



Grand River Partners, Inc.
 c/o Lake Erie College
 391 W Washington St
 Painesville OH 44077

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Mission Statement

To preserve the water quality, open space, the natural, recreational, agricultural and scenic resources of the Grand River in Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake, Portage, and Trumbull Counties by uniting residents, landowners, businesses, and communities in the stewardship and permanent protection of the Grand River watershed.



Grand River Partners, Inc.

Preserving the Grand - Leaving a Legacy



Please fill in or make corrections to your contact information below:

Name _____

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Add me to the e-mail list to receive periodic updates.
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INDIVIDUAL GIFTS

- \$1000 Guardian of the Grand River
- \$500 Steward of the Streams
- \$100 Conservator of the Creeks
- \$_____ or \$50 Member

CORPORATE GIFTS

- \$250 Corporate Gift
- \$_____ Corporate Gift

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spring/summer 2006

thoughts

from the executive director

The Wild Grand River Gorge, stretching from the Harpersfield Covered Bridge in Ashtabula County to the Norfolk and Western Railroad trestle south of Painesville in Lake County, is the longest stretch of designated "Wild" river in Ohio, at 23 miles in length. Here you can float on a canoe for miles without seeing a trace of human impact. The heart and soul can soak up the peaceful energy of the wild river, reveling in the awesome sight of shale ledges with overhanging hemlocks, excellent riffles and runs punctuated with deep holes abounding with fish.



The trademark of the Wild Grand River Gorge, the shale cliffs.

Great stretches of this Wild Grand River Gorge have been protected from development, either through public ownership or through conservation easements on private land. However, to ensure the wild experience offered only by this stretch of river is protected, Grand River Partners is actively seeking to preserve additional land along this section of river. Our recent internal planning has identified a number of actions which we are now taking to ensure we will have the tools and resources available to help private landowners preserve their family lands for future generations.

We are identifying key funding sources, pin-pointing the most critical natural resources needing protection, and creating innovative land protection programs to ensure that we can do the job of land protection most efficiently. With the right tools and resources at our disposal, Grand River Partners, Inc. is in a good position to secure voluntary agreements to keep sensitive portions of private land in the gorge in its natural condition. We can cost-effectively preserve the Wild Grand River Gorge, while keeping private land in private hands.

Steelhead fishers, birders, kayakers, canoeists, and countless others spend their leisure time in and on the Wild Grand River Gorge. The economic benefits of keeping this river clean and wild will amplify over time as population grows, natural areas decrease, and more people learn of the unique features the Grand has to offer. None of our conservation work could be done without the help of the hundreds of neighbors and friends who care about the Grand River and support our work. You can help preserve this beautiful, important river by becoming a member of Grand River Partners, Inc., volunteering your time, or simply calling us with information that may help us to protect a piece of land along the Wild Grand River Gorge.

"To be whole. To be complete. Wildness reminds us what it means to be human, what we are connected to rather than what we are separate from." - Terry Tempest Williams

Eddie Dengg

president's corner

As spring arrives, and the natural world sheds its cloak of snow, renewing the green splendor, it is a good time to reflect on the past year and the accomplishments that are helping to ensure that the Grand River will remain as exceptionally healthy and biologically diverse as it is. 2005 was Grand River Partners' most successful year yet. We protected nearly 500 acres of wetlands, floodplains, riverside forests and other special places from inappropriate development. This is a 30 percent increase over 2004, which was previously our best year ever for land protection.

In fact, during 2004 and 2005, we permanently protected over 40 percent of the roughly 2000 acres we have protected since our founding in 1994. We worked with landowners to permanently protect land and old-growth timber valued at over \$2,500,000 in 2005, with an operating budget of \$250,000. This means that for every \$1 in operating support, Grand River Partners protected \$10 worth of property. We owe a debt of gratitude to the hundreds of members, partners and friends that helped make these efforts so efficient.

What we do on our land today determines the health of our river tomorrow. The health of our river, likewise, influences the quality of our communities, the vibrancy of our economy, and the lives of future generations. A dirty river and an overbuilt landscape tends to harm the quality of communities, depress economies, and degrade the lives of present and future residents.

A clean river, with careful development in its watershed, will increase the quality of life for present and future residents, enhance economic opportunities, and will result in closer, healthier communities.

As we move forward, Grand River Partners will take a more proactive approach to working with landowners to preserve their family land while still allowing for beneficial uses that will not impair the water quality of our fine river.

Dr. Paul Belanger

WATERSHED WATCH

As we continue on our 'wild' adventure canoeing along the Grand, we begin to pick up the pace. This section of the Grand River is alive...not only abundant with wildlife, but with the people that have come to take in all of the experiences that the Grand has to offer. We have now entered the Wild Gorge of the Grand River.

It doesn't take but a brief moment to realize that we have floated our way into yet another section of the dramatically changing Grand River. As our arms get a little rest, we notice that the river in this section begins to flow more rapidly. The underlying riverbed is filled with cobbles, boulders, and gravel; a drastic change from the muddy bottom of the Lowlands area. Here the instream wildlife finds perfect nooks and crannies to call home. Just looking over the side of the canoe, we can see why the Steelhead trout visit the Grand to spawn.

