

**NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
FULL AUTHORITY**

WELLAND

AGENDA

DECEMBER 12, 2007 – 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

BUSINESS:

(1) MINUTES - FULL AUTHORITY MEETING – NOVEMBER 21, 2007

Attached are the Minutes of the Full Authority meeting held November 21, 2007.

(2) BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

(3) DELEGATIONS

- a) Mr. & Mrs. Balasiuk have requested the opportunity to address the Board on behalf of Mr. Sergei Bucalov regarding his proposal to construct an addition to an existing dwelling in the floodplain of 8 Mile Creek in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Under Provincial Policy no new development is to be permitted in floodplain areas, however, the Authority's policy allows for a 20% increase in floor area to a maximum of 300 sq. ft. for existing structures subject to flood proofing requirements. Mr. Bucalov's proposal is to add 652 sq. ft. to an existing structure of 926 sq. ft., an increase of 70% in floor area. Please see attached letter from Mr. Kim Craitor, MPP
- b) Ms. Lisa Drynan has requested the opportunity to address the Board regarding her proposal to expand an existing dwelling located in the floodplain of 40 Mile Creek in the City of Hamilton (formerly Stoney Creek) from 1296 sq. ft. to 1742 sq. ft. Under Provincial Policy no new development is to be permitted in floodplain areas, however, the Authority's policy allows for a 20% increase in floor area to a maximum of 300 sq. ft. for existing structures subject to flood proofing requirements. Ms. Drynan's proposal is an increase of 34% in floor area.

(4) CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

(5) GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

(6) ACCOUNTS – NOVEMBER 2007 – REPORT NO. 92-07

Attached is Staff Report No. 92-07 outlining the list of accounts for November, 2007.

(7) **2008 CURRENT BUDGET – REGION OF NIAGARA - REPORT NO. 93-07**

Attached is Staff Report No. 93-07 regarding this matter.

(8) **POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF ONTARIO REG. 155/06 AND LAND USE PLANNING POLICY DOCUMENT - REPORT NO. 94-07**

Attached is Staff Report No. 94-07 addressing the proposed changes to the document.

(9) **WATER AVAILABILITY STUDY – REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - REPORT NO. 95-07**

Attached is Staff Report No. 95-07 with respect to this matter.

(10) **CONSERVATION LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY – REPORT NO. 88-07**

Attached is Report No. 88-07 regarding this matter. (DEFERRED FROM NOVEMBER)

(11) **2008 CONSERVATION AREAS FEES SCHEDULE – REPORT NO. 96-07**

Attached is Report No. 96-07 outlining the proposed conservation area fees for 2008.

(12) **BALL'S FALLS HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – REPORT NO. 97-07**

Attached is Report No. 97-07 regarding appointments for the Ball's Falls Heritage Advisory Committee.

(13) **PROJECT STATUS REPORT – REPORT NO. 98-07**

Attached is Staff Report No. 98-07 outlining the status of Authority projects.

(14) **OTHER BUSINESS**

(15) **IN-CAMERA – (a) SECTION 28 REGULATIONS STATUS REPORT – REPORT NO. CR-11-07**

Attached is confidential Report No. CR-11-07 regarding this matter.

ADJOURNMENT

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

WELLAND

NOVEMBER 21, 2007

7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

D. Ransom, (Chairman)
B. Baty (Vice-Chairman)
B. Bentley
G. Burroughs
B. Butters
T. Dalimonte
C. D'Angelo
A. Fevez
D. Goulbourne
B. Greenwood
B. Heit
B. Henderson
N. Johnson
B. Steckley

MEMBERS ABSENT:

D. DiFruscio (with regrets)

STAFF PRESENT:

A.L. Burt, General Manager
L. Sawatzky, Recording Secretary
T. McDougall, Executive Director Conservation Foundation
M. Stack, Director Communications
T. D'Amario, Director, Water Management
D. Baker, Director, Land Management

DELEGATIONS:

Rick Brady
John & Austin Kirkby
Dave & Grace Malinowski
Ron Tripp
Rene Landry
Brett Ruck
Dean Pedro

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mark Neufeld, Chair, Source Protection Committee
Chad Kizlyk
John Whyte

BUSINESS:

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He welcomed everyone in attendance and then requested that if anyone had a conflict of interest to declare it. Brian Heit declared a conflict with any items that included Telus or Talk Wireless.

MINUTES - FULL AUTHORITY MEETING –OCTOBER 17, 2007

There were no errors or omissions. The following resolution was presented.

FA-137-07

MOVED BY: B. Greenwood

SECONDED BY: T. Dalimonte

THAT: the Minutes of the Full Authority meeting held October 17, 2007, be received and approved as printed.

"CARRIED"

(2) BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

(3) DELEGATIONS

The Chairman advised that there were several delegations in attendance and introduced Mrs. Grace Malinowski and asked her to come forward for her presentation.

Mrs. Malinowski expressed concern with the present policy of the Authority that will not permit any development on her property since it is designated as wetland. She noted that she would like to farm the land and build a house. The General Manager advised that under the policies being recommended by staff, development would be permitted by the Authority on a limited portion of the property. The Chairman thanked Mrs. Malinowski for her presentation.

The Chairman then introduced Rick Brady and requested him to come forward with his presentation. Mr. Brady advised he was in attendance on behalf of the Niagara Home Builders Association. He provided the Board members with a copy of his presentation which he outlined in detail surrounding concerns regarding the Authority's Policies, Procedures & Guidelines for Regulation 155/06 and the land use planning policies. The Chairman thanked Mr. Brady for his presentation.

The Chairman then called upon Ron Tripp, Director of Infrastructure Services for the Town of Fort Erie to come forward for his presentation. Mr. Tripp was also commenting on concerns with the Authority's Policies, Procedures & Guidelines for Regulation 155/06 and the land use planning policies as they relate to municipal drains. He also provided the Board with a copy of his presentation. Following his presentation there was a question period, after which the Chairman thanked Mr. Tripp for his presentation.

The Chairman introduced Brett Ruck, Drainage Superintendent for the Town of Fort Erie and Rene Landry, Drainage Superintendent for the City of Port Colborne, who were both in attendance for the Authority's Policies, Procedures & Guidelines for Regulation 155/06 and the land use planning policies as they relate to municipal drains.

The Chairman introduced the final delegation for the meeting, Austin and John Kirkby of Niagara-on-the-Lake who were in attendance as landowners who are concerned with the potential impact of the Authority's Policies, Procedures & Guidelines for Regulation 155/06 and the land use planning policies. The Chairman thanked the Kirkbys for their attendance and presentation.

The Chairman suggested that since those who were in attendance were there regarding Item No. 7, it would be appropriate, with the leave of the Board, to deal with this item next. The Board members agreed.

(4) **POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF ONTARIO REG. 155/06 AND LAND USE PLANNING POLICY DOCUMENT - REPORT NO. 86-07**

The Director, Water Management outlined the report in detail and responded to questions. The General Manager provided additional information and clarification on the policy interpretation. A lengthy discussion took place on some of the wording in the document and the Board members felt that it needed further editing.

A question was raised on whether staff could provide the Board with a copy of where the existing lots of record are located and the General Manager advised that it would be prepared.

The following resolution was presented.

