

# Grand River Conservation Authority

**Report number:** GM-03-25-34

**Date:** March 29, 2025

**To:** Members of the Grand River Conservation Authority

**Subject:** Grand River Watershed Flood Warning System

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Report Number GM-03-25-34 – Grand River Watershed Flood Warning System be received as information.

## **Summary:**

As a result of significant snowfall during the months of January and early February, a special Spring Flood Coordinators meeting was held on March 4, 2025. The program included a review of the roles of the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), Police and municipal Flood Coordinators in response to flooding. Presentations relating to the GRCA Flood Warning System, the GRCA's recently approved Ice Management Plan, and Roles and Responsibilities for Flood Communications were provided by GRCA staff. Trudy Kidd from Environment and Climate Change Canada provided an overview of severe weather events over the past three months and a look ahead at the long-term weather forecast.

A total of 168 attendees participated in the March 4, 2025 virtual Flood Coordinators meeting. Municipal Flood Coordinators, Municipal Police, Ontario Provincial Police, Environment Canada, Province of Ontario, neighboring Conservation Authority staff and GRCA staff attended the meeting. One reason for initiating a pre-winter meeting is to ensure all contact information is up to date heading into the winter season with the intention of being as prepared and organized as possible.

## **Report:**

The Grand River Conservation Authority held a pre-winter Flood Warning Emergency Planning Meeting in 2024. The meeting was held on December 5, 2024, and delivered in-person at the GRCA Administration Centre Auditorium. The purpose of the pre-winter meeting was to ensure contact information is up-to-date heading into the winter and spring flood season. The meeting also provides participants with a forecast of the anticipated flood risk based on watershed conditions. During January and the first half of February, the watershed received a significant amount of snowfall and experienced temperatures below seasonal averages. Many watercourses in the watershed were covered with a strong layer of ice.

The combination of near-record snowfall and colder temperatures, along with the forecasted warmer temperatures for late February coupled with rainfall, increased the risk of flooding, specifically due to potential ice jams. To provide an update to municipal emergency management coordinators in the watershed, a special flood coordinators meeting was planned for Tuesday, March 4, 2025. Due to the short notice, the meeting was held virtually to facilitate participation for all emergency management coordinators. A copy of the meeting agenda is included at the end of this report.

Presentations relating to the program included a brief discussion on the role of the GRCA, Police and municipal Flood Coordinators, details of the GRCA Flood Warning System, Flood Management Program Updates, roles and responsibilities for Flood Communications, the

recently approved Ice Management Plan, and Current Watershed Conditions, including the Spring 2025 flood outlook.

Trudy Kidd, a warning preparedness meteorologist from Environment and Climate Change Canada, provided a presentation reviewing the predicted and observed conditions over the months of November and December of 2024 and January and February of 2025 and provided an outlook for the months of March, April and May 2025. Warm conditions have been in forecast for spring, along with moist conditions possible for the month of March. Moths of April and May have been forecasted to be normal with respect to precipitation.

As part of the current conditions presentation, results of the Grand River watershed snow survey results conducted on March 3, 2025, were presented. The northern and middle portions of the watershed were observing high and very high levels of snow and snow water content compared to long-term averages, respectively. Snow depth in the watershed was the highest over the past 10 years and similar levels had been observed in years 2001 and 2014.

A river watch program was conducted on Monday, February 24 and Monday, March 3, to verify the river conditions across the watershed and spot and identify any potential ice jams. The results of the observations were presented at this meeting. Many watercourses were observed to be covered with ice, but no significant frozen-in ice jams had been identified. A comparison between the conditions leading to historical ice jam flooding in Brantford in 1996 and 2018 with current conditions was provided, and it was concluded that while there is a moderate risk of ice jam and consequential flooding, the risk is determined to be lower than what occurred in 1996 and 2018.

A total of 168 attendees participated in the March 4, 2025 virtual Flood Coordinators meeting. Participants included members of the following organizations and agencies: Municipal Flood Coordinators and municipal police from within the watershed, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Municipal and Provincial Police, Provincial Ministries, Other Conservation Authorities staff, and GRCA staff. Information about the number of attendances for the current and previous meetings are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Attendance for 2023, 2024, and 2025 Municipal Flood Coordinators Meetings**

<b>Agencies Represented</b>	<b>2025 Mar. Attendance (Virtual)</b>	<b>2024 Dec. Attendance (In-Person)</b>	<b>2023 Dec. Attendance (In-Person)</b>	<b>2023 Feb. Attendance (Virtual)</b>
Municipal Flood Coordinators	86	25	29	63
Municipal Police	6	2	1	3
Ontario Provincial Police	7	0	2	6
Provincial Ministries	2	0	2	3
Federal Agencies	5	3	5	5
Other Conservation Authority staff	9	0	9	13
News Media	0	0	0	0
GRCA Staff	31	34	19	35
Other	2	0	1	8
<b>Total Persons in Attendance</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>136</b>

**Financial Implications:**

Not Applicable.

**Other Department Considerations:**

Not Applicable.

**Prepared by:**

Vahid Taleban, P. Eng.  
Manager of Flood Operations

**Approved by:**

Samantha Lawson  
Chief Administrative Officer



# Grand River Conservation Authority Flood Warning Emergency Planning Meeting Tuesday, March 04, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

## AGENDA

Presenter	Presentation	Time
<b>1. Shawn Watters</b> Vice-Chair Grand River Conservation Authority Board of Directors	<b>Opening Remarks</b>	2:00 – 2:05 p.m.
<b>2. Katelyn Lynch</b> Manager of Water Control Infrastructure Grand River Conservation Authority	<b>GRCA Flood Warning System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flooding in the Grand River Watershed</li> <li>• Role of the GRCA</li> <li>• Role of Municipality and Municipal Flood Coordinator</li> <li>• Role of police</li> <li>• GRCA's Flood Warning Guide</li> </ul>	2:05 – 2:15 p.m.
<b>3. Vahid Taleban</b> Manager of Flood Operations Grand River Conservation Authority	<b>Ice Management Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of reservoirs and dikes to reduce flooding</li> <li>• Updates to reservoir operations</li> </ul>	2:15 – 2:35 p.m.
<b>4. Lisa Stocco</b> Manager of Strategic Communications and Environmental Education Grand River Conservation Authority	<b>Flood Communications – Roles and Responsibilities</b>	2:35 – 2:50 p.m.
<b>5. Trudy Kidd</b> Warning Preparedness Meteorologist Environment and Climate Change Canada	<b>Weather Recap: Reflecting on past seasons and looking ahead</b>	2:50 – 3:05 p.m.
<b>6. Vahid Taleban</b> Manager of Flood Operations Grand River Conservation Authority	<b>Current Conditions</b>	3:05 – 3:15 p.m.
<b>7. Samantha Lawson</b> CAO Grand River Conservation Authority	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	3:15 – 3:20 p.m.