

Grand River Conservation Authority

Report number: GM-10-24-89

Date: October 25, 2024

To: Members of the Grand River Conservation Authority

Subject: Elora Quarry and GRCA Membership Pass Pilot Project 2024 Update

Recommendation:

THAT Report Number GM-09-24-89 - Elora Quarry and GRCA Membership Pass Pilot Project 2024 Update be received as information.

Summary:

As a follow-up to Report GM-09-23-62 –Elora Quarry and Grand River Conservation Area Membership Pass Update the pilot program allowing GRCA Conservation Areas Membership holders to have access to the Elora Quarry Conservation Area (Elora Quarry CA) has been evaluated.

Additional background information that provides context about how and why capacity measures were determined at the Elora Quarry CA were shared with the General Membership in the following reports: GM- 06-23-49, [GM-12-17-124](#), [GM-12-18-119](#), [GM-11-19-109](#), and [GM-11-21-83](#).

Based on the success of the pilot program in 2024 and the support from the membership users, the membership program will become part of the regular operations of the Elora Quarry Conservation Area.

Report:

Capacity at the Elora Quarry CA 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 Elora Quarry CA 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.

All access to the Elora Quarry CA is through advance reservations, and membership pass holders are required to follow the same process and present a confirmation of reservation at the point of entry. Membership pass holders are also required to pay the additional parking fee of \$15.00 should a parking spot be needed. A cap on the number of spaces available to membership users has been limited to a minimum of 10% to a maximum of 15 % of the total available reservations.

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 CA, and when there is the most demand.

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

During the 2024 operating season for the Elora Quarry CA, 250 GRCA membership transactions were processed with approximately 800 individual tickets issued. GRCA memberships allow up to 6 people per carload. As the 2024 summer unfolded and capacity allowed, the program was extended to also include weekends for GRCA membership holders..

The factors to determine the continuation of the pilot program were the impact on overall operations, technical challenges, financial and statistical information, feedback from the current day-use customers, feedback from GRCA Conservation Area membership pass holders, and feedback from staff.

The 2024 season showed that the current percentage allotment for membership holders is meeting the demand as no one session was completely sold out of the membership portion. This will be monitored for adjustment moving forward as we do with all admission operations, each year.

Feedback was generally positive in nature and most membership holders expressed gratitude for the re-inclusion of GRCA memberships. Staff feedback was positive, that the pilot program helped to provide greater opportunities for local users and long-time supporters of GRCA's Conservation Areas to enjoy the popular recreation area.

Negative feedback was minimal and was typically centered around the online ticketing process. Some GRCA membership users felt they should be given immediate access to the Conservation Area and should not be required to reserve in advance.

Based upon operational needs and feedback from the pilot program, staff support the addition of membership holders accessing the Elora Quarry Conservation Area as part of the regular operations.

Financial Implications:

Assuming patrons purchased a membership card regardless of ability to use that card at the Elora Quarry, and if patrons would have purchased a daily pass if their membership card did not provide access to the quarry, then an additional \$8,000 in revenue would have been realized. . It is unknown if the GRCA membership holders would have chosen to attend the Elora Quarry CA if it wasn't part of the pilot project for the membership program. It is also not known if some patrons might not have purchased a membership card if the pilot project were not in place.

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