FA-138-07

MOVED BY: G. Burroughs

SECONDED BY: B. Dalimonte

THAT: Report No. 86-07 regarding the Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for Administration of Ontario Reg. 155/06 and Land Use Planning Policy Document be received.

"CARRIED"

(5) **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman thanked the Board for their continuing commitment to conservation.

(6) **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

The General Manager reminded the members of the upcoming Conservation Achievement Awards reception on November 28th at the Four Points Sheraton Suites in Thorold at 7:00 p.m. He encouraged the members to attend if at all possible and noted that the individual Award of Merit would be presented to Mrs. Angie Harry and her family in memory of the late Gord Harry and the Friends of 1 Mile Creek group will be receiving the Group Award of Merit. He noted that those attending should advise Mary Stack at the end of the meeting.

The General Manager reminded the members that the next meeting of the Authority is scheduled for Wednesday, December 12th.

ACCOUNTS – OCTOBER, 2007 – REPORT NO. 85-07

There were no questions with respect to the accounts. The following resolution was presented.

FA-139-07

MOVED BY: T. Dalimonte

SECONDED BY: G. Burroughs

THAT: The list of accounts for the month of October, 2007, in the amount of \$971,549.90 be received and approved.

"CARRIED"

(8) REQUEST FROM TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE ON PERMIT FEES- REPORT NO. 87-07

The Director, Water Management outlined the report and the General Manager provided further clarification. After responding to questions, the following resolution was presented.

FA-140-07

MOVED BY: B. Steckley

SECONDED BY: C. D'Angelo

THAT: Report No. 87-07 regarding the request from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake on Permit Fees be received.

"CARRIED"

(9) CONSERVATION LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY- REPORT NO. 88-07

It was agreed that due to the detail of this report and the late hour, this matter would be deferred to the next meeting.

(10) ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD HEARING – REEB QUARRY – REPORT NO. 89-07

The Director, Land Management outlined the staff report noting that the Authority appeared at a hearing the previous day to have this matter dismissed and come back with a final proposal. As a result, the hearing will reconvene in February. He also noted that the Authority is seeking cost recovery. The following resolution was presented.

FA-141-07

MOVED BY: B. Heit

SECONDED BY: T. Dalimonte

THAT: Report NO. 89-07 regarding the Ontario Municipal Board Hearing – Reeb Quarry be received for information purposes.

"CARRIED"

(11) BALL'S FALLS CENTRE FOR CONSERVATION – UPDATE – REPORT NO. 90-07

The Director, Land Management outlined the progress of the Centre to date noting he would be attending a meeting the next day to obtain more accurate information on the completion date. The following resolution was presented.

FA-142-07

MOVED BY: A. Fevez

SECONDED BY: B. Greenwood

THAT: Report No. 90-07 regarding the Ball's Falls Centre for Conservation – Update be received for information purposes.

"CARRIED"

PROJECT STATUS REPORT – REPORT NO. 91-07

There were no questions with respect to this report. The following resolution was presented.

FA-143-07

MOVED BY: B. Henderson

SECONDED BY: B. Steckley

THAT: Report No. 91-07, outlining the status of Authority projects be received for information.

"CARRIED"

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

IN-CAMERA - VIOLATION AND COMPLAINT STATUS REPORT – REPORT NO. CR-10-07

In accordance with Authority policy, the following resolutions were presented.

FA-144-07

MOVED BY: B. Steckley

SECONDED BY: T. Dalimonte

THAT: this meeting do now move in-camera.

Received at 10:07 p.m.

"CARRIED"

Authority Meeting - Minutes
November 21, 2007 – continued

FA-145-07

MOVED BY: G. Burroughs

SECONDED BY: C. D'Angelo

THAT: this meeting do now move back into open session.

Received at 10:08 p.m.

“CARRIED”

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the following resolution was presented.

FA-146-07

MOVED BY: B. Heit

SECONDED BY: A. Fevez

THAT: this meeting do now adjourn.

Received at 10:09 p.m.

“CARRIED”

"L. Sawatzky, Recording Secretary

D. Ransom, Chairman"



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TO: Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: January 2, 2008

RE: Accounts November 2007 - Report No.92-07

Attached is the list of accounts for the month of November 2007 in the amount of \$315,959.47

Recommendation:

The list of accounts for the month of November, 2007, in the amount of \$315,959.47 be received and approved.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Andrew L. Burt, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: December 5, 2007

SUBJECT: 2008 Current Budget - Region of Niagara – Report No. 93-07

Under the preliminary 2008 Current Budget as approved by the Board at the September 19 meeting, the 2008 levy to be assessed to the Region of Niagara for the Current Budget was set at \$4,202,074. This is an increase of \$726,662 from 2006, the significant components of which are new programs noted below:

Debt charge increase	\$232,800
Tree Conservation By-Law Implementation (includes staff accommodation)	\$227,500
Planning MOU & Regulations (includes staff accommodation)	\$179,500
Continuation of Water Festival Public Day	<u>\$ 25,000</u>
Total	\$664,800

The Region of Niagara has requested that increases in 2008 be limited to 2.1%, excluding fixed costs such as debt charges. Excluding the debt charges, the cost increase to the Region of Niagara would be \$432,000 (12.4%). The Conservation Authority's budget was submitted to the Region and Authority staff have participated in the CMT Budget review process. The recommendation of CMT on the 2008 Current Budget to Regional Council has proposed a funding allocation of \$322,077 made up as follows:

<u>Component</u> <u>Shortfall</u>	<u>Authority Budget</u>	<u>CMT</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Tree Conservation By-Law	\$227,500	\$116,700	\$110,800
Planning MOU & Regs.	\$179,500	\$180,377	(\$877)
Water Festival Public Day	<u>\$ 25,000</u>	<u>\$ 25,000</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
Total	\$432,000	\$322,077	\$109,923

When the Conservation Authority was initially approached by the Region in 2006 regarding assuming responsibility for implementation of the Tree Conservation By-Law, we were advised by Regional staff responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the By-Law that 1.5 staff were involved in the program. The recommendation of Authority staff has always been that if this program is to be assumed by the Conservation Authority, it is important that there be appropriate staff numbers and expertise dedicated to the program. This would include a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) who would be responsible for the program and would provide the technical expertise required in the review of permit applications and forest management plans, the technical support for information requests from landowners and work with agricultural organizations, conservation clubs and others to promote good forest management practices. In addition, it would include a technician position which would provide the required program administration, support and promotion under the direction of the RPF position.

On the basis of the funding allocation proposed by CMT, it will not be possible to assign 2 staff to

this new program and as such I am concerned about the ability of the Conservation Authority to adequately and appropriately respond to the program demands.

I have reviewed our Current Budget estimates to determine if there is an opportunity to reduce any proposed expenditures. One of the new cost components in our 2008 budget was accommodation for staff related to the program responsibilities being transferred. After reconsideration of this, I believe we can significantly reduce this cost factor by locating staff in the portable structures which are attached to the main office building. The portables are presently used to house Authority archived files, program equipment and some materials of the building custodian. I estimate the costs to ready this area for staff use and to relocate the files and program equipment to other facilities to be \$23,000, a savings of \$28,000 from our budget estimate. This assumes that the Region will not assess a lease charge for the use of this space.

