



Niagara Peninsula
CONSERVATION
nature for all

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Contributing to a prosperous future...naturally





The Niagara Peninsula watershed is situated within the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Attiwonderonk (Neutral), and the Anishinaabeg, including the Mississaugas of the Credit — many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties (No. 3, 4, and 381) and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today, the watershed is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. Through our *2021-2031 Strategic Plan*, we reconfirm our commitment to shared stewardship of natural resources and our deep appreciation of Indigenous culture and history in the watershed.



Message from the CAO

The theme of NPCA's 2022 Annual Report, *"Contributing to a prosperous future — naturally"*, is a reminder that investments in our local watersheds have paid huge dividends in the past. It is also a reminder that the work of conservation authorities remains more relevant than ever in supporting our quality of life and managing the risks of natural hazards in our rapidly growing urban centers and productive agriculture landscapes.

In keeping with this theme, the report highlights NPCA's hazard management programs that continue to build greater resilience and reduce risks to human life, property, and infrastructure. The report also demonstrates how NPCA's conservation parks and watershed programs have been pivotal in preserving biodiversity and supporting community well-being.

Over the past 12 months, we have made excellent progress executing the Strategic Plan we introduced in 2021, as you'll see in the pages that follow.

To list just a few highlights, we drew record numbers of visitors to our parks for the third consecutive year. We added an important new property to our inventory of conservation land, made significant capital infrastructure upgrades, and restored hectares of forests and wetlands.

Looking inwards, we set the bar high for client service, accountability, and fiscal responsibility. Over the past year, we restructured our organization, established a robust land securement strategy, and put a talent management strategy in place to retain and recruit the best talent. We also attracted more funding — and more diversified funding — than ever.

As we move forward, we'll be focusing on critical questions. How do we best serve residents and support watershed health as the Peninsula's population grows? How do we advance new science to address the impacts of extreme weather on our communities, shorelines, ecosystems, and infrastructure? And how do we protect the natural features that make Niagara, Hamilton, and Haldimand so special?

These questions are especially important in light of recent changes to the legislation governing Ontario's conservation authorities. As we navigate this new landscape with our critical mandate as a resource and natural hazard management agency, we are committed to supporting our partners with good planning decisions, collaborating to build sustainable and resilient communities, and positioning the Peninsula as the best place to live, work, and play.

I know our exceptional team is up for this challenge. Over the past few years, we have proven how much is possible!

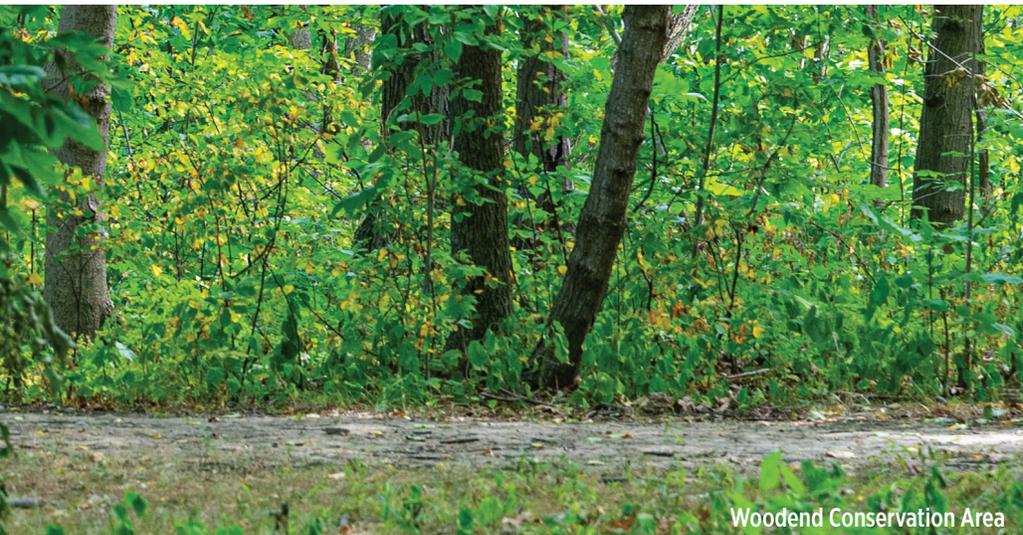
I deeply appreciate the contributions of NPCA's nimble and hard-working staff, our amazing volunteers, our supportive communities, our municipal and Indigenous partners, the many organizations we work with, the federal and provincial governments, and our strong Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation. I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support and collective expertise of our colleagues at Conservation Ontario.

Finally, I would like to thank our outgoing board for their wise guidance and welcome our incoming board members, including Chair Foster and Vice-Chair Metcalfe, at this critical juncture of our rebuilding.

Together, we are creating a strong, purposeful organization that can contribute more than ever to sustainability and prosperity across our unique eco-region.



Chandra Sharma - MCIP RPP
CAO, Secretary-Treasurer
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority



2022 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is committed to serving the Niagara Peninsula watershed on behalf of their municipalities and communities. They contribute their leadership and expertise to decisions that determine the policies and programs of the NPCA.

Message from the Chair

"I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is they must change if they are to get better."

— Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799)

First and foremost, I want to thank the Board of Directors of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority for their faith in selecting me as the Chair for 2022.

I am very fortunate to have taken on the role with a strong and committed Board focused on doing what is right for the environment, for conservation, and for the Niagara Peninsula Watershed — a commitment that is clearly reflected in the *2021-2031 Strategic Plan*.

I have big shoes to fill after Brenda Johnson's two years in the role, and I cannot thank her enough for her leadership shepherding us through the challenges of the pandemic.

For those of you who know my family's history, you will understand how much this role means to me personally. My wife's uncle, Gord Harry, once chaired the NPCA, and this organization has been an integral part of our lives.

As I reflect on the year that was, it is central to realize that Conservation Authorities are facing significant challenges that we must continue to work through as an organization.

Our staff, under the exceptional leadership of Chandra Sharma and her senior leadership team, have taken on the legislative challenges we have been given and have led what has been required for policy, procedure, and governance of the NPCA.

We will continue to work with organizations, be they government or otherwise, to ensure that conservation remains front and centre when it comes to the Niagara Peninsula watershed.



Robert Foster
Chair, Board of Directors
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

James Stewart Beattie

Hamilton

Rick Brady

Niagara - *Niagara Falls*

Brad Clark

Hamilton

Donna Cridland

Niagara - *Wainfleet*

Leah Feor

Niagara - *Fort Erie*

Robert Foster (Chair)

Niagara - *Lincoln*

Jack Hellinga

Niagara - *Port Colborne*

Diana Huson

Niagara - *Pelham*

John Ingrao

Niagara - *Welland*

Brenda Johnson

Hamilton

Ken Kwall

Niagara - *Lincoln*

Bruce Mackenzie

Niagara - *Grimsbby*

John Metcalfe (Vice-Chair)

Haldimand County

William Rapley

Niagara - *Niagara-on-the-Lake*

Ed Smith

Niagara - *St. Catharines*

Rob Shirton

Haldimand County

Bill Steele

Niagara - *Port Colborne*

Malcolm Woodhouse

Niagara - *Thorold*

Brian Wright

Hamilton



Our Vision

NATURE FOR ALL - We envision a healthy and vibrant environment with shared greenspace and clean water that sustains life for future generations.

Our Mission

To create a common ground for conservation-inspired action and accountability to nature.

Our Guiding Principles

Watersheds transcend municipal boundaries

We are committed to working with the watershed community to support and create climate-resilient and connected natural systems.

Natural green infrastructure is critical to life

Our day-to-day work conserves and restores our communities' integral ecological, socio-economic, public safety, and health services.

Diverse experiences and ideas lead to better and stronger collective impact and outcomes

We seek to exemplify inclusion and equity through meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Innovation requires learning from each other and the past

As a result, we are progressive, resilient, adaptable, and strive for continuous improvement to remain a trusted and valued partner.



Our Values

Integrity

We are responsible, honest, trustworthy, and fair in our decisions and actions.

Respect

We are inclusive and value the diverse range of perspectives and interconnectivity of the watershed community. We foster an environment where we recognize and appreciate each other as well as the communities we serve.

