reservation system to be able to accommodate GRCA membership cards.

All access to the Elora Quarry is through advance reservations, and membership pass holders would be required to follow the same process and present a confirmation of reservation at the point of entry. Membership pass holders would also be required to pay the additional parking fee of \$15.00 should a parking spot be required.

Report:

Capacity at the quarry is based on many factors; two of the most limiting are the availability of on-site parking and capacity at the beach. While the parking area can accommodate between 125- 175 cars, the beach has a maximum capacity of between 300-350 people. Other GRCA properties base capacity solely on parking spots. The Quarry is much smaller in size and amenities than other GRCA conservation areas and a heavy concentration of patrons can negatively impact both the user experience at the beach and the natural features.

Currently, between 300 and 350 day pass reservations are made per time slot, (two time slots per day) from early June until Labour Day. The weekend is the busiest time at the Elora Quarry, and when there is the most demand. In July and August 2023, the weekend afternoon bookings reached capacity. The morning session bookings occasionally had limited capacity.

To balance maximizing revenue with allowing membership pass holder access, staff are recommending a weekday reservation program to GRCA Conservation Area membership pass holders as a pilot project.

Membership holders would be required to follow the same process as day users, making a reservation online and getting an access code in return. Parking is an additional fee at the Quarry and would not be covered by the membership pass should a parking space be required.

A cap on the number of spaces available to membership users would be limited to a minimum of 10% to a maximum of 15 % of the total available reservations.

The GRCA IS&T department developed the in-house online Quarry sales program in 2021 and has now developed a modification to incorporate membership card admissions on a pilot program basis to ensure functionality and to assess potential impacts on revenue.

To communicate the launch of an Elora Quarry pilot program to accept GRCA membership pass holders, the pilot program will be announced on the GRCA's website on the webpage for the Elora Quarry. GRCA conservation area membership passes can be renewed at any time during the calendar year and users may not be aware of the change to the program until the spring of 2024. Similarly, the library loaner program of Grand River Conservation Area membership passes that is supported by the Grand River Conservation Foundation will also require an update to reflect that the Elora Quarry be included as a pilot program in 2024.

The factors to determine the continuation of the pilot program would be the impact on overall operations, technical challenges, statistical information related to GRCA membership pass holder use, feedback from the current day use customers, feedback from GRCA conservation area membership pass holders, and feedback from staff.

Financial Implications:

This pilot program is being structured to minimize impacts on Elora Quarry online sales revenue. Reprogramming of the online reservation software will be completed in-house by current GRCA staff so no incremental costs will be incurred.

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