In addition, with recent staffing changes at the Region, I foresee filling the technician position at more junior level. With these changes, the Authority's funding requirement will be revised to:

a) Tree Conservation By-law	\$202,000
b) Planning Services	\$165,000
c) Water Festival Public Day	<u>\$ 25,000</u>
Total	\$392,000

This is a reduction of \$40,000 from our approved preliminary Current Budget. Under the funding allocations proposed by CMT, the Authority's allocation was \$322,077 leaving a shortfall of \$70,000 in funding.

As previously noted, while the Tree Conservation By-Law is a new program, I am concerned that the level of funding proposed by CMT for 2008 might not allow the Authority to adequately and appropriately respond to the program needs and to be pro-active in its implementation.

I have looked at the possibility of directing funds allocated for the new Planning Services to cover the Tree Conservation By-Law program costs but I am concerned about the negative impacts on the delivery of this program.

I note that our present planning services turn-around times, without the additional volumes expected under the MOU, have become inordinately and unacceptably long and we are now finding review times averaging 3 months on most submissions. This is a significant increase from our corporate target of 1 month. Unless additional staff resources are assigned to this program, the review times will further increase which will not be well received by individuals and developers alike. With the signing of the Planning Services MOU, it was the Authority's expectation, as we had previously advised the Region, that the additional volume of work to be directed to the Conservation Authority would be supported by appropriate staff resources. We had initially indicated that on the basis of our knowledge, this would be 2 staff but after further discussions with Planning Dept. staff we have reduced this to 1 staff. In the 2008 Budget, it was noted that excluding any consideration of the planning transfer from the Region, 1 additional staff position was required to deal with the increased planning services work load, much of which can be attributed to the expanded regulations enacted by the Province in mid-2006.

Recognizing one of the objectives of the Planning Services Review and the recommended transfer of responsibilities is to expedite planning services delivery, initiating the transfer of responsibilities but not providing the necessary staff support to ensure the efficiencies are achieved is self defeating.

There are a number of options available to the Authority including, but not limited to:

- 1) Request the Region provide the additional funding required (\$70,000).
- 2) Decline the assumption of the Tree Conservation By-Law responsibilities – would reduce the Authority's 2008 Current Budget levy to the Region by \$202,000
- 3) Re-direct funding from Planning Services to the Tree Conservation By-law – would result in longer delays in the delivery of Planning Services

The direction of the Board is respectfully requested.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. 93-07 regarding the 2008 Current Budget – Region of Niagara be received.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Andrew L. Burt, General Manager/ Secretary-Treasurer

TO: Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: January 2, 2008

RE: Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for Administration of Ontario Reg. 155/06 and Land Use Planning Policy Document - Report No. 94-07

This report is a follow-up from Report No.86-07 concerning the Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for Administration of Ontario Reg. 155/06 and Land Use Planning Policy Document, considered by the Board at the November 21, 2007 Authority meeting.

At that meeting, a number of issues and concerns were presented by delegations and subsequently discussed by the Board Members. Below are staff recommendations pertaining to these items with the corresponding revisions highlighted on the pertinent sections of the policy document which are attached.

Page 14 – Watershed Planning – Implementation Strategies

Concern was expressed over the part of the definition of Regulatory Measures “Measures that control an individual’s freedom to act ...”. NPCA staff agree that this terminology is not necessary in the context of Watershed Planning and have removed that entire sentence in that section.

Page 39 – Municipal Drains – Section 3.23

The terminology in the first section has been revised to clearly recognize that municipalities are responsible for drains under the Drainage Act.

Section a), page 39, and section b), page 40 have been revised as follows:

- Where no permits are required, the wording has been revised to indicate “no permits or studies are required” in order to clarify that the NPCA will not be requesting any studies under the “no permit” scenario.
- For Class E drains, the policy document has been revised to state that a permit for maintenance on Class E drains would only be required where the proposed works would “significantly” impact the watercourse. Although the term “significant” is subjective, it will provide some flexibility to the Conservation Authority where only minor impacts are anticipated. The determination of what is deemed “significant” will be made on a site specific basis.

Section c), page 40 has been revised to clarify when further studies may be required and the extent of these studies. In addition, the policy document notes that the Conservation Authority may consider cost sharing of any requested studies. As the extent of studies will be site specific, the policy document does not indicate a cost sharing formula or a maximum/minimum contribution from the NPCA.

Page 45 – Existing Lots of Record – Wetlands – Section 3.24.2

As requested by the Board, a map illustrating the vacant lots of record (approximately 400) located within a wetland feature where there may be the potential for development (based on existing municipal zoning) is attached.

In this section, reference to “vacant” lots of record has been added to ensure that this policy is used as intended and not to allow for further or expanded development in wetland features. Policies with respect to expanded development are included in other sections of this document.

With respect to ownership and whether this clause is based on the current owner or “runs with the land”, it is the staff recommendation that the latter policy apply. The alternative of allowing only current owners the opportunity to develop these lands may compel the current owners to develop the property prior to selling it in order to achieve full value. Many wetlands that may not have been developed for some time or not at all could therefore become developed as a result of adopting a policy that does not run with the land.

General

NPCA staff believe the final draft policy document provides the flexibility that allows maximum ability of drainage and land use while maintaining the environmental responsibility of the NPCA. Although it is recognized that some of the sections are subjective, staff believe these to be necessary to keep the document sufficiently generic that would allow applicability for most situations. In the rare circumstance where the interpretation of staff and any applicant differ and cannot be adequately resolved at the staff level, the applicant will always have the opportunity to present their respective issues to the Board for their decision and direction.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. 94-07 regarding the Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for Administration of Ontario Reg. 155/06 and Land Use Planning Policy Document be received; and

That the Policy Document dated December 12, 2007 be approved and adopted; and further

That the Policy Document be forwarded to all watershed municipalities and other interested parties.

Prepared by: Tony D’Amario, P. Eng., Director, Water Management

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Andrew L. Burt, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer



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TO: Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: January 2, 2008

RE: Water Availability Study - Request for Proposals – Report No. 95-07

Authority staff recently issued a Request for Proposal to prepare water availability studies for the 14 Watershed Planning Areas (WSPA). The water availability studies are part of the Source Water Protection Tier 1 Water Budget project and are to determine evapotranspiration and the water available for surface water flow and groundwater recharge on a monthly basis.

NPCA watershed municipal water supplies are entirely sourced from Great Lakes sources and are not considered water quantity stressed by the MOE. As a result, the NPCA Tier 1 Water Budget focuses on issues related to non-municipal water users such as rurally serviced residents (e.g. private groundwater wells), non-Great Lake surface water takers (e.g. agricultural and golf irrigation) and impacts to aquatic systems. The overall Tier 1 Water Budget consists of multiple components requiring analysis to determine if each WSPA is stressed. These include Permits to Take Water (PTTW), private wells, agricultural uses, horizontal groundwater inflow/outflow and water availability per WSPA.

The NPCA Tier 1 Water Budget is being funded by the Province of Ontario and the work program was developed by NPCA based on Ministry of Environment guidance and approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources who will be completing a final review of the study. A staff recommendation to retain a consultant will be presented at December 12, 2007 meeting for approval. The consultant is to begin work January 7, 2008 with project completion scheduled for July 31, 2008.