Customer Service

We conduct our business with professionalism, transparency, and equity to achieve high-quality service delivery standards.

Conservation Leadership

We are conservation leaders in the watershed and aim to inspire and empower others through exemplary actions and outcomes.

YEAR IN REVIEW

CONSERVATION AREAS



110,500

Visitors at 4
Flagship Parks



22%

Increase in Visitors



232

Seasonal Campers



1,600+

Membership Passes
Sold



40,000

Visitors to
Signature Events

FLOOD MANAGEMENT



5

Flood Bulletins Issued



180 KILOMETERS

Riverine Floodplain
Mapping Initiated



Niagara Peninsula
CONSERVATION
nature for all

VOLUNTEERS



409

Active Volunteers



7,354

Volunteer Hours



2,927

Trees Planted



6,338

Wildflowers Planted

RESTORATION



26.7

Hectares Reforested



1.21

Hectares of Wetland
Restored



3.9

Hectares of Riparian
Habitat



70,000

Trees Planted



4,347

Shrubs Planted



BY THE NUMBERS

OUR WATERSHED



475,187

Residents



242,980

Hectares Watershed
Jurisdiction



41

Conservation Areas



2,946

Hectares
Land Holdings



202

Local Waterways



15

Municipalities



4

Flagship Properties



80

Surface Water
Monitoring Stations



46

Groundwater
Monitoring Wells



Strategic Plan 2021-31

Our Priorities and Goals

Through extensive engagement with internal and external stakeholders, NPCA developed six strategic priorities to guide its work over the coming years. Each strategic priority includes specific goals, actions, and deliverables for NPCA to undertake with its partners and community stakeholders to achieve a thriving environment that sustains life for future generations.

The following pages of the annual report will highlight each of our six strategic priorities, as well as the progress that's been made to date on the Strategic Plan goals associated with each priority.

 **1 Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds**

 **2 Supporting Sustainable Growth**

 **3 Connecting People to Nature**

 **4 Partner of Choice**

 **5 Organizational Excellence**

 **6 Financial Sustainability**

Progress Scorecard Legend

		
COMPLETED	IN PROGRESS	TO BE INITIATED

HEALTHY AND CLIMATE RESILIENT WATERSHEDS

Wainfleet Wetlands Conservation Area



Understanding, protecting, and improving watershed ecosystems is critical to preparing for the impacts of climate change. Our work is focused on keeping people and properties safe from natural hazards like floods and shoreline erosion, protecting our drinking water sources, improving water quality in watersheds and adjacent Great Lakes, and conserving and enhancing habitat across the landscape.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Support evidence-based decision-making for climate-resilient watersheds and shorelines

Robust data collection program established by 2023 and data gaps filled by 2026

Protect people and properties from natural hazards and climate impacts

A climate risk and vulnerability action plan developed by 2023 integrated with provincially-mandated watershed-based resource management strategy

Restore and enhance natural habitat, water resources, and forest cover

Increased area (ha) of protected and restored habitat by 2031 measured annually

Manage NPCA lands to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover

Management plans completed for 100% of NPCA properties by 2031

Highlights INTEGRATED WATERSHED STRATEGIES

- Issued 5 flood bulletins
- Mapped 180 km of riverine floodplain
- 660 surface & 43 groundwater water quality samples
- Decommissioned 2 wells
- Monitored 19 stream gauge stations & 11 climate stations
- Planted 70,000 trees & 4,347 shrubs
- Reforested 26.7 hectares
- Restored 1.21 hectares of wetland
- Initiated nature-based shoreline management & an organization-wide *Climate Action Plan*
- Niagara River Remedial Action Plan:
 - Made progress or completed 88% of remedial actions
 - Completed 7 coastal wetland projects

Climate Change

The NPCA's 2021–2031 Strategic Plan identified climate change as a critical priority. Our new Watershed Strategies and Climate Change team that was established in 2022 will help address that priority by providing technical expertise, undertaking applied climate research, and conducting on-the-ground work to build watershed resiliency.

We also began developing an organization-wide *Climate Change Action Plan*. The aim of this plan is to increase climate resilience within NPCA properties, reduce our carbon footprint to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and engage with NPCA staff, partners, and stakeholders to accelerate local climate action.

Collaborating for a Sustainable Future: The Inaugural Niagara Climate Change Summit

In June 2022, NPCA partnered with Niagara Region and Brock University to deliver the inaugural Niagara Climate Change Summit. This multi-stakeholder event brought together 120 participants in person and another 172 online, while recordings posted online have racked up more than 500 views.

The Summit concluded with attendees signing a pledge to form partnerships, share critical data, and accelerate action on climate change in Niagara. The gathering catalyzed the formation of two new collaborations: the Niagara Climate Change Action Network and Niagara Climate Change Municipal Community of Practice. These initiatives bring together more than 40 groups, including local governments, utilities, businesses, educational institutions, environmental organizations, Indigenous communities, and other stakeholders.



Protecting People & Infrastructure Through Flood Risk Management

The NPCA's extensive Flood Management Program includes floodplain mapping, flood forecasting, real-time warnings, and flow monitoring. NPCA also has a robust Flood Forecasting and Warning system to warn residents of the timing, magnitude, and duration of storm events so that affected homeowners are aware and can prepare.

In 2022, NPCA continued to monitor daily water levels at our 19 stream gauge stations and climate data at our 11 climate stations, along with regular maintenance, calibration, and inspections at all 30 installations. Water flow monitoring information helps better predict both floods and conditions that may result in droughts. The 12 Mile Creek stream gauge station at St. Johns Valley Centre Conservation Area was upgraded with new sensors that measure water levels, and air and water temperatures. These upgrades will help NPCA to better predict flooding in the 12 Mile Creek watershed, as well as monitor the health of the watercourse.

What Happened?

The 2022 Lake Erie Winter Storm Elliott



Storm events on the Great Lakes can result in flooding, erosion, and damage due to high waves. NPCA's flood bulletins in 2022 helped to proactively warn the community about severe Lake Erie storms. The 2022 Lake Erie Winter Storm Elliott was unique and unprecedented. High winds caused snow drifting inland and strong wave action, which impacted the Lake Erie shoreline. Unlike most storm surge events, this one also featured plummeting temperatures and the flash freezing of wave spray that caused damage to homes, property, and infrastructure.

Lake Erie was not completely frozen over when the storm hit. The open water fuelled a strong lake-effect snowstorm that dumped large amounts of snow on our southern tier municipalities. NPCA snow surveys indicated that there was an average of between 40 to 70 mm of water in the snowpack (depending on location). The days immediately after the storm event were unseasonably warm, which served to melt most of the snowpack. Fortunately, most of the snowpack had melted before the area experienced heavy rain storms a few days following Winter Storm Elliott. The absence of snow on the ground

HEALTHY AND CLIMATE RESILIENT WATERSHEDS

and associated snow thaw during the rainstorms helped to reduce the extent of flooding that was experienced. NPCA's hazard mapping did an excellent job of accurately delineating the extent of the flooding and storm surge. Co-ordination with emergency services across Niagara Region further helped to manage this extreme event.

Climate change is predicted to result in warmer winters. Because of this, it is expected that Lake Erie will continue to regularly not freeze over, and the open water will fuel severe lake-effect snowstorms. When the lake is frozen, the ice serves to protect the shoreline from wave action and dampen storm surges. However, if there is no ice, there is no natural protection. Constructing new shoreline protections in a robust and resilient manner using green infrastructure will be necessary to address hazards and improve the conditions of new builds over what exists now thereby increasing the resiliency along the shoreline.

NPCA floodplain mapping provides a good indication of the areas that are susceptible to major flooding during a rapid melt of a large snowpack. Any potential development should continue to be directed away from these areas.

Monitoring to Support Evidence-Based Decision Making

Water Quality Monitoring samples from 80 surface water and 46 groundwater sites test for numerous things like general chemistry, nutrients, metals, and bacteria. Benthic sampling looks at organisms found in underwater communities in lakes and streams in order to better monitor environmental health.