Perhaps the most noticeable & breathtaking views are of the shale walls that act as turrets towering and standing guard over the Grand. In fact, it is these shale walls that provided protection for the Whittlesey Indians as they made their fort perched high above the river at the confluence of Paine Creek & the Grand River.

The April showers that bring the May flowers also bring breathtaking views as waterfalls cascade over the towering Chagrin Shale walls of the Grand River. The Hemlock trees have seemingly defied the laws of gravity; one can only wonder how strong the roots of the lonely hemlock must be to assist its master in remaining perched on the steep slopes & loose shale. Splashes of blue are prevalent on the hillsides as the Virginia Bluebells begin to bloom; a tell-tale sign of spring.



Virginia Bluebells flourish along the banks of the Grand River.

Spring on the Grand offers a symphony of sounds as flocks of migrating birds return from their vacation homes. Hikers along the banks can follow the tracks of the white-tailed deer as they make their way to the Grand, their personal watering hole. Lucky observers may catch a glimpse of a bald eagle soaring the corridor of the Grand, just feet above the water in search of a quick meal. The Great Blue Heron stands in the shallows and quietly stalks its prey. A careful ear can identify the call of the

pileated woodpecker that makes its home in the forested corridor of the Grand.

The Grand River in this area is beauty at its best. The river meanders its way through some heavily populated areas, yet still remains as a retreat from the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives. It would seem unimaginable to float through this stretch of river without seeing constant reminders of the human impacts left upon the Grand. However, the rugged topography and the hard work of the Grand River Partnership has managed to keep this Wild Grand River Gorge in a very surprising and welcomed natural state, keeping homes and industry out of the line of sight from the river.

As we continue our float, we can occasionally hear the warning whistles of a fast approaching train; a tell tale sign that we are nearing the end of our journey on the Wild Grand River Gorge. The Norfolk and Western Railroad trestle south of Painesville marks the end of the Wild section of the Grand River. So, put the paddling on pause, pull the canoe off to the bank, and enjoy the scenery as we wait for the next newsletter where we will explore the estuarine area of the Grand River.

Vicki Domonkos

EASEMENT NEWS

It is no surprise that the Grand River Gorge has the highest quality fish and macroinvertebrate habitat to be found in the watershed. In fact according to the United States Geological Survey, Water Resources Investigations Report, 97-4256; "The Grand River is the most biologically diverse river of its size flowing into the Lake Erie-Lake St. Clair basin." Since the inception in 1994 Grand River Partners has realized the importance and value of the Wild Grand River Gorge. Over the past 12 years Grand River Partners has been working to protect land and water quality of the Grand River Gorge.

To date Grand River Partners has protected 26 properties representing 1,968 acres of land by permanent conservation easement and ownership. Of the 26 properties that have been protected 8 are located within the Grand River Gorge. Each of the eight properties have frontage on the Grand River and range from 4 acres to 125 acres in size. Every one of these eight properties has Grand River frontage, floodplain wetlands, flood channels, steep slopes and high quality headwater streams. The very first conservation easement Grand River Partners established was in October 1996 with the help of the Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The last projects Grand River Partners completed in the Wild Grand River Gorge were completed in 2001, when we protected 137 acres there.



South County Line Road Easement
A view of the Wild Grand River that flows through permanently protected property.

Grand River Partners has protected 1,000 acres since then, mainly in the Grand River Lowlands and Tributaries project areas where land prices are lower. Recognizing the critical importance of the Grand River Gorge, Grand River Partners has formulated a plan to proactively step up our land protection efforts in the Grand River Gorge. By utilizing creative land protection tools Grand River Partners can help landowners protect their land even in areas such as the gorge where land values are exceedingly high. Grand River Partners would like to enlist your help in increasing our presence in the Grand River Gorge. If you own land between Windsor-Mechanicsville Road and the train trestle near State Route 84 along the river contact us at 440-375-7312 to learn more about protection opportunities available to you.

Chad Knisely

upcoming events

SATURDAY APRIL 15, Cleveland Museum of Natural History
Canoe-based invasive plant management along the Grand River.
Please RSVP to Renee Boronka at the Museum, 1-800-317-9155 ext. 3505. If you have your own canoe or kayak, please bring it along.

SATURDAY APRIL 22 & 23, Lake Metroparks Grand River Canoe and Kayak Race
Call Brian Davidson of Lake Metroparks at (440) 256-2110 for more information.

SATURDAY APRIL 29, Grand River Partners Canoe Cleanup,
call Grand River Partners for more information.

WEDNESDAY MAY 3,
Ohio EPA will hold a public meeting to discuss the Total Maximum Daily Load study for the Lower Grand River Watershed. Watch the newspapers for time and location.

TUESDAY MAY 16,
Grand River Partners Annual Meeting at Chalet Debonne Vineyard