Recommendation:

Report No. 95-07 regarding the Water Availability Study - Request for Proposals be received.

Prepared by: Tony D'Amario, P. Eng. Director, Water Management

Respectfully Submitted by:

Andrew L. Burt, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: November 15, 2007

SUBJECT: Conservation Land Acquisition Strategy – Report No. 88-07

Over the past 48 years, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has worked with a number of groups, organizations and foundations to secure more than 2,830 hectares (7,000 acres) of natural landscapes throughout the watershed.

Current growth trends suggest that over the next 25-years, an additional 56,000 households will be required to accommodate population growth in the Region of Niagara. Although the Official Plans and growth strategies for the Region of Niagara, the City of Hamilton and Haldimand County will focus urban development around existing centres, these new residents will be placing additional demands on existing greenspace and natural areas.

Significant natural areas and corridors must be protected to ensure the long term sustainability of fragile ecosystems. In early 2006, the Conservation Authority began a project to map sensitive natural areas, at risk of being lost. Using current information, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority conducted an exercise to target candidate lands for protection. The analysis identified natural features along with associated corridors and critical buffers. Overall, 804 parcels totaling approximately 7,400 hectares (18,300 acres) located across the Authority's watershed are recommended for protection.

The estimated cost for fee simple acquisition of all these properties is estimated at \$42 million (2007 dollars). It is emphasized that the proposed acquisition program is being recommended as a multi-year program to be implemented subject to annual budget limitations. It is anticipated that the project costs will be significantly reduced through alternative acquisition methods such as land gifting, bequests, conservation easements, land trading and donations. These savings will also reduce the time required to achieve the protection targets.

This strategy is intended to be an open and flexible document. In order to maintain effectiveness, the action plan for this document includes recommendations for an annual summary with a major review every 5 years.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. 88-07, regarding the Conservation Land Acquisition Strategy for the Watershed of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority be received; and

That the multi-year land acquisition program for the NPCA watershed be approved and implemented subject to annual budget limitations.

Prepared by: Darcy B. Baker - Director, Land Management

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Andrew L. Burt, General Manager/ Secretary-Treasurer



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TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: December 6, 2007

SUBJECT: 2008 Conservation Areas Fee Schedule – Report No. 96-07

Traditionally the NPCA has used one standard fee schedule for all four revenue generating Conservation areas. Over the past five years, park development and infrastructure upgrades have improved the visitor facilities. The result is distinct conservation areas that staff believe warrant specific fees to reflect the level of service offered, recreational opportunities and market location. The 2008 fee schedule has been developed with these factors in mind.

Ball's Falls Conservation Area

Ball's Falls has experienced the largest change in the level of service. In 2008, the Ball's Falls Centre for Conservation will be opened. This facility provides park orientation, visitor services and new rental space for groups and community events.

Day use visitors will have new, modern facilities and access to display galleries. The exhibits focus on the natural and cultural resources at Ball's Falls along with principles of watershed management and energy conservation. Day use fees will be increased to reflect the new level of service.

Educational programming will be enhanced by the presence of the new Centre. Programs will be offered year-round, and special efforts are underway to expand general interest and adult programming.

The Centre provides two new rental facilities for community groups, meetings and special events. A community gallery will house temporary exhibits related to Ball's Falls, the Niagara Escarpment and the Twenty Mile Creek Watershed. The new spaces complement the existing church, barn and field centre rental facilities.

All of these changes will impact the way people experience Ball's Falls. There are a number of local residents who only use the trails at Ball's Falls and will see these new fees as a significant increase. In order to address these concerns, staff recommend a trial program where a trail membership will be offered to those residents who only wish to hike on the trails through the area. The membership would be discounted from the annual membership and would not allow access to the Centre for Conservation or any of the exhibits.

Binbrook Conservation Area

Binbrook is a day use area, on the edge of a rapidly growing section of Hamilton. An expanded swimming beach, children's splash pad, rental equipment, and children's fishing area, have transformed this conservation area. This is the largest natural area in the eastern portion of the City of Hamilton, drawing from Ancaster, Stoney Creek, East Mountain and Caledonia. Day use rates have been raised to reflect the increased level of visitor services.

Chippawa Creek and Long Beach Conservation Areas

Chippawa Creek and Long Beach have focused their improvements on the aging campground infrastructure. Day use does not play a significant role in either park, however staff are continuing to work on incentives to bring visitors out. Staff recommend eliminating the free day-use at Long Beach, replacing it with a day use membership, tied into the Conservation Authority's season pass.

When comparing 2007 fees from local campgrounds, the NPCA is at the high end of camping, based on comparable infrastructure and services. In 2008, and beyond, the NPCA must take care not to price camping beyond what the market will bear. The proposed increases for 2008 are aimed at bringing the campsite fees in-line with local market, and ensuring fees reflect the value of service being offered.

Season Pass

The season pass offered visitors access to our four gated conservation areas between May 24th and the Labour Day weekend. Ball's Falls was the only area offering services beyond Labour Day, however the facilities were closed after Thanksgiving.

With the opening of the new Centre for Conservation, and expansion of the Binbrook operations to year-round programming, the season has extended to the entire year. Staff recommend that the season pass be extended to an annual pass or membership, as some neighbouring Conservation Authorities are offering. The new format would improve the level of service by providing automatic access to all areas with electronic gates. Staff would also use marketing incentives to improve sales and encourage visitors to explore all of the NPCA properties, rather than keeping to their favourite local spot.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. 96-07 regarding the 2008 Conservation Areas Fee Schedule be received and the recommendations contained therein approved.

Prepared By: D. Baker, Director, Land Management

**Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Andrew L. Burt, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer**

Proposed 2008 Fee Schedule

Ball's Falls

Day Use	2007	2008
Adults	3.50	5.50
Seniors	2.50	4.00
Students	2.50	4.00
Max Car	12.00	15.00
Off-season (per car)	3.50	5.00
Bus (over 20/vehicle)	60.00	70.00
Annual Membership	60.00	70/60.00

Ball's Falls Facilities

Field Centre	2007	2008
Organized Groups	80.00	80.00

Picnic Pavilion	2007	2008
Weekends	60.00	60.00
Weekdays	30.00	30.00

Historical Tours	2007	2008
School Group/person	3.00	4.00
Adult Group/person	4.00	5.50
Minimum Tour Fee	40.00	45.00

Group Camping	2007	2008
Site Fee	20.00	20.00
Per Person / Night	2.50	4.00
Minimum Charge	35.00	40.00

Outdoor Wedding	2007	2008
"v" area by parking lot (25 people maximum)		
Wedding only	390.00	425.00
Wedding & Barn Reception -with no alcohol	740.00	815.00
Wedding & Barn Reception With alcohol	850.00	935.00

Ball's Falls Facilities

Church Rental	2007	2008
Wedding	435.00	450.00
Church Service	85.00	85.00
Security Deposit	150.00	200.00

Barn Rental	2007	2008
Non-Wedding (Fri/Sat)	435.00	450.00
Non-Wedding (Sun-Thurs)	315.00	330.00
Education (weekday)	80.00	80.00
Reception – with alcohol	550.00	600.00
Reception – no alcohol	440.00	485.00
Security Deposit	150.00	250.00

