

Growing the Greenbelt in the Grand River Watershed

#Protect Our Water

For immediate release

February 5, 2018

Guelph – Wellington Water Watchers (WWW), is hosting an event called **Growing the Greenbelt in the Grand River Watershed.**

February 07, 2018 at 7pm - 9:30pm

St. James Anglican Church (basement)

86 Glasgow St N

Guelph, ON N1H 4W2

Please learn more and [RSVP here](#).

Hear Trevor Dickinson, Professor Emeritus of the University of Guelph, Water Resources Engineer offer his presentation called:

Climate Change & Urban Development Have Impacted Stream Flows In Southern Ontario

Stream flows in southern Ontario have changed as a result of climate change and urban development. Winter flows have increased and spring flows have decreased due to climate change. The decrease in green space and increase in impermeable surfaces associated with our urban growth have caused significant increase in summer stream flows. A consequence of these changes is that most reported floods in southern Ontario now occur in urbanized areas in summer months. We might be wise to reflect upon these developments before we pave more of our landscape.

Following his presentation, Trevor will join a panel discussion to explore the merits of including source water protection areas of Guelph-Wellington in the "Bluebelt". Also on the panel will be Kevin Thomason of Grand River Environmental Network (GREN), Shelley Petrie of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation and the panel will be moderated by Karen Farbridge, former mayor of the city of Guelph.

Wellington Water Watchers has many supporters who would like to see the source water protection areas of Guelph-Wellington added to an expanded Greenbelt, and this includes the Paris-Galt moraine, the Orangeville moraine, significant wetlands and

public lands along our river corridors. We have invited regional decision makers as well as interested members of the public to attend this event and hear the arguments presented by Trevor Dickinson.

My research shows that flooding incidents are increasing because we have paved over critical natural features that would otherwise be able to manage storm water flows,” stated Trevor Dickinson who will be presenting his research findings at this event. “ We must learn from the mistakes of the past so that we don’t repeat them, and ensure we have adequate green space and wetlands to manage storm waters going forward.”

Currently, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is holding an open comment period regarding the proposed study area for potential Greenbelt expansion, which will conclude on March 7, 2018.

It is essential to have this important public consultation to ensure our voices here in Wellington County are heard. Within our county, the Paris-Galt Moraine, the Orangeville Moraine, green lands along our river corridors and significant wetlands - areas of ecological and hydrological significance - are all identified in our mapping as areas where urbanization should not occur.

All our work to keep our water in our watershed would be for naught if we pave over our moraines – those wonderful geologic features that ensure we have pristine groundwater. The same is true for our significant wetlands and river corridors. We need to protect these important ecological treasures from the impacts of development and urban sprawl.

Like all Ontarians, in Wellington County, we care about our water. We are fierce vocal advocates against the unnecessary extraction of our precious water and we understand that we must, at the same time, work to protect the natural features that ensure bountiful and clean source water for generations to come.

“We will work to see our river corridors, Orangeville Moraine and Paris-Galt Moraine, and significant wetlands and recharge areas included in an expanded Greenbelt. We need comprehensive and effective regional protection of our critical potable water resources, working lands and natural heritage systems,” says Arlene Slocombe, executive director of WWW. “More than 90 per cent of Ontarians agree that the Greenbelt is one of the most important initiatives for the future of the province. Wellington County should be included in this expanded Greenbelt to protect our water!”

The Paris-Galt and Orangeville Moraine features supply clean drinking water directly to the 171,889 people living in Centre Wellington, Erin, Guelph/Eramosa (including the City of Guelph), North Dumfries and portions of North Wellington. They filter and recharge local aquifers and mitigate the risks of flooding and extreme weather for downstream communities. But they are under increasing pressure from urban sprawl and agricultural intensification.

The essential natural features WWW has identified needing Greenbelt expansion, lie outside land already designated for urban development needed to accommodate population growth until 2041 and beyond.

The Government of Ontario has announced [six open houses](#), starting on January 31, 2018. The Open House in Guelph will take place on:

Tuesday February 6,

5:30 - 8:00 pm

Italian Canadian Club

135 Ferguson St., Guelph

We are encouraging local citizens to speak up and provide feedback to the government supporting this important initiative and to learn more at www.wellingtonwaterwatchers.ca

Please join us in learning more and [RSVP](#) to join our Growing the Greenbelt in the Grand River Watershed on Feb 7th.

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About Wellington Water Watchers Founded in 2007, Wellington Water Watchers (WWW) is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization based in Guelph, Ontario. Committed to the protection of water resources and public education, WWW works to affect local water policy and protect water sources. WWW also sponsors and supports guest speakers, debates, and are active at bottled-water free community events.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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<http://wellingtonwaterwatchers.ca/campaigns/growing-the-greenbelt/>

Trevor Dickinson, Professor Emeritus of the University of Guelph, Water Resources Engineer

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Background:

Recently, the Province has announced a [consultation process](#) that identified wetlands, streams, rivers and moraines in communities to the west and north of the existing Greenbelt (Brant County, Waterloo, Guelph-Wellington, and Dufferin and Simcoe) for potential Greenbelt protection. More than 1 million *new* residents are expected to live in these areas by 2041, and they will rely on the groundwater supplies fed by these water sources.

We encourage all Ontarians to [express their views](#) on the proposed expansion “study areas” during the Provincial consultation process, which will conclude on March 7, 2018.

Wellington Water Watchers along with over 120 community groups have been calling for the expansion of the Greenbelt to create a "Bluebelt" to ensure the critical source water protections areas are given the comprehensive regional protection needed to ensure high quality groundwater recharge in our portion of the Grand River watershed.

View the Province's proposed [Study Area](#) and compare it with [our asks](#) for the upper Grand River Watershed. Take a look at the [Consultation Document](#).

Attached here is a document to provide further background on how this would impact municipalities. Also attached is a document on the impacts to agricultural lands within Greenbelt designation, and an excerpt from the Ontario Planning Journal on this topic.