

**Grand River Visitor Experience Development**  
**'The Grand, from source to mouth' Documentary Film Premiere Event in Brantford**

On Saturday, June 17, 2023, in collaboration with Discover Brantford, Six Nations Tourism, and County of Brant Tourism, Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association supported the premiere event of a documentary film and film maker, Thomas Ostapchuk and his 2023 film, 'The Grand'.

The film premiere event took place in Brantford's downtown core, at Harmony Square which naturally showcase the proximity of the river to downtown amenities and experiences. Locals and visitors were invited by Discover Brantford event team, Kara Davey, Tia Chisholm and Jillian Page, to come to the square, dine, explore the displays by outfitters, Grand River Rafting Company and Grand Experiences Outdoor Adventure Company; and Two Row on the Grand, the Community Play Project – Dragonfly installation, and tourism information booths for pre-film festivities.

Film Maker, Thomas Ostapchuk was on site to share his paddle journey that began in Dufferin Highlands, Dundalk, Ontario – the source, to the mouth of the river in Port Maitland at Lake Erie. His inspiring and emotional quest demonstrated his personal determination to find and explore adventure in Southern Ontario.

The geography of the river in Hamilton Halton Brant is in the County of Brant, City of Brantford, Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations. Considered the middle section of the river, a joint investment initiative to support the film, by RTO 6, 4, 3, and 1 demonstrated our collaborative efforts to work as a watershed development collective.

The filming of the project was made in early May 2022, and this project was identified as an important Grand River development initiative, further building on the opportunity to provide regional partners access to a visual story of the Grand River. The clear objective continues to help provide an appreciation to learn and experience the river from a film maker's personal perspective, driving outdoor enthusiasts to dip a paddle in our Canadian Heritage River.

The 20-minute film follows Tom Ostapchuk on his self-supported journey to kayak the 300-km-long Grand River. Fighting for his dreams and searching for his place in the world, he finds the courage and determination to push beyond his limits. The film documents the eight-day expedition testing his determination and stamina as he faces white water rapids, long days of paddling, and isolation with his thoughts. Along the way, he meets passionate paddlers who share their words and wisdom to guide his journey.

A special appreciation and acknowledgement to the regional partners featured in the film- a story-telling paddle by Jamie Kent, Grand Experiences and Ellie Joseph, Two Row on the Grand. The film also included Tom's overnight stay at Chiefswood Park Cabins, a much appreciated complimentary cabin accommodation, and as a benefit, featured exterior and interior shots of one of the beautiful rustic pine cabins.

With the weather co-operating on a lovely June evening, the event was well-attended by locals. We wish to thank you all of the regional partners for a successful collaboration and collective representation of river experiences and projects.