Centre for Conservation Multi Purpose Room	--	2008
Non-Wedding (Fri/Sat)		650.00
Non-Wedding (Sun-Thurs)		425.00
Education/non-profit meeting		225.00
Sun – Thurs. 5 hour max Small ed.room		120.00
Wedding Reception–with alcohol		1000.00
Wedding Reception– no alcohol		875.00
Security Deposit		500.00
MPR Packages		
Church Wedding & MPR Reception - with alcohol		1400.00
Church Wedding & MPR Reception – no alcohol		1275.00
Packages	2007	2008
Church Wedding & Barn Reception -no alcohol	840.00	900.00
Church Wedding & Barn Reception– with alcohol	950.00	1000.00
Barn Wedding Service Reception -no alcohol	520.00	620.00
Barn Wedding Service & Reception–alcohol	720.00	750.00



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E-mail: npca@conservation-niagara.on.ca

TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: December 6, 2007

SUBJECT: Appointments–Ball’s Falls Heritage Advisory Committee–Report No. 97-07

Ball’s Falls Heritage Advisory Committee members, Mike Hunter and Fred High will both complete their three year term of office on December 31, 2007. These individuals have both served 2 terms and have indicated they would like to continue to participate on the Committee.

Mike Hunter and Fred High have been involved in the implementation of the Ball’s Falls master plan and are very familiar with the construction of the Centre and the exhibit design project, both of which are now moving into the final phase.

Traditionally appointments to the Committee have been for a 3 year period. Given their knowledge of and dedication to guiding the site changes now underway, these members are a valuable resource for the advisory committee and the Conservation Authority. Accordingly, staff recommend that Mike Hunter and Fred High be appointed to the Ball’s Falls Heritage Advisory Committee for 3 year term effective January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Mike Hunter and Fred High be appointed to the Ball’s Falls Heritage Advisory Committee for a 3 year term effective January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2010.

Prepared by: Christine Hayward, Curator, Ball’s Falls Conservation Area

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Andrew L. Burt, General Manager/ Secretary-Treasurer

TO: Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: January 2, 2008

RE: PROJECT STATUS REPORT - REPORT NO. 98-07

WATER MANAGEMENT

Binbrook Reservoir – City of Hamilton (Glanbrook)

1) Reservoir Water Levels

The reservoir water levels for the last 30 days have generally fluctuated between 649.4 feet and 649.2 feet (for reference the dam holding level is 650.50 feet). NPCA staff continue to monitor the reservoir water levels daily.

2) The spillway reconstruction project is well underway, including the relocation of existing trees to allow for an access road, construction of the access road and preliminary grading for the spillway armour protection.

Shriner's Creek – City of Niagara Falls

The 2003 Shriner's Creek Study had recommended that the existing NPCA owned stormwater detention facility (known as Dyke B) located west of Kalar Road on the Shriner's Creek W5-4 Tributary be modified in order to improve water quality, attenuate flows, and provide year round base flow to the Shriner's Creek system. The NPCA has retained the firm of Totten Sims Hubicki in order to redesign the stormwater facility. A preliminary design has been reviewed by the NPCA and has been sent back to TSH for revision. Final design drawings are expected in early December.

NPCA 'Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alteration to Shorelines and Watercourses' Permits

The NPCA regulates construction around watercourses, wetlands, valley lands, shorelines, and floodplains. The NPCA has currently approved 69 permit applications for the 2007 calendar year. The NPCA anticipates that before the end of 2007, the NPCA will have issued 74 permits.

As a result of the implementation of the Generic Regulations in May 2006, the NPCA has seen a dramatic increase in the number of permit applications that are being submitted to this office. Listed below is the number of permits issued each year going back to 2000:

2007 – 69 permits issued (74 projected)
2006 – 44 permits issued
2005 – 33 permits issued
2004 – 30 permits issued
2003 – 30 permits issued
2002 – 27 permits issued
2001 – 25 permits issued

2000 – 29 permits issued

Lake Erie North Shore Watershed Plan

Background research and writing has been temporarily put on hold to focus on finishing up 15-16-18 Mile Creeks Watershed Plan and South Niagara Falls Watershed Plan. Research and writing of Lake Erie North Shore Background and Characterization will recommence later this year.

Central Welland River Watershed Plan

Background research and writing has been temporarily put on hold to focus on finishing up 15-16-18 Mile Creeks Watershed Plan and South Niagara Falls Watershed Plan. Research and writing of Central Welland River Background and Characterization will recommence later this year.

Fifteen-Sixteen-Eighteen Mile Creeks Watershed Plan

The Watershed Plan was presented to the public on Thursday November 29th at the Town of Lincoln Council Chambers. Approximately 15 people showed up and overall feed back was positive. The Watershed Plan has been posted for staff commenting and any necessary changes will be made in spring 2008.

South Niagara Falls Watershed Plan

The Steering Committee is set to meet on Wednesday December 5th. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the draft Watershed Plan. This watershed plan will be presented to the public early next year.

Source Water Protection

Letters of appointment were sent out to all the new Source Protection Committee (SPC) members. The first SPC meeting will be held on December 10. Mr. Brian Baty will be the designated Source Protection Authority liaison at the meeting. Minutes of the meeting will be posted on the NPCA source protection website.

Technical work: The Tier 1 Water Budget is progress steadily. A board report on the selection of a consultant to complete water availability modeling is attached. To meet the deadlines imposed by the province (MNR) the selected consultant must start the work in early January. The consultant's work will form a major part of the Tier 1 Water Budget. NPCA staff are still assisting the Niagara Region with the Intake Protection Zone (IPZ) studies. The IPZ work is however progressing slower than desired.

Natural Heritage Areas Inventory Update

Staff are very busy entering the data from the 400 properties visited over the course of the field season. More than 60 different Ecological Land Classification Communities have been noted in Port Colborne and South Niagara Falls and more than 40 have been noted in Wainfleet. By far the most common community found to date is the Red Maple Mineral Deciduous Swamp Type. Many significant plant species have been recorded to date including Spotted Wintergreen, Butternut, Round-leaved Green Brier, Water Willow, and White Wood Aster.

The project's reptile and amphibian consultants, Rob Tervo and Amy Brant, uncovered many interesting finds this field season. Some of the more notable reptiles and amphibians found

were the five-lined skink, eastern massasauga rattlesnake, fowler's toad, spotted turtles, Blanding's turtles, northern dusky salamanders and Allegheny mountain dusky salamander.

Bob Curry, the project's birding, butterfly, dragonfly and damselfly consultant, discovered 52 different species of butterflies, 48 species of dragonflies and damselflies, at least 10 of which are new biological records for Niagara. He also noted significant birds such as the tufted titmouse and the hooded warbler.

Bert Murphy, the geological consultant for the project has submitted the geology report for the Port Colborne area of the project and staff will utilize this report in the compilation of project's final report.

The project's steering committee meeting was held in November. The meeting highlighted and updated the committee on the 2007 field season. It was well attended. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in February 2008.

The project's implementation committee meeting is scheduled for December 6th. It is anticipated that this meeting will also be well attended.

The project is still actively seeking grant monies from environmental organizations. Two more funding applications are being prepared for delivery in December 2007, and several more are being prepared for the New Year.