Drinking Water Source Protection

The Drinking Water Source Protection Program for the Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Area covers six municipal drinking water systems and their vulnerable areas, also known as Intake Protection Zones. These include Grimsby (Lake Ontario), DeCew, Welland, Port Colborne (from Welland Canal sources), Rosehill (Fort Erie, Lake Erie), and Niagara Falls (Niagara River). All the policies within the Source Water Protection Plan continue to be implemented and any significant drinking water threats that are found are immediately addressed. Source Water Protection Technical Work updates are in progress for three Niagara Region Water Treatment Plants including Welland, Rosehill (Fort Erie), and Niagara Falls.

Congratulations to Chair Bill Hodgson for his reappointment by the Province of Ontario in 2022 as the Chair of the Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Committee.

Our Monitoring Achievements:

- Collected 25 benthic macroinvertebrate samples for monitoring aquatic health
- Biological assessments of the Hamilton Airport & Hamilton (Glanbrook) Landfill
- Regulatory monitoring for conservation areas septic systems
- Deployment of 5 premium water quality monitoring systems – Yellow Spring Instruments (YSI) EXO sondes – in the Welland River, and Twelve Mile and Twenty Mile Creeks
- PFAS monitoring at Binbrook Conservation Area's Lake Niapenco (Hamilton)
- Continued monitoring for PCBs in Lower Twelve Mile Creek (St. Catharines)
- PCB sampling for Lyon's Creek
- Benthic sampling at Mud Lake Conservation Area
- Pesticide monitoring in Four Mile Creek (Niagara-on-the-Lake)
- Conservation Ontario's delegate on the Lake Ontario Annex #4 Nutrient Task Force

Water Well Decommissioning

NPCA's Water Well Decommissioning Program helped to properly decommission two unused water wells to prevent surface contaminants from directly entering local groundwater system.



Before and after well decommissioning



Restoration initiatives

Restoration for Watershed Resilience

Forests, wetlands, and meadows are not just beautiful places to visit. They also slow climate change by sequestering carbon, providing critical habitat, and soaking up water that prevents flooding. NPCA is working to ensure our watershed can deliver these vital ecological services for generations to come. We are undertaking reforestation, wetland enhancement, and naturalization projects at our own properties. We are also proactively collaborating with landowners, municipalities, and other community partners to protect and restore more land across the Niagara Peninsula. In 2022, NPCA's Board of Directors approved our new Watershed Restoration and Stewardship Program, which aims to restore 600 hectares of habitat and plant one million trees by 2031.

Our Restoration Achievements:

- 🌿 **Planting 4,700 trees & 100 shrubs at Two Mile Creek Conservation Area**
- 🌿 **Completing several community tree planting projects with the City of St. Catharines & Town of Grimsby to improve forest cover & wildlife habitat on municipal land**
- 🌿 **Planting almost 70,000 trees in collaboration with Forests Ontario, Haldimand Stewardship Council, Land Care Niagara & private landowners**
- 🌿 **Conducting large-scale restoration work at our newly purchased Conservation Area thanks to financial support from the Federal Government, City of Hamilton, Niagara Region & Ontario Power Generation**

Shoreline Resiliency

Lakewood Conservation Area is a vacant 15-acre property located in the Township of Wainfleet that was purchased by NPCA in 2014. The site features 158 meters of Lake Erie shoreline and includes a sensitive dune system and existing backshore wetlands. The property is also known to be an important migratory bird stopover, as well as potential habitat for Fowler's Toads. Shoreline resiliency is an emerging strategic objective for NPCA. Restoration planning for this site includes nature-based shoreline management techniques to protect the existing sensitive dune system. In 2022, NPCA initiated the development of a Management Plan for the site, including a monitoring and adaptive management program prioritizing nature-based shoreline hazard mitigation options.

HEALTHY AND CLIMATE RESILIENT WATERSHEDS



Securing Land to Sustain Healthy Landscapes

NPCA's *Nature for Niagara's Future* study notes that about 17 per cent of the Niagara Peninsula watershed has natural cover, which is well short of the 30 per cent target required to sustain a healthy and resilient landscape.

To help close this gap, NPCA's Board of Directors approved a new *Land Securement Strategy* in December 2022, following engagement with Indigenous partners and stakeholders. This long-term strategy lays the foundation for our ambitious plans to acquire more properties in the coming years to expand our existing network of conservation areas while protecting delicate habitats, and natural hydrologic and hydrogeologic functions. The Strategy sets a target of securing approximately 180 (minimum) to 360 (optimal) hectares of new lands by 2032.

Legislative changes introduced by the Province of Ontario resulted in several new Regulations under the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Notable for land planning responsibilities was Regulation 686/21 that outlines requirements for a *Land Inventory and Conservation Areas Strategy*. In 2022 staff participated in working group meetings led by Conservation Ontario to develop a consistent approach to these strategic documents among all 36 conservation authorities throughout the province.

NPCA staff are also in the process of prioritizing management plans for each of our 41 properties. Work has already begun on new management plans for Morgan's Point and Lakewood Conservation Areas. Revisions to the draft management plan for Cave Springs Conservation Area were also initiated in 2022. Priorities identified for the next two to three years of management planning efforts include Beamer Memorial, Rockway, and Mountainview Conservation Areas.

To support these efforts, we also created a Land Planning Department within NPCA. In addition to focusing on land acquisition, it will also focus on land management planning for conservation areas and broader strategic planning for NPCA's nearly 2,900 hectares of conservation lands.

Beyond the Falls – Making a Splash at the Great Lakes Public Forum

Organized once every three years by Environment and Climate Change Canada and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Great Lakes Public Forum brings together the public, Indigenous leaders, non-government organizations, and other agencies to discuss the state of the Great Lakes, progress made under the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement*, and priorities for the next three years. In 2022, the Forum was held in Niagara Falls and NPCA was there.

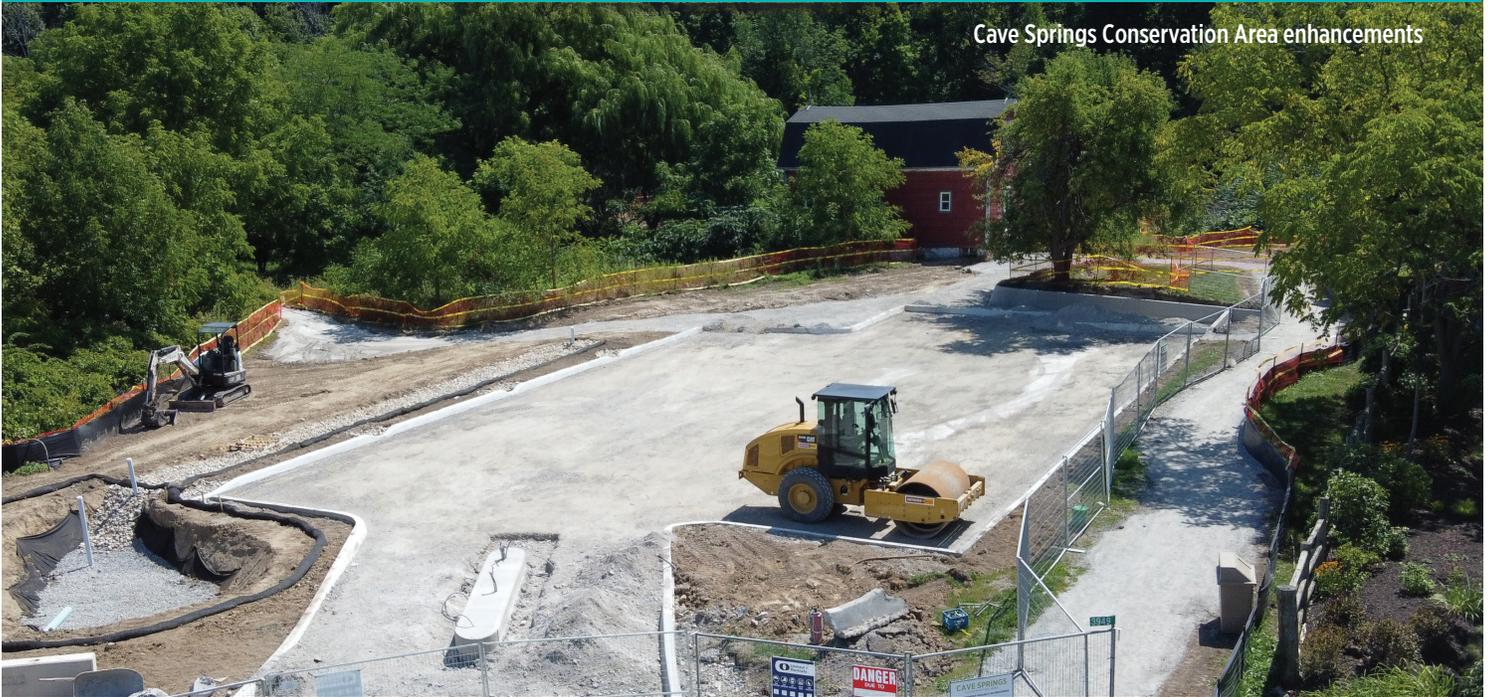
Our "Beyond the Falls" bus tour at the event showcased environmental projects underway along the Niagara River. Participants received first-hand information on such things as fish monitoring, habitat restoration efforts at Chippawa Battlefield, and a water-quality remediation project in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The tour received a five-star rating with many comments suggesting it should be offered regularly. Meanwhile, NPCA staff representing the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan took part in a panel discussion on restoring water quality and ecosystem health within the Great Lakes and Niagara River.