Water Quality Program

The fall benthic invertebrate sampling has been completed. Fall samples have been taken at several stations located along the north shore of Lake Erie as part of the watershed plans. Stream quality data for many of these watercourses is very limited or non-existent and the information collected in 2007 will assist in filling important data gaps for these watersheds. In addition, samples have been taken at the Hamilton International Airport as part of the 2007 annual biomonitoring assessment. Identification of all samples will be commencing in December. The NPCA has also completed the 2007 portion of the benthic invertebrate Temporal Study with the Ministry of Environment.

The remaining groundwater wells from the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) will be sampled in December as part of the 2007 monitoring. Samples taken in November from the other PGMN wells have been analyzed for several parameters including nutrients, metals, microbiology and general chemistry, and data analysis is currently underway.

The NPCA is currently selecting members for the Welland River Eutrophication Study Committee for 2008. This Committee will be made up of partner agency representatives to oversee implementation of the Welland River Eutrophication study under the auspices of the Remedial Action Plan Team.

Niagara River Remedial Action Plan

Contaminated Sediments:

The third meeting of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) for Lyon's Creek East was held on November 27, 2007. The committee received an informal presentation Rein Jaagumagi, Senior Environmental Specialist from Golder Associates Ltd. about the site characterization study and the ecological risk assessment. Although weather hampered attendance, a lengthy question and answer session provided important insight or the CLC.

Niagara River RAP / Welland River Restoration

Staff have met with representatives from Ducks Unlimited and planning is underway for at least 3 or 4 wetland restoration projects to improve water quality and habitat potential throughout the Welland River watershed in 2008.

Planning is also underway on projects for spring and summer of 2008. Project highlights include a livestock restriction fencing and solar alternate watering source project, a combination wetland restoration and reforestation project as well as 4 riparian restoration and buffer projects.

Two demonstration projects were completed in a new development on the Welland River in Welland. The projects consisted of the creation of plots of native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees, in order to increase wildlife habitat and improve the quality of the water flowing off of these yards. The purpose of these projects was to encourage residents in this area to leave a buffer between their lawn and the river. The benefits of using native vegetation were explained to residents.

The year 2007 has been an excellent year in the Welland River watershed. Projects include:

- 5 manure management/Best Management Practices
- 1 trickle irrigation project with a water savings of 6,493,500 gallons
- Approximately 52,000 native trees and shrubs planted over 64 acres including 4 acres of restored wetlands
- Over 1 km of riparian restoration

Watershed Restoration

Staff attended the Environmental Farm Plan Greencover Workshop in Mississauga. The work shop showcased many innovative projects completed throughout the province. NPCA restoration projects included three Greencover Canada partnered projects this year. Some form of Greencover funding is expected to be available in 2008 as uptake throughout the province was generally lower than other Farm Plan funding categories resulting in surplus funds.

Staff met with Ducks Unlimited representatives regarding a proposed three year partnership project through Trillium Foundation funding that will see restoration staff receive wetland and Permit to Take Water training as well as provide additional project dollars for wetland projects throughout the watershed (not limited to the Niagara River AOC.) The aim of the project is to build capacity within the NPCA and the community to expand upon wetland restoration and conservation expertise. Funding approval is expected before March 2008.

A wetland project that was started in 2006 with the digging of the wetland was continued this spring and summer. Staff planted native aquatic vegetation in and around the wetland to increase habitat, help with water filtration and improve water quality. In addition, the outside and surrounding area of the wetland was seeded with native wildflowers and grasses appropriate for the conditions of the property. Two wood duck boxes, donated by Ducks

Unlimited, were erected at the site in order to encourage wood ducks to nest and to use the wetland and creek nearby.

Projects completed through General Restoration this year include:

- 1 stream fencing project with crossing
- 400 meters of windbreak planting
- 5 wetland projects totaling 4 + acres
- 1 shoreline erosion control & habitat enhancement
- 1 trickle irrigation project saving approximately 2 million gallons of water

Twenty Mile Creek Restoration

Staff have been busy working on year end activities and lining up projects for 2008. Tentative projects include several acres of reforestation, a grassed waterway and a trickle irrigation project.

A meeting of the Twenty Mile Creek Implementation Committee is planned for January 2008.

Projects completed in Twenty Mile Creek this year include:

- 5 manure storages
- 2 milk-house washwater treatment systems
- 2 grassed waterways
- 1 stream fencing
- 1 hedgerow planting
- 1 reforestation project totaling 3 acres
- 1 gully erosion control

Twelve Mile Creek Restoration

Staff is investigating the feasibility of remediating a failing berm and overflow structure on an on-line pond along a warm-water stream above Shorthills Provincial Park, to prevent a likely spring collapse that would flush sediment into the important fish habitat downstream. The structural work will happen in December or January, with the buffer creation, shoreline naturalization and habitat creation waiting until spring.

Niagara College Ecosystem Restoration students are working with staff on a restoration study project at the Nature Conservancy's Lathrop Property, an important headwater site known for its seeps and springs. In addition to researching the restoration of old fields on the site, the project will address invasive fish species (threats to native Brook Trout and amphibians), and thermal pollution issues, and build on past student research. Results of their work will be incorporated into an NPCA project, in partnership with NRC and others.

Other new projects currently under development include a wetland creation in the floodplain of a headwater of Terrace Creek, to filter overland runoff, enlarge floodplain capacity, and improve fish habitat. Two landowners in the sensitive Upper Twelve Mile Creek area have expressed interest in improving stream buffers on their properties. One of these will include reforestation of about five acres of lawn.

Niagara College Ecosystem Restoration students enthusiastically planted hundreds of acorns, potted trees and shrubs, and wetland wildflower plugs to complete this year's work at Site 9 of the Lower Twelve Mile Creek restoration work on OPG lands. Site 6 will see large stock trees planted by Trees Unlimited this week. As this greenbelt is much used by walkers and cyclists, information signage about the restoration activities will be installed shortly by OPG. The signs have OPG contact information, project description, as well as partnership (OPG, NPCA, Green Committee of St. Catharines, and Land Care Niagara) logos.

Completed and ongoing projects for Twelve Mile Creek Watershed in 2007 include:

Reforestation and Headwater Buffering projects:

- 8 projects totaling 15.2 acres
- 7540 tree and shrub seedlings
- 3500 grass & wildflower plugs
- 8 kg direct seeding

1 Butterfly Meadow project

- 1,400 grass and wildflower plugs, 50 trees and shrubs

1 Nutrient Reduction Stream Restoration project:

Aeration of on-line pond to reduce nutrients in water and sediments from upstream farm runoff.

2 Dispersion Sandwich and Wetland projects:

Filtering tile and overland drainage to reduce nutrients before water reaches stream system.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Watershed Restoration

The Landsdowne Pond and Outlet Assessment has been completed for One Mile Creek. Staff are preparing recommendations and an implementation plan for the Board for early in 2008.

The Friends of One Mile Creek were honoured at the Conservation Achievement Awards ceremony this year with the Award of Merit for their ongoing efforts to improve One Mile Creek. The group, now 60 members strong, were thrilled with the special recognition and will continue working with the NPCA and NOTL staff and the community on behalf of One Mile Creek.