Niagara River Remedial Action Plan

Since 1999, NPCA has coordinated and implemented the activities of the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) program with federal and provincial funding support. Through a collaborative approach with local partners, we are making progress on improving the river's water quality and ecosystem health. By the end of 2022, 88 per cent of remedial actions identified through the RAP's five-year *Delisting Strategy* are in progress or have been completed by NPCA and its partners. This includes habitat restoration, water quality improvements, and more. For more information, visit niagarariver.ca

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Cave Springs Conservation Area enhancements



NPCA is committed to a coordinated approach to environmental planning with high client services standards, a regional ecosystem lens to protect and enhance the unique biodiversity of our watershed, and the implementation of green infrastructure and low-impact development approaches critical to building healthy and resilient communities.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Maintain a high standard of client services, tools, and procedures for planning review and permits



Improvement in client service metrics year over year

Lead an integrated watershed management approach to support planning and policy for protecting and enhancing watersheds



100% of sub-watershed plans for future growth areas updated by 2031

Lead the implementation of sustainable technologies and green infrastructure best practices for climate resilience and sustainability



A green infrastructure and sustainable technologies program established at NPCA by 2026

Highlights **PLANNING, GROWTH & CLIENT SERVICES**

- Issued 401 permits
- Reviewed 968 planning files
- Updated our Planning & Permitting Policy Document
- Created a new Procedural Manual
- Established new Environmental Impact Study guidelines
- Upgraded green infrastructure
- Implemented low-impact development technologies

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Planning & Policy

Responsible growth and development means creating resilient communities through land use planning and NPCA permitting that prepares us for the impacts of climate change and urbanization. This means leveraging sustainable technologies and low-impact development practices, as well as implementing policies, programs, and services to minimize impacts of flooding and erosion. It also means collaborating with communities and experts to ensure we are fostering a resilient future for the next generation.

To better position NPCA to respond to increasing growth pressures within our watersheds, to implement our 10-year Strategic Plan, and prepare for legislative changes, we have updated our Policies for Planning and Development in the Watersheds of the NPCA and created the accompanying Planning and Permitting Procedural Manual. Together, these resources provide clarity and direction to NPCA staff, municipalities, landowners, developers, and community stakeholders on how to keep people, property, and infrastructure safe from natural hazards while enhancing our shared natural environment.

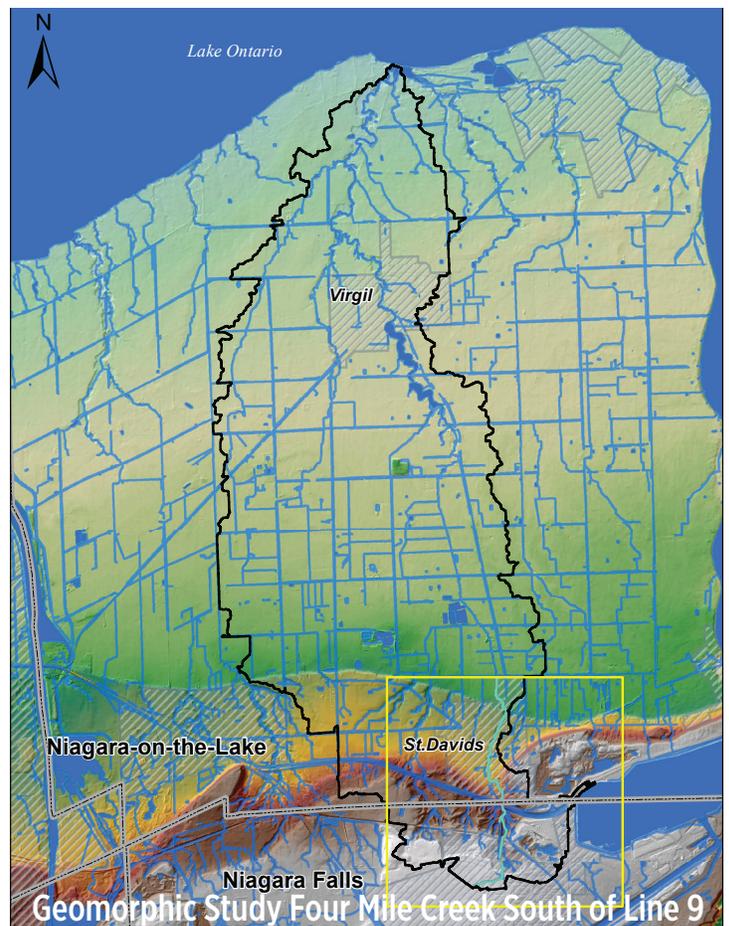
Integrated Watershed Strategies

Recent updates to the provincial *Conservation Authorities Act* and its regulations has established a requirement for Conservation Authorities to prepare a "watershed-based resource management strategy". This direction influenced NPCA's 2022 organizational realignment to strengthen its Integrated Watershed Strategies department to better reflect our role in addressing and managing local watershed triggers, issues, and risks. As part of this strategy, NPCA will also identify any gaps in Category 1 mandatory programs and services that are not meeting the needs of existing and future issues in the watershed, and gaps that must be addressed with support from municipal partners and other agencies.

While NPCA worked with Conservation Ontario in 2022 to establish the framework for integrating and updating existing watershed studies as part of the proposed watershed-based resource management strategy, our work continued to support our municipal partners with critical technical information to support growth-related priorities. We provided input on environmental policies for the Region of Niagara's new Official Plan, the Township of West Lincoln's *Subwatershed Study* for the *Smithville Master Community Plan*, and terms of reference for several other municipal subwatershed studies.

NPCA partnered with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to conduct a five-kilometre geomorphology study of Four Mile Creek to better understand community concerns around water quantity issues in the subwatershed. Most importantly, in 2022 we began to prioritize, review, and reorganize existing monitoring and other technical requirement gaps required by subwatershed studies.

In 2022, capital updates were completed on NPCA's Digital Terrain Model (DTM), and large-scale Ecological Land Classification (ELC) Community Series mapping. The DTM functions as the topographic base, which is critical to the hydrologic and hydraulic model development supporting floodplain mapping initiatives. This community resource is also now readily available on NPCA's Open Data GIS Portal (gis-npca-camaps.opendata.arcgis.com). The ELC update provides a new view of natural areas on the landscape across the entire Niagara Peninsula watershed since 2010. It also provides age and species information to enhance and improve the inventory for effective watershed resource management.



Leveraging Low-Impact Development at Cave Springs Conservation Area

Cave Springs Conservation Area has seen a significant increase in visitors in recent years. However, this conservation area can currently only be accessed from the Bruce Trail and lacks any parking or visitor amenities. This led to trespassing, unauthorized parking, and unsafe use of the site during the pandemic.



Cave Springs Conservation Area enhancements

With support from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario’s Canada Community Revitalization Fund in 2022, we launched the Cave Springs Enhancement Project to address these issues. Improvements to the site include a parking area, an enhanced 400-metre accessible trail, and a new trail system with wayfinding to complement the Bruce Trail. Educational signage to inform visitors about the site, present Indigenous and local history, and recognize the late Margaret Reed who donated the property to NPCA will be installed in 2023 to further enhance this project.