Projects in Niagara-on-the-Lake this year included a riparian buffer planting, a manure storage, and an erosion control project.

The new Restoration Technician for NOTL watersheds will begin working on January 2 in the New Year.

ECO School Program

2007 saw the delivery of the ECO School program to 28 different schools throughout the watershed, from Dunnville to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Of these 28 schools, 5 were re-applicants. Staff from the NPCA conducted site visits, prepared the site and assisted each school with the planting. The school was then responsible for the maintenance of the plot (i.e. watering, weeding and completion of monitoring journal). Staff also conducted site visits during the summer and fall months, to monitor and ensure the success of the plots. Staff are now looking to recognize each participating school by presenting them with a plaque for their school. Staff are already receiving applications for the 2008 program.

Three public workshops were held in 2007 to increase knowledge and awareness about the benefits of using native plants and also to learn more about the Conservation Authority's Quality Program. The workshops were held in Port Colborne, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls at local schools. Landowners were given a copy of the NPCA's Native Plant Guide and were given the opportunity to plant native wildflower seeds, build blue bird boxes and speak directly to NPCA staff about native plants. The workshop also offered information about the Niagara River RAP, Water quality in Niagara and information about the NPCF, our Conservation Areas and our other programs.

Yellow Fish Road Program

Several volunteer events were coordinated over the course of the spring and summer, including one in Port Colborne with a local Brownies group, one in Niagara-on-the-Lake with local families and one in St. Catharines with Sir Winston High School. Several Yellow Fish Road presentations and demonstration were delivered throughout the year to various elementary schools in our watershed as well as some high schools. Staff are also making an inventory of the Yellow Fish Road kits and making note of what needs to be ordered for next year's painting season. Staff will be compiling the information in a year-end report to be provided to Trout Unlimited as well as attending a Yellow Fish Road Partners Symposium in December to meet with partners, discuss any changes to the program and new initiatives and wrap up the painting season.

Outreach Programs

The In-school Conservation Presentations continue every Thursday at various schools throughout our watershed. There has been a great deal of positive feedback from both students and teachers about the programs. The programs are continually updated and revised based on feedback and to keep up with current issues and NPCA projects. To complement the informal verbal and written feedback received from schools, Evaluation Forms for students and teachers have been given to some of the schools for comments about the Conservation Presentations. These forms will enable us to continually update and change the presentations based on input from teachers and students. To date, Staff has visited schools all over the NPCA jurisdiction, including schools in Grimsby, Haldimand, Welland, Port Colborne, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Fort Erie, and Hamilton.

Angler Diary Program

Now in its 7th year, the Angler Diary Program continued in the Welland River Watershed. This year, over 60 Angler Diaries were sent out. These diaries are collected at the end of the fishing season and they allow the Authority to accumulate valuable information which will assist with its ongoing restoration and fisheries improvement programs for the Welland River. Anglers recorded information through the Welland River Angler's Diary Program including species of fish caught, the location of the catch, and consumption. In addition, anglers have recorded information concerning water quality conditions and other types of wildlife sightings. This information is entered into a database once it is received.

All participants who turned in the completed diaries by the December 7th deadline were entered in a draw for a prize. The prizes for this year will be drawn on December 17th 2007. Two additional prizes are given for the most creative diary and for the most complete diary.

Fish Tagging/Angler Derby

The Angler Derby took place on July 7th 2007 at Merrit Island. Approximately 20 fish were caught and tagged by Biotactic at the Derby. These fish were released upstream of the siphons between the Welland Canal and the Welland River. The Authority is trying to determine whether the siphons are acting as a barrier to fish migration. This information will be compiled and delivered to the Ministry of Natural Resources in the coming year.

In addition to tagging fish at the Angler Derby, staff also assisted Chris Bunt and his team from Biotactic to catch and tag fish in the Welland River on two separate occasions in August and October 2007. A total of 77 fish were tagged from these two events. Each tag has an individual fish identification number, as well as the NPCA telephone number. People are encouraged to call the NPCA if they catch a fish with a tag on it in order for us to collect valuable information about fish migration, and overall movement within the Welland River watershed. This program is complementary to the Angler Diary program.

GIS / Information Management

Source Water Protection - Tier 1 Water Budget:

The 1:2000 hydrography build for the surface water resources spatial framework is now complete and is currently being cleaned and undergoing QA/QC for connectivity.

Fifteen years worth of daily average spatial surfaces for solar radiation, precipitation and temperature parameters have been interpolated across the watershed (representing approximately 270 hours of computing time) as the meteorological inputs to the surface water hydrology models.

Storm sewer mapping for the lower tier municipalities with intake protection zones is being reviewed and updated for use in drainage area analyses to spatially refine the intake upland areas to properly scope the threats work.

Watershed Planning - Characterization maps and statistical habitat analysis are underway in support of the Central Welland River and Lake Erie North Shore Watershed Plan developments.

Analyses and mapping exercises were conducted to quantify the affect of the Authority's wetland policies for existing lots of records almost entirely contained within a wetland.

A review of how the Authority's Generic Regulation map was being incorporated into the City of St. Catharines' draft comprehensive zone map was conducted.

Staff continues to participate in a steering role in the Planning Function Review's integrated GIS MOU item.

The Natural Areas Inventory has received new yet very preliminary Ontario Wetland Evaluation System wetland mapping for West Lincoln, Pelham, Thorold, Welland, and North Niagara Falls. Preliminary analyses to determine properties to focus on next field season were conducted.

Corporate GIS

A consultation session between the Authority business/program areas and the Regional GIS Services group was conducted this month in order to identify future areas where the Authority could either collaborate with the Region in some business cases as a partner or in other cases simply as a potential solutions provider with regards to NPCA GIS and Information Management needs. Preliminary impressions from the process seem to support a significant level of collaboration building from our existing shared service agreements for both enterprise GIS and IT/IS on a number of overlapping initiatives.

Metadata creation for the Authority's spatial data continues and is due to the Region prior to the holidays.

NPCA GIS and Regional GIS staff presented at the Latonell Conservation Symposium this past month in the Source Water Protection Information Management session. The presentation, entitled '*A Conservation Authority and Municipal Partnership: Fostering A Local Technology Environment*' was extremely well received and has generated a lot of interest in the shared services approach to GIS and Information Management.

LAND MANAGEMENT

Ball's Falls Conservation Area

There was a good turn-out of the Ball's Falls volunteers at the Conservation Achievement Awards reception held November 28th, with about 20 of the more than 30 individuals and organizations that were recognized in attendance.

The filming of "Ghost Trackers" at Ball's Falls on November 12th and 13th ran smoothly and staff received positive feedback from the production company with their experience.

Volunteers assisted staff with the decorating and set-up for the 'Christmas in the Country' education program (November 19 – December 13th). The program is running and bookings are confirmed for approximately 850 students.

Attendance increased from last year with close to 100 visitors enjoying the public Christmas Open House on Sunday November 25th. The musical program provided by The Playford Players in the church, was well received. Twelve children participated in the "T'was the Night Before Christmas" workshop. Visitors were enjoying the blacksmith shop and were pleased to know they could purchase the hand-crafted decorative hooks that were offered for sale this year.