Most importantly, these enhancements at Cave Springs incorporate low-impact development elements to manage stormwater and reduce the risk of downstream flooding. A grassed buffer strip at the site now filters runoff from the parking lot while an enhanced swale encourages it to soak into the ground, and a new rain garden of native plants at the site helps absorb and filter any overflow.

Collective Ambition: 2 Billion Trees Commitment & Investment in Our Watershed

The Federal Government’s 2 Billion Trees Commitment program seeks to partner with local governments and organizations to plant two billion trees across Canada by 2031 — trees that will capture and store carbon, improve water quality, support biodiversity, and provide other community well-being benefits to support proposed growth in our watershed. In 2022, NPCA secured a \$150,000 capacity building grant under this program to launch our Trees for All campaign with an aim to develop a 10-year



watershed-wide restoration initiative. We would like to thank Niagara Region, local municipal and community partners, and ENGOs for their support of our proposal.

Responding to Legislative Changes

In October 2022, the Ontario Government passed *Bill 23*, the *More Homes Built Faster Act*, to help achieve its target of building 1.5 million homes in the next decade. Other proposals, including amendments to the *Greenbelt Plan*, Greenbelt area boundary regulation, and Ontario Wetland Evaluation System, were also put forward. NPCA along with Conservation Ontario provided a series of submissions on these proposed legislative changes highlighting the major implications they posed for the roles and responsibilities of conservation authorities.

In November 2022, NPCA presented our key areas of concern to the Provincial Standing Committee on *Bill 23* (and associated proposals) and offered 12 recommendations to ensure sustainable solutions. Chief among these were changes to the wetland evaluation system to better define, map, and protect these vital ecosystems. NPCA also coordinated discussions with our municipal partners to establish a streamlined approach and to improve client service processes to help conform to the expedited timelines outlined in *Provincial Bill 109*, which amended the *Ontario Planning Act*.

NPCA continues to work with our partners to ensure that the science, data, and emerging best practices in watershed management are readily available to decision makers to support and advance progressive and sound environmental planning.

Our Environmental Planning, Policy And Regulations Achievements:

- ✿ A conformity update to NPCA’s *Planning & Permitting Policy Document* in line with the new regulations made under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*
- ✿ Configuration improvements to CityView (our development application tracking software) which now includes an online portal for permit application intake
- ✿ Updating our *NPCA Client Service Standards Guidelines*
- ✿ Responding to Provincial policy matters posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario
- ✿ Ongoing regulatory mapping maintenance & updates to mapping with respect to watercourses, wetlands & apparent valleys
- ✿ Regular coordination meetings with municipal partners & Niagara Escarpment Commission

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE



Children at Ball's Falls Conservation Area



We are committed to fostering community connections and creating equal access to public greenspaces. This includes connecting trails and greenspaces for the physical health and mental well-being of people, as well as providing nature-based education to help create the next generation of environmental leaders, and enhancing stewardship and volunteer opportunities that support diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Create equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people



Public greenspace within urban or near-urban areas increased by 2031

Lead nature education, environmental stewardship, and volunteerism



An outreach, stewardship and education strategy developed by 2024

100% of actions from outreach, stewardship, and education strategy implemented by 2031

Improve cultural connections and heritage appreciation



A cultural heritage strategy developed by 2025

100% of actions from cultural heritage strategy implemented by 2031

Promote the watershed as a destination of choice for adventure, culture, and ecological tourism



A marketing and ecotourism strategy developed by 2025

100% of actions from marketing and ecotourism strategy implemented by 2031

Highlights

CONSERVATION PARKS & OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- 🌿 Welcomed 110,000+ paid day use guests at our four flagship parks
- 🌿 100,000+ visitors at our passive parks
- 🌿 Sold 1,600 NaturePlus annual pass memberships
- 🌿 Attracted 40,000 visitors to NPCA signature events – a 60% increase from 2021
- 🌿 Accommodated 232 seasonal campers
- 🌿 Hosted 89 weddings
- 🌿 5,000 Students and day campers
- 🌿 First annual Reawakening Our Relations event at Ball's Falls



Thanksgiving Festival at Ball's Falls Conservation Area



Reawakening Our Relations at Ball's Falls Conservation Area

Each year, more than 200,000 people visit NPCA properties to escape the busyness of urban life, get some fresh air, and take in spectacular views from atop the Niagara Escarpment. Some come to stay active by hiking, cycling, and snowshoeing, while others come to enjoy the outdoors at weddings, festivals, and family picnics. Whatever their motivation, our priority is to make those connections with nature as easy, equitable, and memorable as possible.

In 2022, we saw record attendance at our flagship parks for the third consecutive year. The more than 100,000 paid day use guests we welcomed was a 22 per cent increase from 2021. We also saw remarkable attendance at our signature events, thanks in part to the easing of pandemic-related restrictions.

To support this growing trend, we are investing in visitor infrastructure. In 2022, we secured \$750,000 from the Canada Community Revitalization Fund via the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario to improve greenspace and accessibility at six of our conservation areas: Ball's Falls, Binbrook, Cave Springs, St. Johns, Louth, and Rockway.

Our asset improvement initiative provided safe access to parks by adding new parking spaces at underserved properties and installing parking gates to manage after-hours access. This work also helped restore accessible trails for visitors using assistive mobility devices, and enhance 21 km of hiking trails by restoring existing boardwalks and stairs.

Adding Rockway Property to NPCA's Assets

One of NPCA's largest and most-visited parks, Rockway Conservation Area, just got bigger. Thanks to funding support from Niagara Region, we acquired lands (1.21 acres) that were once home to the Rockway Community Centre. NPCA is currently developing site plans for a new parking area and entrance that will improve access to the waterfalls and trail system at this popular location.

Welcoming Youth Back to Nature

Last year saw the full return of our outdoor education programs, field trips, and camps at several NPCA conservation areas. Our staff delivered outdoor education programming to more than 5,000 students and day campers. It was also our first full year delivering field trips for the Niagara Catholic District School Board, providing land-based learning and cultural heritage programs for nearly 900 students.

Reawakening Our Relations

In keeping with our commitment to reconciliation, NPCA partnered with the Niagara Folk Arts Festival and Kakekalanicks consultants to present the Reawakening Our Relations event at Ball's Falls leading up to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The three-day program was presented by local Indigenous artists, storytellers, and knowledge keepers. Together, they led attendees in sports, discussions, and guided walks in nature.

The weekend opened with a smudging ceremony, followed by a guided twilight nature walk, led by local Elder Dave Labbé and an outdoor educator. The next day, FUSE Lacrosse hosted an interactive workshop on the cultural significance of this Indigenous sport and how to play. Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, and storytellers also shared powerful thoughts of Turtle Island. The event concluded with a guided walk where guests reflected on Indigenous histories, futures, and legacies.

Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival Draws Record Numbers

Our 2022 Thanksgiving Festival returned to its full glory for the first time since the pandemic. The 48th edition of this annual event attracted a record number 28,000 attendees over the holiday weekend. Visitors were treated to 150 artisans and craft vendors, local food trucks, and an incredible lineup of Canadian music. Guests took part in guided and self-guided hikes to explore nature and learn about the geology of the Niagara Escarpment. Demonstrations and tours at the event's Heritage Village brought history to life. And kids enjoyed face painting, train and pony rides, and bird-of-prey shows hosted by the Canadian Raptor Conservancy.

New App Helps Keep Our Trails in Good Condition



In 2022, we developed an internal Trail Incident Reporting App. This new tool enables our volunteer trail ambassadors and staff to report incidents and concerns on NPCA properties and trails in real time with accurate locations for things like potholes, downed trees, and dumping. The app helps our land care teams to prioritize and schedule their work.

PARTNER OF CHOICE



Conservation Awards



We will achieve our strategic priorities by working together with Indigenous partners, stakeholders, and our local communities. Our coordinated and collective impact will be deeper and stronger thanks to shared resources, strong collaboration, communities of practice, and capacity building in new and emerging areas such as climate change.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Strengthen government relations towards collective outcomes and impact



Agreements with all three upper-tier municipalities in 2023 and lower-tier municipalities by 2025

Foster relationships with the community, non-government organizations, businesses, agriculture, industry, and academic institutions for collective outcomes and impact



A stakeholder and community engagement strategy developed by 2025

100% of actions from stakeholder and community strategy implemented by 2031

Improve engagement with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples that supports shared stewardship



Indigenous engagement guidelines developed in 2022

Staff provided with Indigenous awareness training

Highlights

ENGAGEMENT, PUBLIC OUTREACH & EDUCATION

- Engaged 400+ active volunteers & welcomed 300+ new volunteers
- Benefited from 7,354 volunteer hours resulting in 2,927 trees/shrubs & 6,338 wildflowers planted
- Removed 7,000+ invasive European water chestnut plants from the Welland River
- Attracted 685,000 website views & engaged 35,000 people in our social media community
- Garnered more than 8.8 million impressions from our top 25 news articles
- Attracted 4,400 visits to our Get Involved portal
- Introduced a new NPCA logo as part of our organizational rebranding

To drive conservation in the Niagara Peninsula watershed in 2022, we collaborated with the Niagara Parks Commission to begin restoring a four-acre wetland at their Gonder's Flats property adjacent to the Niagara River in Fort Erie. The project brought together several partners, including the Town of Fort Erie, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Land Care Niagara and Niagara Community Foundation.

We also strengthened our relationships with Indigenous partners. In February 2022, NPCA established an Indigenous Engagement Working Group to enhance our relationships with local communities, and to raise awareness and create learning opportunities for staff. We added Indigenous representatives to our Public Advisory Committee and the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan Council. We also participated in community events like the Niagara Regional Native Friendship Centre's annual traditional pow wow.

In terms of our amazing NPCA volunteers, in 2022 we were fortunate to add 309 passionate individuals to our roster. In total, our volunteers donated more than 7,000 hours, doing everything from running guided heritage tours to monitoring birds, to maintaining trails and planting nearly 3,000 trees and shrubs and more than 6,000 wildflowers to help restore critical ecosystems.

Additionally, the volunteer members of the NPCA Public Advisory Committee have been instrumental in informing our *2021-2031 Strategic Plan*, as well as our Planning and Permitting Policy Review, and *Land Securement Strategy*.

2022 Public Advisory Committee

Cindilee Ecker-Flagg
 Dion Kelly
 Donna Speranzini
 Erika Furney
 Harry Korosis
 John Ariens

Jonathan Musso
 Joseph Schonberger-Chair
 Michael Kauzlaric
 Natalie Seniuk
 Tracy Boese

Volunteer Spotlight: Jaylin Reyes

Since signing up as a volunteer with NPCA in May 2022, Jaylin has already contributed close to 100 hours by helping to make multiple community planting projects a success. She also shared her infectious passion for conservation and education as a camp leader for our summer adventure program at St. Johns Conservation Area. "She came to camp with a smile on her face and energy for the day that not only influenced the campers, but other leaders as well," says program staffer Quinn Vos.

Volunteering also supports this recent university graduate's future plans. "The NPCA was a great way for me to explore what fields interest me and gain valuable experience that will help me enter a career in environmental services," she says. Thank you Jaylin for your outstanding contributions!

Celebrating Stellar Volunteers

After the pandemic prevented us from hosting our Conservation Awards in 2021, we were thrilled to bring the annual event back in 2022. With more than 200 guests in attendance, the ceremony celebrated accomplishments from the previous two years by the incredible volunteers, community partners, businesses, and local organizations that give of their time, energy, and resources to make the Niagara Peninsula watershed a better place to live, work, and play.

2020 Award of Merit recipients:

Youth Award: Kaden Warren

Individual Award: Jocelyn Baker

Individual Award: Marcie Jacklin

Individual Award: Ian Smith

Organization Award: Earth Day Hamilton Burlington



2020 Award of Merit recipients

2021 Award of Merit recipients:

Individual Award: Kerry Kennedy

Individual Award: Kyra Simone

Individual Award: Lindsay Taylor

Organization Award: Niagara Coastal Community Collaborative

Business Award: Spirit in Niagara – Small Batch Distillery



2021 Award of Merit recipients

PARTNER OF CHOICE



Teaming Up to Protect the Niagara Peninsula from Invasive Species

In July 2020, two recreational paddlers reported the presence of European water chestnut (EWC) in the Welland River. This aggressive invasive species forms dense floating leaves that can shade out native vegetation, get tangled in boat motors, and make swimming almost impossible. They can also kill fish by reducing oxygen levels in the river when they decompose.

In 2022, Canada's Invasive Species Centre led a program to remove EWC from the Welland River, with support from NPCA and Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Our "Paddle with a Purpose" events helped educate the local community about EWC and how to report and remove it. The results were impressive. Five summer students removed approximately 7,000 EWC plants along a 26 km stretch of the Welland River and then properly disposed of them on shore.

We also teamed up to tackle European black alder trees and other invasive species at E.C. Brown Conservation Area in Welland. We worked with post-graduate students in the Ecosystem Restoration Program at Niagara College to identify, map, and develop a plan to manage them and then we put that plan into action with funding from the Invasive Species Centre.

This massive habitat restoration project involved the removal of thousands of mature black alders and the area impacted by these removals was then reseeded with native wildflowers and grasses to enhance biodiversity and support local wildlife, including pollinators.



Community Outreach

In 2022, we continued to prioritize meaningful community outreach and education to inspire conservation action within the communities that we serve. Throughout the year, our staff led several guided hikes coordinated by local libraries and we delivered numerous educational presentations about our work, native plants, and more. We also participated in many community events, including:

- 🍃 Niagara Children's Water Festival
- 🍃 Great Lakes Public Forum
- 🍃 Niagara Climate Change Summit
- 🍃 Mother Earth Day
- 🍃 Port Colborne Conservation Club Family Fishing Derby
- 🍃 Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network Launch
- 🍃 Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival
- 🍃 Earth Day Events



Partners in Conservation Spotlight



Our Annual Report allows us the opportunity to formally and publicly acknowledge the municipalities, organizations, and community partners that help make our work possible.

- Aviva Gives Back
- Bert Miller Nature Club
- Birds Canada
- Brock University
- Camp Marydale
- Canadore College
- Carolinian Canada
- City of Hamilton
- City of Niagara Falls
- City of Port Colborne
- City of St. Catharines
- City of Thorold
- City of Welland
- Cogeco
- Community Cares St. Catharines and Thorold
- Community Cares West Niagara
- Community Cares West Lincoln
- District School Board of Niagara
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Earth Day Hamilton-Burlington
- Eco-Defenders
- Fitzgerald Neighbours
- Forests Ontario
- Fort Erie Conservation Club
- Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre
- Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park
- Friends of LaFortune Park
- Friends of One Mile Creek
- Friends of Walker's Creek
- Forest Gene Conservation Association
- Fort Erie Conservation Club
- General Motors
- Glanbrook Conservation Committee
- Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce
- Green Herons
- Grimsby Benevolent Fund

- Haldimand County
- Haldimand Stewardship Council
- Haldimand Horticultural Society
- Hamilton Airport
- Hamilton Naturalists' Club
- Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
- Hope Centre Welland
- Invasive Species Centre
- Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club
- Kakekalanicks Consulting
- Knight Archives
- Land Care Niagara
- Lincoln Garden Club
- Links for Greener Learning
- McMaster University
- Métis Nation of Ontario
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- Niagara Antique Power Association
- Niagara Bruce Trail Club
- Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Niagara Coastal Community Collaborative
- Niagara College
- Niagara Community Foundation
- Niagara Falls Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee
- Niagara Falls Nature Club
- Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre
- Niagara Handweavers and Spinners Guild
- Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network
- Niagara Parks Commission
- Niagara Peninsula Aspiring Global Geopark
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation
- Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch
- Niagara Region
- Niagara Region Métis Council
- Niagara Regional Native Centre
- Niagara Woodcarvers Association

- Ontario Alliance of Climbers
- Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance
- Ontario Power Generation
- Park in the City Committee, Niagara Falls
- Pelham Cares
- Peninsula Field Naturalists
- Port Colborne Garden Club
- Port Colborne Conservation Club
- Prince of Wales Public School
- Ridley College
- Rotary International
- Royal Astronomical Society of Canada – Niagara
- Sassafras Farms
- Soaring Eagles
- Scouts Canada
- Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council
- Society for Ecological Restoration – Niagara College
- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- Town of Fort Erie
- Town of Grimsby
- Town of Lincoln
- Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Town of Pelham
- Town of Wainfleet
- Town of West Lincoln
- Trees for Hamilton
- Trout Unlimited Canada, Niagara Chapter
- Trout Unlimited, Strategic Watershed Action Team
- Twenty Valley Tourism Association
- Village Community Association
- Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre
- Westmount Public School

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Organizational excellence is our commitment to providing superior customer service and a workplace environment where staff and volunteers can thrive. It is also an act of continuous improvement to refine internal processes to enhance efficiency and drive better results. This includes the integration of social sustainability, equity and diversity, as well as reducing our climate footprint through our day-to-day operations.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Attract, retain, and invest in high caliber, diverse talent to deliver superior outcomes



A talent management strategy developed in 2022
100% of actions in the talent management strategy implemented by 2031

Improve internal operations and processes



A digital transformation strategy developed in 2023
100% of actions in the digital transformation strategy implemented by 2031

Provide high standards of customer service



Customer service guidelines developed in 2022
All staff provided customer service training

Demonstrate leadership in addressing climate change and sustainable practices through NPCA lands and operations



A corporate climate change action commitment and launch of a strategy in 2022
100% of actions in corporate climate change strategy implemented by 2031

Highlights

WORKPLACE CULTURE

- Filled 14 job opportunities
- Created 100 youth employment opportunities
- Conducted Indigenous awareness training for staff
- Provided 28 staff development opportunities
- Retained more than 30% of our staff for more than 10 years
- Achieved zero days lost due to injuries
- 100 seasonal opportunities filled
- 2 staff members reached 20 years of service



In 2022, we made important strides to fulfil staff needs and expand NPCA's capacity. The cornerstone of these efforts was the completion of a Realignment and Change Management process that we began in 2021. Through the process, we identified efficiencies, reallocated resources, and made other substantial changes to help us achieve our mandate and Strategic Plan priorities, as well as fulfil transition requirements resulting from legislative changes to the *Conservation Authority Act* and *Bill 23*. We drew upon staff feedback from every level of the organization to establish teams that align responsibilities with employee skills and future aspirations.

Another key achievement was establishing strategies for talent management, training, and succession planning to help us attract and keep exceptional people. We invested in our team, providing 28 professional development opportunities, including full-day Indigenous awareness training for all staff, and we added a paid statutory holiday for staff to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Other wins included facilitating a safe return to the workplace, following more than two years of pandemic-related disruptions. We developed a hybrid workplace that provides the benefit of in-person collaboration and connection with the focus and work-life balance that a remote work environment provides. We also established a new collective bargaining agreement with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union.

Thanks in part to these efforts, we attracted exceptional talent. With a new organizational structure, better tools, and a skilled team in place, NPCA is poised to become a conservation leader with a broader reach, impact, and influence.



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Years of Service Recipients



Sarah Mastroianni – 20 Years:
Manager, Planning and Permit Administration

Sarah began her career with NPCA as a summer student at Long Beach Conservation Area. She is the backbone to our planning and permit team thanks to her in-depth knowledge of our watersheds, and her reliable planning history and advice. Having started as a student, she has progressed to be one of our leaders training and she helps in mentoring our next generation of planners



Steve Miller – 20 Years:
Senior Manager, Water Resources

Steve joined NPCA as an engineer and has worn many hats with the organization and continues to do so. He has been involved with plan and permit reviews, managing our floodplain mapping updates, developing shoreline hazard management plans, participating in numerous multistakeholder working groups, and overseeing critical infrastructure upgrades to our dams and conservation areas.



Nathaniel Devos – 15 Years:
Park Manager, Chippawa Creek Conservation Area

Nathaniel has developed a wealth of knowledge working in different capacities at various parks such as Long Beach and Ball's Falls before assuming his current role for the last three seasons. He is a consummate team player and his extensive park management knowledge and proficiency in technology enables him to contribute significantly to the implementation of new NPCA programs and initiatives.



Ryan Kitchen – 15 Years:
Flood Risk Management Technician

Ryan started with NPCA as a Natural Areas Inventory Technician and now leads our Flood Forecasting and Warning Program. He is passionate about the weather and throughout his time with NPCA has witnessed approx. 8,720 mm of precipitation fall on the watershed. He is in the running to have the most NPCA job titles and is always willing to drop whatever he is doing to help others.



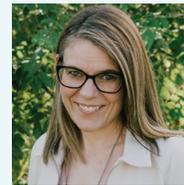
Irene Bradnam – 10 Years:
Administrative Assistant to Watershed Management

Irene is often the first person that visitors to our main office interact with. Working the front counter and delivering impeccable customer service, she is the face of NPCA liaising with landowners and members of the public looking for work permits or more information. She ensures that all incoming questions are answered and to say that she keeps everything on track would be an understatement!



Eric Augustino – 10 Years:
Water Quality Technician

Eric is on the front lines of collecting samples in the field and maintaining NPCA's water quality sensors. Throughout his time with the organization, he has collected approx. 6,400 surface water and 120 groundwater samples, as well as preserved more than 33,000 benthic macroinvertebrates (bugs and small worms). He is a vital member of the team and is always pleased to take the time to help others.



Natalie Green – 5 Years:
Manager, Climate Change and Special Programs

Natalie joined NPCA as the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) coordinator. She has completed RAP's 5-year Delisting Plan, removed two impairments for algae and plankton, and in 2022 represented the RAP program and NPCA at the Great Lakes Summit in Niagara. She also helps push many important initiatives forward like the Land Securement Strategy and our Indigenous Engagement Working Group.



Erika Navarro – 5 Years:
Communications & Marketing Specialist

Erika makes everyone at NPCA look good. She ensures that our audiences know about all our programs and services, that our website content is up to date and engaging, and that we have a strong digital and social media presence. She responds to comments and questions from media and the public and always ensures that our key messages are communicated in a consistent, engaging, and positive way.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Morgan's Point Conservation Area



NPCA strives to be a financially responsible, stable, and sustainable organization. To ensure financial sustainability, we must maximize the impact of every dollar while finding new ways to boost revenue. This means leveraging best practices, adopting innovative business models, and attracting diverse funding sources, including leveraging the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation to raise funds.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Ensure responsible, sustainable, and sound fiscal practices

Variance against the budget no greater than 20%



Optimize self-generating revenue using innovative approaches

Increased self-generated revenue



Improve asset management and close the state of good repair gap

Maintenance of Good Facility Condition Index

NPCA is committed to ensuring a responsible and sustainable organization with sound fiscal management. In 2022, our variance of actual results against our budget was just 4 per cent – compared to 6.3 per cent in 2021 – and well in line with our strategic targets. We also implemented an updated policy and related schedule of fees for NPCA-generated revenues to retain accurate costs of services in a full-cost recovery model.

NPCA successfully leveraged existing funding sources and innovative partnerships to diversify funding and optimize self-generating revenues. For every \$1 of municipal funding we collect, NPCA raises an additional \$1.85 in revenues, thereby reducing our reliance on the municipal levy and taxpayers. In 2022, our grant funding also increased by 357 per cent to \$2.1 million – from \$460K in 2020.

To improve asset management and close the state-of-good repair gap, NPCA invested \$4.4 million in tangible capital assets in 2022 and completed 31 projects. A capital planning module to provide a framework for long-term capital planning and inform asset management strategies is currently being implemented. Additionally, a natural asset management accounting initiative is also planned for 2023.

Organizational excellence guidelines are also being implemented to improve internal operations and processes, which includes modernizing and leveraging digital opportunities and solutions. Additionally, NPCA is implementing a records management program (Laserfiche) and policy to support efficient and improved information sharing. A digital transformation strategy and roadmap will be finalized in 2023.

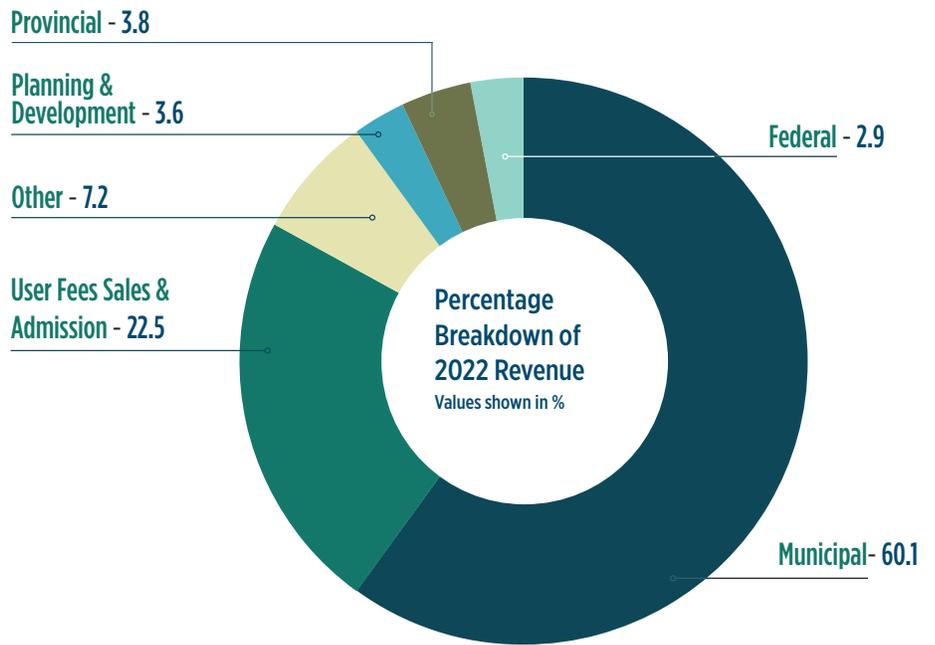
Highlights FINANCIAL STABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

- Self-generated revenues in 2022 equaled \$4.53 million – representing 33.2% of total revenues
- Secured \$2.1 million in grant funding – a 375% increase from \$460K in 2021
- Initiated asset management accounting for natural assets & green infrastructure
- Completed \$4.4 million in capital projects
- Variance against budget only 4%
- Updated our Fee Policy & Fee Schedule

NPCA Financials

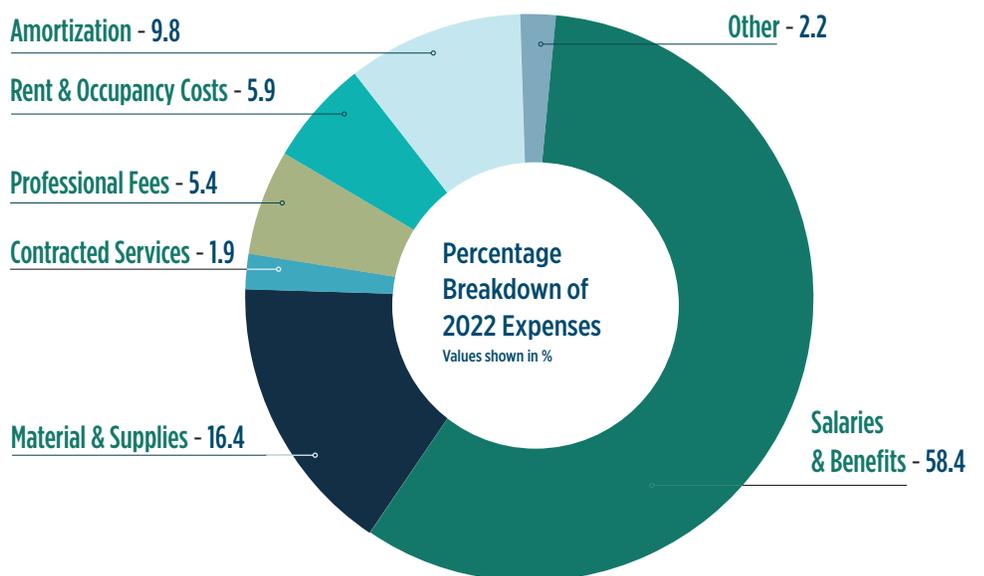
2022 Revenues

NPCA's operating revenues are classified in two streams — government (municipal, provincial, federal) and self-generated. The municipal levy represents 60 per cent of our total funding envelope, down from 67 per cent in 2021. NPCA-generated revenues — including fees for service activity, user fees, and admissions — contributed 33.2 per cent (\$4.53 million) to gross revenues, up from 28.8 per cent in 2021.



2022 Expenses

In keeping with historical trends, labour costs and materials and supplies represent the largest share of operating expenses at 74.8 per cent.



NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION



With a strong Board and a well-established Memorandum of Understanding with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA), 2022 was an extremely rewarding year for the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation (NPCF). We successfully steered the organization forward with a solid plan to establish ourselves as a charity of choice for environmental giving for the important work of NPCA.

One of the Foundation's greatest achievements in 2022 was the development of a fundraising strategy for our NATURE FOR ALL, FOR ALWAYS campaign. Four critical priorities have been established and they include: Ecological Restoration, Land Securement, Community Accessible Greenspace and Conservation Parks, and Outdoor Education and Recreation Programing.

We acknowledge our board members and staff for their ongoing contributions through our Director's Donation Challenge. We applaud the continued support of our community partners like Ontario Power Generation, Knight Archives, Regional Chair Bradley's Charity Golf Tournament, Kevin Ripski for his boardwalk donation to St. Johns Conservation Area, and local artisan Marvin Enns. Marvin crafts exquisite pens from the more than 400-year-old Comfort Maple sugar maple tree and the Foundation has sold more than 55 of his unique keepsakes.

This incredible work has been a team effort, and I would like to acknowledge and thank our 2022 NPCF Board of Directors for their vision, energy, and support. This includes Dianna Huson, Donna Cridland, Barbara Greenwood, Mike Balsom and NPCA Board Chair Rob Foster. We would also like to thank our many donors, volunteers, and sponsors for their incredible support.

In closing, I would like to urge our community to give for Nature and the important work of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. We look forward to a successful 2023.



Tom Insinna - Board Chair
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation

2022 NPCF Board of Directors

Tom Insinna
Chair

Barbara Greenwood
Vice-Chair

Donna Cridland
Treasurer

Mike Balsom
Director

Diana Huson
Director

Robert Foster
NPCA Chair



“READ ALL ABOUT IT!” NPCA IN THE NEWS



Canada Community Revitalization Fund: NPCA Funding announcement with Minister Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, and Niagara Centre MP Vance Badawey

- ❖ From *Yahoo!* to the *Toronto Star*, NPCA received plenty of positive media coverage in 2022, helping us build awareness about the critical work that we do and the importance of conservation in the Niagara Peninsula. Our top eight media stories alone attracted a total of nearly 70 million views!
- ❖ Those stories shone a spotlight on many of the achievements we have highlighted elsewhere in this report — such as implementing nature-friendly upgrades to Cave Springs Conservation Area, fighting the invasive European water chestnuts in the Welland River, collaborating on a wide range of restoration initiatives, updating our policies, and responding to the provincial legislative changes.
- ❖ These stories also highlighted the public value that our natural spaces provide. For example, as communities grappled with scorching summer temperatures, *The*

Weather Network turned to our NPCA experts to discuss the crucial role trees play in reducing urban heat islands. Additionally, our Ball’s Falls Conservation Area programs continued to garner a lot of public profile through local media.

- ❖ Meanwhile, *Yahoo!* featured a story about how the Ontario Heritage Trust is partnering with NPCA and the Bruce Trail Conservancy to expand the Niagara Twenty Valley Trail that will ultimately provide hikers access to a continuous 1,366 km network of trails.
- ❖ Our trails made other headlines as well. Four of *Niagara This Week’s* top five best hikes in West Niagara are found in NPCA conservation areas: Beamer Memorial, Cave Springs, Ball’s Falls, and Louth.

YEAR IN REVIEW

2022

WATCH THE NPCA 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW VIDEO



Follow us on social, scan the QR code above





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