The Ministry of Canadian Heritage advised that the NPCA interim report submitted on the status Centre for Conservation Construction project was satisfactory and payment for 90% or \$270,000 of the \$300,000 approved Cultural Spaces Canada grant will be processed shortly

Mystus Exhibits staff is beginning to schedule site visits to record final measurements for exhibit installation as interior work progresses in the Centre.

Ball's Falls CA Centre for Conservation

This past month saw all trades on site as winter weather bears down. Portions of the building construction are temperature sensitive, and the trades are following specifications for installation in cold weather. Seasonal items, such as final asphalt paving, site seeding and landscape planting, have now been bumped to spring 2008 for completion.

Heating is now required inside the building as the interior finishing continues. All room partitions are up and drywall is installed in the gallery and office areas. The solarium and skylight were the last areas to receive glass to fully seal the building. The mechanical systems are proceeding well and with the electrical transformer in place, Pen West is hooking up permanent power to the building. Masonry work is at the final touch-up stage, plumbing and electrical fixtures are ready to install as the trades move into the detailed interior finishing and millwork.

Outside on site the hard landscaping, grading, topsoil placement, and parking lot work is proceeding with the goal of completing these items before year end. Soft landscaping will then follow in the spring. The natural stone seating wall is installed at the south patio, the pedestrian bridge footings are in place, bridge fabrication is completed, and the pond is dug at the front of the building. The rainwater cisterns are backfilled and the rainwater collection trenches and pond terracing is underway. The new enlarged entrance into the site from 6th Avenue and a new culvert at the road is in place. Remaining site work includes forming and pouring the rest of the sidewalks and curbs.

Weekly meetings are being held with our staff, the architects, consultants and contractors to monitor the building schedule and resolve questions as they arise.

LEED compliance is being tracked by our consultants and the building commissioning items are being scoped and documented as the building systems progress. Staff are monitoring the work in progress and taking photographs for our reference and file.

Ecological-Environmental Services

Wainfleet Wetlands Conservation Area

Bathymetry mapping has been completed for the abandoned quarries of the Wainfleet Wetlands. This will be used along with several water quality parameters, in the on-going monitoring program of the NPCA.

Willoughby Marsh Conservation Area

To date, 35 percent of the Conservation Area has been completed as part of the moss species at risk study. While surveying will temporarily stop during the provincial controlled deer hunting week of Dec. 3, it will recommence on Dec. 10. Funding report writing and administration continues during the controlled deer hunt.

NPCA Hunting Program

a) Waterfowl Program

The waterfowl hunting program and season is now closed at Mud Lake Conservation Area Nov30. Staff will be reviewing the harvest reports in mid January (post receipt of the reports) and determining the site needs for the 2008 program. Binbrook CA waterfowl hunting program continues through Dec. 8 of this year.

b) General

Staff have received and issued an additional 10 hunting permits/permission for 2007. To date 353 hunting permits have been issued. Of these, 43 permits are issued to individuals residing outside of our administrative area.

Carolinian Canada Factsheet

CA staff, and other agencies with resource protection mandates, met to assist the Carolinian Canada organization with information on several local natural features in the Niagara Peninsula. The localized information will be used in a factsheet Carolinian Canada is producing and will be distributed to rural landowners to increase the awareness of these ecosystems and resources and ways to assist in protecting these resources.

Red Mulberry Trees

The NPCA has commenced work to increase the population of the endangered species of local Red Mulberry trees. This is being completed by the staff ecologist using funding that has been obtained from the provincial Species at Risk program. Methods of cutting and grafting will be used for producing new seedlings, which will be grown and tended by a local nursery. All works are consistent with the Red Mulberry Recovery Strategy and staff is in close contact with the Red Mulberry Recovery Team.

Conservation Areas General

Binbrook Conservation Area

Underwater log and rock cribs are being constructed and placed in strategic areas of Lake Niapenco. These structures were recommended in the Binbrook CA Fish Management Plan, and will help to improve fish habitat and strengthen fish populations by providing areas for food, rest and rearing. Six structures are being completed by staff with the help of volunteers in December, and will be placed in the lake by staff under frozen lake conditions (January-February). The project is being funded by the Community Fish and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) of MNR.

Land management staff are assisting with the dam spillway project, working with the tree spade contractor on site for tree removals from the construction area. Majority of the tree spade work was completed Nov. 15th in the park. The trees were relocated to enhance areas near the main picnic pavilion, playground, and open meadow near the beach.

EC Brown - New Constructed Wetland Project

Field staff are near completion of the final site items in the work program for this year. The stonedust trails and maintenance gates are installed, and the wood deck viewing platforms are currently under construction. These features are being constructed at the Central Workshop in sections. The completed sections will then be moved out to the site and installed on the concrete piers.

Long Beach / Chippawa Creek

Campground Staff are working with GIS staff to update park maps. Over time, campsites have moved, been deleted or added. This is an effort that is generally made every decade, and ensures visitors will see quality maps and diagrams of our campgrounds; and campsite numbering that makes sense.

Campground Staff have been liaising with Hydro One representatives related to complaints from campers at CC regarding "low voltage" at electrical campsites. Although Hydro One has determined that transformers supplying the campground are well above requirements, the problem could be related to one of three things: older park campsite electrical equipment; campers' equipment; or inadequate electrical supply originating from the Bismark sub-station. Because the problem is being experienced on sites installed only 10 years ago, and neighbours along Regional Road 45 have also experienced the same problem, staff believe the problem may be related to the supply. That being the case, staff have developed a contingency plan in cooperation with Hydro One to log, measure and evaluate the supply during the 2008 season.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Conservation Achievement Awards

The 2007 Conservation Achievement Awards reception was held on Wednesday, November 28, 2006 at the Four Points Sheraton Suites with over 210 people in attendance. Awards of Merit were presented to the family of Gord Harry and Friends of One Mile Creek. These recipients were thrilled with their presentations. Thanks to the members who were able to assist at the event.

Source Water Protection

The first meeting of the Source Protection Committee is scheduled for December 10. The Authority has received notification that we will receive funding of \$27,746 for projects through the Drinking Water Stewardship Fund.

A.D. Latornell Symposium

Over 1100 participants attended this year's symposium which focused on Healthy Watersheds, Healthy Great Lakes. A number of NPCA staff participated as speakers.

Yellow Fish Road Program

Staff will be attending a Partners Update meeting on December 12.

Twenty Valley Tourism Association

The Association will be hosting an ice wine festival as part of the Niagara Wine Festival on January 19 and 20, 2008 in Jordan Village.

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Fort Erie Conservation Women's Auxiliary

Staff was notified that the Fort Erie Conservation Women's Auxiliary will be disbanding as a volunteer group at the end of this year. In 1991, our Foundation entered into a partnership with FECWA to create a Conservation Education Bursary program to support Fort Erie students pursuing post secondary education in the field of conservation. Since its inception, 106 bursaries totaling \$105,600 have been awarded.

As per the original terms of reference, the Foundation will continue to administer the bursary program as has been done in the past. The efforts of this dedicated group were acknowledged at this year's Conservation Achievement Awards and each member was given a small token of appreciation at the event.

Recommendation:

Report No. 98-07 outlining the status of Authority projects be received for information.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Andrew L. Burt, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer