

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

FULL AUTHORITY

WELLAND

AGENDA

March 18, 2009 – 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

BUSINESS:

(1) MINUTES – FULL AUTHORITY MEETING – FEBRUARY 18, 2009

Attached are the Minutes of the Full Authority Meeting held February 18, 2009.

(2) BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

(3) DELEGATION

Representatives from the Niagara Land Trust requested the opportunity to address the Board.

(4) CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

(5) CAO'S REPORT

(6) 2008 CURRENT & CAPITAL BUDGETS – UNAUDITED YEAR END - REPORT NO. 15-09

Attached is Staff Report No. 15-09 together with a copy of the 2008 Current and Capital Budgets Summary.

(7) 2009 SALARY SCHEDULE – ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT NO. 16-09

Attached is Staff Report No. 16-09 regarding this matter.

(8) 2009 HONOURARIUM & PER DIEM ADJUSTMENT– REPORT NO. 17-09

Attached is Staff Report No. 17-09 with respect to this matter.

(9) IMPLEMENTATION COSTS – NEW CORPORATE LOGO – REPORT NO. 18-09

Attached is Staff Report No. 18-09 outlining the costs associated with the new logo.

(10) **REVISED PERMIT APPLICATION FEES SCHEDULE - REPORT NO. 19-09**

Attached is Staff Report No. 19-09 outlining this matter.

(11) **E.C. BROWN LAND EXCHANGE REPORT – REPORT NO. 20-09**

Attached is Staff Report No. 20-09 regarding this exchange.

(12) **ST. JOHNS TROUT POND SEASON OPENING – REPORT NO. 21-09**

Attached is Report No. 21-09 regarding the above.

(13) **SIMPLY TREMENDOUS – 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT – REPORT NO. 22-09**

Attached is Staff Report No. 22-09 regarding this event.

(14) **PROJECT STATUS REPORT – REPORT NO. 23-09**

Attached is Staff Report No. 23-09 outlining the status of Authority projects and programs.

(15) **IN-CAMERA**

- (a) Complaint and Violation Status Report – Report No. CR-6-09
- (b) Tree By-Law Status Report – Report No. CR-7-09

(16) **OTHER BUSINESS**

ADJOURNMENT



TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: March 10, 2009

SUBJECT: 2008 Current & Capital Budgets – Unaudited Year End - Report No. 15-09

This report follows up Report 07-09 (deferred) presented in the February 18, 2009 Board meeting.

For the 2008 Current Budget, the Year End program expenditures are generally consistent with those previously noted to the Board. Overall, program expenditures are under budget by approximately \$150,000 with the following significant variances.

- Watershed Report Card less cost than budget amount.
- Tree Conservation By-Law not in approved budget but funded by Region later in 2008.
- Conservation Areas expenses reduced due to anticipated revenue reductions as a result of extreme wet summer in 2008.
- Full annualized costs for staffing at the Centre for Conservation and the biologist position (Planning Program) not realized due to late hiring of the positions.
- Staff cost savings as a result of General Manager retirement and delayed job replacement for the Director, Water Management
- Reduced expenditures in the Vehicles and Equipment Budget due to lower than expected prices for the purchases.

With these program savings along with the receipt of higher than budgeted administration fees and interest revenues, the Conservation Authority has unused revenues of approximately \$100,500 and unused special levies of \$32,900. In the Conservation Areas Programming budget, a further \$64,900 in excess of the budget target was realized at the Hamilton and Haldimand Conservation Areas. Based on the above, I am recommending that these funds totaling approximately \$198,300 be appropriated to the following reserve accounts:

- 1) Approximately \$10,000 to the Short Term Disability Reserve to cover 2008 as well as future costs in this self-insured benefit component.
- 2) Approximately \$65,500 to the General Operating Contingency to be allocated for final work on compiling data for the PSAB Tangible Capital Assets requirements which are effective 2009 as well as net costs for activities associated with the 50th Anniversary Celebration.
- 3) Approximately \$32,900 to the Debt Charge Reserve
- 4) Approximately \$59,500 to the Conservation Area Operating Reserve – City of Hamilton
- 5) Approximately \$5,400 to the Conservation Area Operating Reserve – Haldimand County
- 6) Approximately \$25,000 to Equipment Reserve

The above recommendation differs from Report 07-09 by eliminating the recommended reserve to Regulations and Planning Services (\$33,200) and adding same to the General Operating Contingency to finance anticipated amounts for the PSAB work and 50th Anniversary Celebration activities.

For the Conservation Areas in the Region of Niagara, while overall operating expenditures were reduced, the 2008 revenues did not meet the budget target due primarily to weather related impacts and a long term illness of one of the employees in a Conservation area, resulting in a shortfall of approximately \$33,900. To cover this shortfall, it is recommended that \$25,000 be allocated from the Short Term Disability Reserve and approximately \$8,900 from the CA Operating Reserve (Niagara). I also recommend the transfer of \$25,000 from the sick leave reserve account for the former General Manager's sick bank payout upon his retirement to the short term disability reserve to replenish that account. It should be noted that the Authority's sick leave reserve balance will be approximately \$95,000 which will cover the current liability of approximately \$90,000 (as of Dec. 31, 2008).

For the 2008 Capital Budget, the Year End program expenditures are generally consistent with those previously noted to the Board with the following notes.

- Under the Resource Inventory and Environment Monitoring program the Miscellaneous Projects component expenditure is approximately \$59,200 vs. approved expenditures of \$27,100. The bulk of the increase is due to an additional project funded separately (\$30,000) by Niagara Region to undertake fish barrier projects in the Welland River. Other projects in this category include the yearly community fisheries assessment program (catch and release fish tracking, family fishing day and angler derby, fisheries monitoring to document success of restoration projects).
- Unanticipated delays in completing the Balls Falls Centre for Conservation and the wet conditions experienced throughout the 2008 summer season, resulted in several large projects including trail construction at various Conservation Areas, Heritage Building upgrades at Balls Falls and campground upgrades at Long Beach and Chippawa not being completed.
- Although several land acquisitions were completed in 2008, the final report on land values in 2008 will allow staff to negotiate further acquisitions in 2009 in accordance with the Land Acquisition objectives as previously approved by the Board.
- Delays in initiating the Central Welland River and and Beaverdams/Shriners Creeks Watershed Plans resulted in under expenditures in the Water Management Program.

As a result of the above, there is an unused levy balance of approximately \$969,300 in the Conservation Area Development budget and \$192,800 in the Water Management budget. The majority of these funds will be used for projects carried into 2009 (identified in the 2009 Capital Budget), and accordingly, it is appropriate to assign these amounts to reserve accounts pending their use. Accordingly, I am recommending that the funds be allocated to the following reserve accounts:

- 1) Approximately \$159,400 to Watershed Studies – Region of Niagara
- 2) Approximately \$33,400 to Resource Inventory and Monitoring
- 3) Approximately \$464,700 to Conservation Area Capital Reserve – Region of Niagara
- 4) Approximately \$112,800 to Conservation Area Capital Reserve (City of Hamilton – includes the separate Land Acquisition amount for the Hamilton area)
- 5) Approximately \$391,800 to Land Acquisition Reserve (New Reserve)

Subject to the approval of the Board, the 2008 Financial Statements will reflect the recommended appropriations.

DISCUSSION

For the Capital program, unexpended funds are carried over into the next fiscal year to complete projects or initiate projects that were scheduled for the previous year but not completed for various reasons. The approval of the 2009 Capital Budget included the use of these capital reserve funds towards the listed projects.

With respect to the Land Acquisition Program, the Board approved a Long-Range Acquisition strategy for the entire NPCA Watershed in December 2007. The Strategy identified 804 significant parcels across 15 municipalities that warrant protection through acquisition and targeted stewardship initiatives. The strategy included an annual expenditure of \$500,000 to implement the program. Unspent funds in each year would be rolled over to support acquisitions the following year. A five-year review was built into the strategy to ensure the document is flexible and responds to the changing climate. It will also provide an opportunity to review the funding formula and program achievements.

For the Current program, unused revenues are achieved through either or both of an increase in anticipated revenue or a reduction in expenses for the fiscal year. For 2009, the excess revenue over expenses totals approximately \$133,000 (not including Hamilton/Haldimand) with the bulk of the difference being a significant increase in interest revenue over anticipated and a reduction in the cost of program delivery as outlined above.

Historically, the NPCA has allocated the Current Budget year-end excess revenue to appropriate reserves and carry over accounts for use in subsequent years. The main reason for this is to maintain healthy reserve amounts to deal with unanticipated expenditures or unachieved revenues that occur during the course of the NPCA fiscal year. The Authority's process to levy municipalities under the Conservation Authorities Act does not allow for the charging of additional levy over that adopted by the Board earlier in the year if a deficit budget is realized and accordingly, our auditors have recommended appropriate reserve amounts in this regard. Many of the NPCA programs are extremely volatile and revenue amounts can be significantly different than anticipated due to weather or economic conditions (Thanksgiving Festival, Conservation Areas, number of permits/planning matters subject to economic conditions, interest rates). Anticipated expenditure amounts are equally as volatile and could increase dramatically over the course of the year (legal fees for violations, emergency works in Conservation Areas, flood forecasting, expenses such as gas and utilities and legislative changes).

With the recommended appropriation amounts, the Reserve Amounts (Current and Capital) for 2008 total approximately \$3,512,000 compared to the 2007 amount of approximately \$3,625,000 (reduction of \$113,000). Full expenditure of the 2009 budget will reduce this amount a further \$1,200,000 for a 2009 year end estimated balance of \$2,300,000. It is anticipated that the Authority, as others, will be facing significant fiscal challenges in 2010

and further support the need for appropriate reserves in our program areas. I recommend to the Board that the allocation of the reserve amounts as outlined above be supported.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. 15-09 regarding the 2008 Current and Capital Budgets – Unaudited Year End be received; and

That the recommended appropriations be approved.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Tony D'Amario, P. Eng. CAO/ Secretary-Treasurer

TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: March 9, 2009

SUBJECT: 2009 Salary Schedule - Economic Adjustment – Report No. 16-09

In the 2009 budget, allowance has been provided for a 3.0% economic adjustment to the Authority's salary & wage schedule. For comparison purposes, a review of other Conservation Authorities and other local agencies economic adjustment was undertaken by staff with the following results:

Conservation Authorities:

3% Hamilton, Rideau, Kawartha, Central Lake Ontario, Grand River, Toronto, Lake Simcoe, Grey Sauble, Credit Valley, Ganaraska

2.5 – 3.0% Halton (with approval of up to 4%)

Municipalities:

3% Hamilton, St. Catharines, Barrie (union only, non union 0%), Niagara Falls (0% for Senior Staff and Council), Welland

Niagara Region:

non-union	2.75% (plus additional cash payout based on performance)
Cupe 1287 (inside/outside staff)	2.5%
Cupe 1019 and 1757 (paramedics/public health professionals)	3.0%

Historically, the NPCA has been consistent with the non-union adjustment awarded by the Region of Niagara although the Authority does not have a variable pay for performance program. The amounts of payout for this program on a yearly basis vary and as such an equivalent percentage value cannot be calculated.

It is important that the NPCA salaries remain competitive with similar Conservation Authorities and other agencies. Yearly adjustments to the salary schedule are also recommended to reduce the need for future salary reviews and the often resulting financial challenges in implementation.

It is therefore recommended that the NPCA adopt a 2.75% increase in the salary schedule. For information, the impact on the approved 2009 Current and Capital Approved Budget is approximately an overall reduction of \$9,000.

RECOMMENDATION:

That a 2.75% economic adjustment to the Authority's salary schedule be approved retroactive to January 1, 2009.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Tony D'Amario, P. Eng, CAO/ Secretary-Treasurer

TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: March 10, 2009

SUBJECT: 2009 Honourarium & Per Diem Adjustment– Report No. 17-09

The Chairman's honourarium and member per diems are currently \$4,463 annually and \$65.60 per meeting respectively. It is recommended that the rates be increased by a 2.75% economic adjustment retroactive to January 1, 2009. With this adjustment, the honourarium would be \$4,586 and the per diem would be \$67.40. In accordance with Section 37 of The Conservation Authorities Act, approval of the Ontario Municipal Board is required.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Report No. 17-09 regarding the Honourarium and Per Diem Economic Adjustment be received; and

That subject to the approval of the Ontario Municipal Board in accordance with Section 37 of The Conservation Authorities Act, the Chairman's honourarium be adjusted to \$4,586 per annum and the member per diem be adjusted to \$67.40 per meeting, retroactive to January 1, 2009.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Tony D'Amario, P. Eng. CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

TO: Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: March 18, 2009

SUBJECT: Implementation Costs – New Corporate Logo – Report No. 18-09

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Following the approval of the new corporate logo at the February 18, 2009 Board meeting, staff were requested to provide details on costs for full implementation of the new logo to replace all corporate items displaying the previous logo. The intent was to review options to undertake a full scale replacement to the new logo as opposed to a phased approach which would result in the Authority having 2 logos over a multi year time frame.

The Authority's annual budget has allowances to replace signs, uniforms and other items with logos on an as needed basis. Below is a listing of items that represent the additional costs beyond the normal budget for logo replacement if carried out for 2009.

Area Signs

34 Conservation Areas with current logo. Most have double-sided signs. Some are more elaborate than others, but an average cost of \$1,000 per sign would be appropriate. Total costs for 68 (2 X 34) X \$1,000 = \$68,000

Main Building Sign

The NPCA main office has a sign at the front of the building. Producing a sticker to cover the old logo would cost approximately \$300. The sign is relatively small and there may be an opportunity to increase the size for more visibility from a public perspective. The estimated cost for a larger sign replacement is \$3,000.

Vehicles

Vehicles are probably the most visible item owned by the NPCA to the general public and accordingly it would be most appropriate to replace all vehicle stickers to the new logo as soon as possible. Replace cost for the stickers is \$1,400.

Uniforms

Our field and technical office staff have uniforms with the old logos that will need replacement. Total cost in this regard is estimated at \$5,000.

Based on the above and the cost of the listed items, it is recommended that the Authority continue with a phased approach to implementation with the following schedule.

2009 Main Building Sign - enhanced (\$3,000), Vehicle Sticker Replacement (\$1,400), 11 Conservation Area Signs with priority given to highest use areas (\$22,000) – Total Cost \$26,400.

2010 12 Conservation Area Signs with medium public use (\$24,000)

2011 11 Conservation Area Signs with lowest public use (\$22,000)

It is also recommended that staff uniforms not be altered as part of the new logo implementation. Uniforms have relatively low useful life and logo changes can be achieved through the normal replacement process.

Costs for these replacements were not identified in the 2009 Approved Budget. Staff will look to in year savings to finance this initiative. Where this is not possible, it is recommended that contingency reserves be utilized.

RECOMMENDATION

That Report No. 18-09 regarding the implementation costs for the new Authority logo be received and approved as printed.

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Tony D'Amario, P.Eng. CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

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To: Chairman and Members of the Authority

Date: March 18, 2009

Re: Revised Permit Application Fees Schedule – Report No. 19-09

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The purpose of this report is to recommend a revised fee schedule for permit applications pursuant to our Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alteration to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulations, O.Reg 155/06, as amended. Members will recall that the issue of fee amounts was originally raised by the Town of Fort Erie as detailed in Report No. 05-09, dated January 21, 2009 (attached). Subsequently, at the February 2009 Board meeting, a delegation from the Town of Fort Erie addressed the Authority to further speak to their concerns. At this time, the Fort Erie delegation expressed a more reasonable concern than previously advanced. Specifically, they acknowledged the need for the Authority to recover permit review costs from fees however, they provided examples of charges they felt were exorbitant, given the works being reviewed and requested the Authority to review its process for determining charges.

While Board members generally expressed support for their previous direction for “full cost” recovery of permit review costs, the legitimacy of “averaging” of review fees was questioned. The concept of charging a “review specific” fee was discussed however, the drawback of this approach is that review fees would be unpredictable and costs would actually increase, due to the additional layer of administration required to track review details and prepare invoices. Nonetheless, in reviewing previous application fee charges, senior staff concurred that the current application review schedule could be refined further, to give staff firmer guidance with respect to appropriate fees.

In this regard, a much more detailed list of fees has been prepared and is attached for the Boards consideration. In addition, two changes are proposed to the current fee structure, in an effort to make it more equitable. Firstly, a fixed fee for maintenance activities for all classes of permits has been introduced to replace the existing practice of setting this fee at 50% of an application for “new” works. Secondly, for both watercourse crossings and channel works, including works pursuant to the Drainage Act, an additional of sub category/fee levels has been established for works of smaller scope, to better reflect the relative level of effort generally required in a review. Staff would advise that although the schedule attempts to be more equitable, the proposed schedule does not reduce the upper limits of our fees, but rather allows staff more flexibility to reduce fees for works that typically do not warrant a major review effort.

Although discussed at the February meeting, the idea of grouping numerous works (i.e. multiple culvert replacement) into one consolidated application is not recommended and has not been incorporated into this fee schedule. This is because a consolidated application would not in reduce staff efforts to process a permit approval in any significant way, as each location would still have to be reviewed in the context of site specific restrictions and conditions.

Finally, in an effort to recover income losses that may result from this schedule, staff is proposing a new charge for on site technical advice/inspection. This is similar to the charge made by the Planning Division for Property Information requests. Briefly put, a significant amount of staff effort is spent attending properties to assess what an owner can and cannot do. Currently, the entire program expense is borne by the smaller percentage of applicants that ultimately are required to make application for a permit. It is anticipated that this new charge will offset any loss resulting

from the revised application fee schedule. In this regard, any technical advice/inspection fee charge will be refunded if application for a related permit is made within one year of the site visit.

List Attachments

1. Revised Fee Schedule dated March 18, 2009
2. Report No. 05-09; Permit Fees for Works Subject To Authority Regulations

RECOMMENDATION

THAT: Report No. 19-09 regarding the permit fees for works subject to Authority Regulations, dated March 18, 2009, be received for information; and

That the Revised Fee Schedule dated March 18, 2009, as appended to this report be adopted.

Prepared by: John Kukalis; Director, Water Management

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Tony D'Amario, P.Eng. CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: March 10, 2009

SUBJECT: E.C. BROWN LAND EXCHANGE – REPORT NO. 20-09

The Region of Niagara recently completed their plans for the replacement of O'Reilly's Bridge across the Welland River with a new 2-lane structure. This project includes changes to the bridge approaches and the alignment of River Road.

Conservation Authority staff have been involved in the bridge study since the beginning. The study team recognized that the new structure and road realignment would require the acquisition of some property abutting the intersection, however the extent of these lands would not be known until construction drawings were available.

Regional staff received construction drawings in late February and have calculated the property required for this project. The plan is attached to this report for your consideration. The Region requires three small parcels of land, highlighted in yellow, totaling 924.33 m² (0.228 acres). Upon completion of the construction, as much as 3500 m² (0.865 acres), highlighted in orange, will become redundant and could be transferred to the NPCA.

Authority staff examined the proposal and discussed the project at length with our Regional counterparts. We believe a simple land exchange between the Region and the NPCA would benefit both parties. No compensation would be paid to the NPCA, and the Region of Niagara would be responsible for the Authority's legal costs to complete the land transfer. The NPCA would realize a net increase in our land holdings at E.C. Brown.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report Number 20-09 be received; and,

That staff be authorized to complete the land exchange with the Region of Niagara to facilitate the replacement of O'Reilly's Bridge and the realignment of River Road.

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

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Tony D'Amario, P.Eng. CAO/ Secretary-Treasurer

TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: March 10, 2009

SUBJECT: ST. JOHNS TROUT POND SEASON OPENING – REPORT NO. 21-09

At the June 2008 Board meeting, staff were asked to investigate funding sources for stocking the St. Johns Trout Pond. Over the past 8-months a number of service clubs, conservation organizations and foundations were contacted to solicit interest in the program. Although the amount being requested was relatively small (\$2,500), a number of these organizations responded that it was becoming difficult to raise funds for their own programs.

Following up on the points raised by Board Members at the June meeting, staff reviewed the options available for the 2009 Trout Season. We believe the NPCA has three potential options to continue with the program:

1) Continue to offer the season opening event to the public, free of charge.

The benefit of this option is that the public is already accustomed to it. Visitors remark every year that this is a “family tradition” for them, and they know what to expect. On the negative side, this option does not educate visitors about the connection between user fees and services, nor does it recognize the value-added aspect of the 50th Anniversary BBQ. Visitors do not make the connection between the Conservation Area program and resource management.

2) Offer the season opening event free of charge, but solicit voluntary donations

The benefit of this option is the traditional event continues to be offered for free, and the Authority can raise donated funds to offset costs. Voluntary donations have been very successful at a number of other events where value-added activities are involved (BBQ or snacks). It would not be unrealistic to collect \$200 to \$300 from the group. In order for this option to be a success, the NPCA must ensure that visitors are educated about Conservation Area programming and the benefits of wise resource management.

3) Implement an admission fee (Adults \$3.00, Children \$2.00, free to children under 12)

The benefit of this option is that the public is paying a user fee in recognition of the cost to stock the pond with trout. The 50th Anniversary BBQ is a value-added event that should help to soften the blow of a new admission fee. On the negative side, our average attendance at this event is 160 people, more than half of them children. Based on the suggested admission fee, the NPCA could collect \$360. Staff believe the admission fees would not be enough to cover the additional staff and advertizing required to ensure visitors are aware of the program changes. The net result would be an event that costs more than offering it free to the public. Those wishing to

avoid the admission fee would come to the area on the following day and fish for free.

Conclusion

Staff believe the Trout Season Opening is a good public relations event for the NPCA. Since it is a family oriented program, we receive good media coverage and the public appreciates the opportunity to get out for an afternoon of fishing. The event is well received, however more efforts need to be directed to delivering messages about the Conservation Authority and the various opportunities for the public to become involved. We are concerned that a mandatory user fee will produce a negative backlash and result in higher costs for the program.

Based on the above, staff recommend Option 2) where the program is offered free, but voluntary donations are solicited from visitors. There will be a greater information component to the day, with detailed information on the stocking program and Conservation Areas in general. The NPCA will continue to canvas the local community for contributions towards fish stocking program.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report Number 21-09 be received; and,

That the 2009 Trout Season Opening be offered to the public free of charge; and,

That staff encourage donations at the 50th Anniversary BBQ.

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

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Tony D'Amario, P.Eng. CAO/ Secretary-Treasurer

To: Chairman and Members of the Authority

Date: March 18, 2009

Re: “Simply Tremendous” - 50th Anniversary Event – Report No. 22-08

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The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of the details and constraints surrounding the planned activities for the “Simply Tremendous” - 50th Anniversary event.

The “Simply Tremendous” event is currently envisioned as both an educational effort and a “friendly challenge” or competition between our local municipalities. The goal of the program is to plant 50,000 trees across the Watershed, over an anticipated 2 year period. The Authority’s current tree planting activities typically focus on establishing riparian belts for wildlife, etc. as laid out in our Watershed Plans and while this is important, the “Simply Tremendous” program will focus on the need to increase awareness of the benefits of planting native species in urban environments.

Currently staff are proposing to “kick off” the event by holding a 50 trees each ceremonial planting in each municipality, on a property of their choosing. In addition, information packages, including our newly created Native Plant Guide will be forwarded to local municipalities along with a request that they incorporate native tree species into their development standards and urban design guidelines. Resolutions will be requested from local Councils confirming their participation in the “Simply Tremendous” challenge and municipal plantings, including boulevard trees and other plantings in new developments will count towards a municipality’s score, provided they are a native species.

Staff initially considered providing 50,000 trees to the municipalities/public however, this was ruled out for a number of reasons. While tree may be available, large scale planting stock normally consist of bare root “whips” which, if given out to the general public, have little chance for survival as planting requirements (timing and conditions) are critical. This is a significant concern as citizens will not be left with a positive impression if the whip they plant simply dies. Accordingly, this initiative could only achieve reasonable success if potted trees are distributed to the public. Furthermore, consideration of what species is to be planted at a particular homeowners location is necessary because of different soil, shade requirements, etc. The Authority could contract for transplanting of the whips into pots before distribution to the public however, the cost is significant. Based on current estimates, 50,000 whips alone would cost somewhere around \$50,000 plus pots, assembly, storage and transport. It is not unrealistic, that this initiative could cost in excess of \$ 100,000. In addition, the logistics of assembly, storage and co-ordinating the distribution with the member municipalities would be extremely onerous and require additional staff resources.

Given the above, and in order to achieve a positive goal in terms of conservation, it is proposed that a limited ceremonial tree planting at each municipality be undertaken as the kick off for 2009. Based on full participation from 12 local municipalities, 3 regional municipalities and the NPCA, an average of 3,125 trees per participant will be required to reach the 50,000 tree target. Depending on the municipal uptake and needs, the Authority can consider undertaking additional urban planting/education activities in 2010 or beyond if necessary, to assist in reaching the “Simply Tremendous” objectives.

RECOMMENDATION

That Report No. 22-09 regarding the “Simply Tremendous” event be received for information.

Prepared by: Mary Stack; Director, Communications & John Kukalis; Director, Water Management

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Tony D’Amario, P.Eng. CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

TO: Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: March 18, 2009

RE: PROJECT STATUS REPORT - REPORT NO. 23-09

WATER MANAGEMENT

I. Watershed Regulation Division

1) Binbrook Reservoir & Gauge Stations

Shortly after reestablishing a new power supply to the reservoir, in December 2008 the water level sensor located in the reservoir bank began to malfunction. Staff was able to contact the original installer of the instrumentation and the problem cannot be readily repaired. As such, staff has had to visit the reservoir to visually monitor the water levels before being able to adjust the valve settings.

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

i) Permits

The NPCA has approved 9 permit applications for the 2009 calendar year. The NPCA has also refused to issue permits for 2 applications during this same time period.

ii) Violations

Please refer to the associated Report under "in camera" section of agenda.

iii) NPCA-DFO Partnership Agreement

The NPCA is under agreement with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to review works in or near water to determine whether the work is likely to result in the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat (HADD). As part of the NPCA-DFO Partnership Agreement, NPCA staff work as a liaison between DFO Assessors and proponents to recommend appropriate fish habitat compensation projects. During the current calendar year NPCA staff has reviewed 12 applications under this agreement.

iv) Municipal Drain Maintenance Review

The NPCA continues to represent Conservation Authorities located in Central Ontario. on the DART Committee with representatives of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Drainage Superintendents Association of Ontario, Ontario Society of Professional Engineers(Land Drainage Committee), Association of Municipalities of Ontario – Rural Caucus, OMAFRA, MNR and Conservation Ontario. The purpose of the DART is to develop a consistent approach and technical direction with regard to municipal drainage project review under Conservation Authority Regulations. NPCA staff has reviewed 3 municipal drain project during the current calendar year.

3) Floodplain Mapping

i) Ussher's Creek – City of Niagara Falls

The NPCA is presently undertaking the necessary calculations, field work, and map analysis to accurately determine the extent of the 100 year flood elevations for Ussher's Creek in the City of Niagara Falls.

ii) Bayer's (Boyer's) Creek – City of Niagara Falls

The NPCA is presently undertaking the necessary calculations, field work, and map analysis to accurately determine the extent of the 100 year flood elevations for Bayer's Creek in the City of Niagara Falls.

II. Watershed Planning Division

1) Municipal and Development Plan Input and Review

Plan review activity has remained brisk through this traditionally slower time of year. This has resulted in some review delays, particularly in the area of hydrogeology, as "in house" staff is focusing on SWP activities.

2) Watershed Plan Preparation

a) Lake Erie North Shore Watershed Plan

Final edits to the Background and Characterization are nearly complete. To reduce printing costs, a CD rather than hard copy containing the Final Phase One will be sent to the members of the Steering Committee. A Steering Committee meeting is planned for April 14. This meeting will be combined with the Steering Committee of the Central Welland River Watershed Plan. The purpose of this meeting is to review the process of Phase 2; the Restoration Strategy. In addition, a representative of the Ministry of Natural Resources will be doing a presentation on 2 Species at Risk; the Fowlers Toad and the Massasauga Rattlesnake which are unique to the study areas.

The Lake Erie North Shore Geomorphic Assessment has been completed and hard copies have been distributed to respective staff and the consultants working on the shoreline mapping project.

b) Central Welland River Watershed Plan

Final edits to the Background and Characterization are nearly complete. To reduce printing costs, a CD rather than hard copy containing the Final Phase One will be sent to the members of the Steering Committee. A Steering Committee meeting is planned for April 14. This meeting will be combined with the Steering Committee of the Lake Erie North Shore Watershed Plan. The purpose of this meeting is to review the process of Phase 2; the Restoration Strategy. In addition, a representative of the Ministry of Natural Resources will be doing a presentation on 2 Species at Risk; the Fowlers Toad and the Massasauga Rattlesnake which are unique to the study areas.

The geomorphic desktop analysis continues in preparation for the upcoming field season. Various data layers and air photos are being analyzed for historical and physical characteristics of the watershed. All data is being entered into a newly created Access database for the study area.

Aquafor Beech has begun the background work on the floodplain mapping for this watershed plan.

c) Beaverdams and Shriners Creek Watershed Plan

Research and writing of the Background Characterization is nearly complete. Letters notifying members of the Steering Committee of the first meeting will be sent out at the end of March along with a copy of the Draft Watershed Characterizations and Issues Identification. The first meeting will take place near the end of April.

3) Lyons Creek East Fluvial Geomorphology Study

A Final Draft One Report is expected by March 13th. Internal discussion has been conducted as to the expansion of the study objectives to meet the needs of the Remedial Action Plan (RAP). Discussion regarding the potential extension is not complete internally. A tentative meeting date is scheduled for March 31 with the consultants, RAP representatives and respective staff. The purpose of this meeting is to review the project to date, address any outstanding concerns and discuss the prospect of expanding the scope of the study.

4) Natural Areas Inventory

Field crews are working on entering the data collected in the field during the 2008 season. Approximately 80 technical summaries containing data from all properties visited are being written.

In addition, members of the staff are analyzing portions of the data to produce specific components of the final project report. Reports from consultants on various components of the project are coming in and the process of editing them for the final document has begun.

III. Source Water Protection Division

1) Source Water Protection Plan

-The minor revision to the SPC Terms of Reference was approved by the Source Protection Committee and submitted to the MOE before the Feb 28, 2009 deadline.

-NPCA staff and Niagara Region staff have been meeting on a regular basis to review the progress of the SP work undertaken on the Intake Protection Zones (IPZs). NPCA and Niagara Region are currently in discussions with Stantec to complete some additional surface water modeling for Grimsby and Rosehill Water Treatment Plant (WTP) intakes.

-NPCA has contracted Dillon Consultants to conduct a peer review of the reports completed by Niagara Region's consultant. The peer review was requested by the source protection committee and is funded by the province.

-NPCA met with MOE source protection officials to review our work plan and schedule of tasks to complete the Assessment Report. The meeting proved beneficial to all.

-Currently "in house" staff is focusing efforts on the Tier 1 Water Budget. Current work includes mainly report preparation. A peer review will also be completed on the Tier 1 Water Budget report.

-The SPC met on February 10, 2009. The main focus of the meeting was the review of vulnerability scoring for two surface water municipal intakes.

2) Water Quality Monitoring Program:

a) Routine Water Quality Work

- Routine surface water quality monitoring will resume in April 2009. Currently, 2008 data is being analyzed and will be presented in the Water Quality Monitoring Program 2008 Annual Report.

-The NPCA continues to collect groundwater level data at 15 wells of the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN). The NPCA is also continuing to work with Ministry of the Environment to establish digital service at PGMN telemetry sites.

-Taxonomic identification of benthic invertebrates continues on samples collected during the fall 2008 sampling season.

b) Special Water Quality Projects

- The Welland River Eutrophication Technical Working Group met on Feb. 18th to discuss the 2008 field results and to plan for the 2009 field season. It was determined that this project is proceeding very well and only slight modifications to the work plan were necessary for 2009 field season to address data gaps.

-Water Quality staff are currently writing technical reports for the Hamilton International Airport and Glanbrook Landfill bioassessment studies. These reports are expected to be completed in March 2009.

-The Lake Ontario Collaborative Study on Twenty Mile Creek has been extended through 2009. In 2009 two surface water samples have been collected to capture the spring melt. NPCA will be meeting with study partners on March 11 and 12 to discuss the 2008 results and funding requirements for the 2009 field season.

-The NPCA continues to receive requests for applications for the NPCA Water Well Decommissioning Grant Program.

IV. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Division

1) Source Water Protection Support Activities

Some lingering technical tasks for the Tier 1 Water Budget are being completed and include a consumptive demand calculation of Permits to Take Water and an analysis of expected rural private well use. Cartographic activities for the Tier 1 Water Budget and the Assessment Reports are scheduled as next priorities.

2) Watershed Planning Support Activities

a) Several tasks supporting the Natural Areas Inventory Project are still being addressed.

- DRAFT Community Series ELC mapping is scheduled for QA/QC.

-Tract Code assignment for the 2008 field season on the natural area mapping which functions as the bridge to the database of survey observation data continues.

- Several custom reports for wildlife observation summaries have been produced from the database for several contributors to the final report.

b) The Authority Regulation and Screening layers have been updated based on new flood studies and refined draft wetland boundaries in Wainfleet. New finalized wetland evaluation boundaries for Port Colborne have just been received so these will need to be included in

another maintenance iteration to commence shortly. The update included another draft of the Niagara Natural Environment Information Screening Layer as NPCA's requirement from the Planning MOU.

3) Corporate GIS Support Activities

- Technical work on our 1:2000 surface water inventory spatial framework continues.
- GIS staff is presently working with Restoration staff to update the restoration database based on the 2008 field season.
- Several large data requests for Authority information assets have been filled for consulting teams working on the Region of Niagara's *South Niagara East West Arterial* study, and the Ministry of Transportation's *QEW Widening Between Niagara Falls and Fort Erie* project.

V. Watershed Restoration Division

1) General Watershed Restoration

Areas where current watershed plans have not yet been developed continue to have priority water quality and habitat projects delivered through the general restoration program. The following are the restoration projects that are currently being planned for 2009:

- 3 wetland creation project located in 40 Mile Creek Watershed, totaling approximately 2 hectares
- 4 woodland habitat restoration projects totaling approximately 3.7 hectares
- Riparian and Wetland Planting Project located in the 40 Mile Creek Watershed, approximately 0.75 hectares
- 2 shelterbelt riparian planting projects

2) Niagara River RAP/ Welland River Restoration

Staff is working on the planning and implementation of Water Quality and Habitat Improvement projects for the spring and summer of 2009. Projects currently underway include:

- 3 riparian restoration projects including the establishment of 2 riparian buffers and the stabilization of 150m of Welland River shoreline, reducing erosion and improving aquatic habitat
- 4 woodland habitat restoration projects totaling approximately 20 acres
- 1 pit and mound restoration project
- The NPCA's partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada will continue through 2009 with wetland restoration projects on at least 3 sites within the Niagara River AOC. Construction of 2 wetland projects from the 2008/2009 project year has been completed and planning of 2009/2010 projects

3) Fort Erie Creeks Watershed Restoration

The Fort Erie Creeks Watershed Plan has been received by restoration staff for implementation. Staff are reviewing the recommendations and are preparing to assemble the Implementation Committee.

- The following are the restoration projects that are currently underway for 2009:

- 2 riparian restoration projects and 1 Best Management Practices projects within the Black Creek watershed.
- An alternate watering source project in the Six Mile Creek watershed.
- A partnership with the Niagara Parks Commission to help complete a riparian restoration project along the Niagara River

4) Twenty Mile Creek Restoration

-Two Twenty Mile Creek Implementation Committee meetings are planned for March and September of this year.

-Twenty Mile Creek projects planned to date for implementation in 2009 include:

- 1 windbreak tree planting approximately 200m in length,
- 1 manure storage project,
- 4 riparian buffer plantings,
- 1 wetland habitat enhancement project
- 2 woodland habitat restoration

5) Twelve Mile Creek Restoration

-A Twelve Mile Creek Watershed Plan Implementation Committee meeting will be held on March 24th to discuss partner responsibilities and priority projects. Staff will provide an overview of completed restoration projects, as well as activities of other NPCA departments, carried out in accordance with our commitments in the Twelve Mile Creek Watershed Plan.

The following are the restoration projects that are currently being planned for 2009:

- Flood plain wetland restoration and reforestation in a western Twelve Mile Creek headwater area. A wetland will be re-excavated in a former meander area of a "straightened" stream.
- 2 Stream native buffers and reforestation on different tributaries of Richardson's Creek.
- staff are working with Regional Niagara and Town of Pelham to develop a solution to a serious erosion problem arising from Highway 20 runoff, which threatens Brook Trout downstream.
- A farm in Upper Twelve Mile Creek will undergo an ecological transformation this spring, in partnership with EFP funding. Buffers will be planted on 1.5 km of stream, dispersion sandwich technology will be employed to filter runoff, which will then flow into the restored floodplain wetland. Three stream crossings for cropping machinery will be installed. In addition, the most highly impacted areas of the stream will have some erosion control, and pool restoration through excavation. The latter will serve to trap sediments in the short-term.
- Year two of the Decew Escarpment Tablelands Restoration, a partnership with OPG, Region of Niagara, NRC, Bruce Trail Conservancy, and Niagara College, will see planting of about 10 acres.
- About 3 acres of old field will be direct-seeded with prairie and tree species at the Lathrop property.
- Three smaller Stream-buffer/reforestation projects are planned in Upper Twelve Mile Creek on rural-residential properties.

6) Niagara-on-the-Lake Restoration

-Staff held the second NOTL Watershed Plan Implementation Committee meeting in March 2009. The committee terms of reference was discussed and will be confirmed at the next meeting. A watershed implementation work plan will be discussed at the next meeting of the committee scheduled for April 28th 2009.

-The next meeting of the One Mile Creek Watershed Implementation Committee is scheduled for March 24th 2009.

-Staff continue to prepare for the One Mile Creek Earth Day Creek Clean Up, as well as work on planting plans, plant material estimates, and meeting with landowners for new 2009 projects.

Below is a list of the restoration projects that are currently being planned for 2009:

- 2 shelterbelt within the Four Mile Creek watershed totaling approximately 400 m
- 1 woodland enhancement project within the Four Mile Creek watershed totaling approximately 1.5 ac.
- 1 riparian improvement projects along One Mile Creek 90 m²
- 2 riparian improvement projects along Four Mile Creek 500 m²

7) 15,16,18 Mile Creeks Restoration

- The following are the restoration projects that are currently being planned for 2009:

- 4 Riparian Buffer Projects, in the 16 Mile Creek Watershed, with an approximate total of 1 km of stream length to be restored with a vegetated buffer.
- 5 Woodland Habitat restoration projects (2 sites located in 15 Mile Creek Watershed, 3 sites are located in 16 Mile Creek Watershed) with an approximate total of 7 hectares to be restored.

8) Yellow Fish Road

- The Yellow Fish Road (YFR) Program will continue to work with school and community groups across the NPCA jurisdiction in 2009. Bookings for the upcoming Spring and Summer painting season have begun.

9) ECO School Program

-March 1st marked the deadline for schools to apply for the 2009 program. In total, 34 schools from 9 municipalities applied. Site visits have been scheduled, planting will commence on June 1st.

Staff also delivered a plaque of recognition to each of the 29 participating schools from 2008. The plaques were presented to the teacher and students that planted and maintained the plot over the last year and a photo was taken by NPCA staff.

VI. Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Division

1) Lyons Creek

Since its February/09 meeting, the Contaminated Sediments Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is obtaining commitments for the recommended sediment management strategy for Lyon's Creek East of Monitored Natural Recovery, as per the project work plan. A February newsletter was distributed within the Lyon's Creek East community, and a letter of appreciation was sent to those citizens who volunteered to sit on the Community Liaison Committee, as it now has completed its role.

Contact details for Transport Canada and the City of Welland has been provided to citizens at Lyon's Creek West for anyone wanting further details on sediment management at the site.

2) Stage 2 RAP Update

- Since the Nov/08 meeting, comments have been received from some RAP Implementers from their review of the draft Stage 2 Update report. The next Implementers meeting is expected to be held in April/09 to further fine-tune the draft RAP Work Plan.
- The next RAP Science Committee meeting will be held at the end of March/09. The main agenda item will be the committee's response to the document "*Technical Review of Impairments and Delisting Criteria. 2007*". The committee's response and recommendations will be included in the draft Stage 2 Update report.
- A Public Advisory Committee is being planned for mid-April to review the revised delisting criteria, as per recommendations from the Science Committee.
- The RAP Coordinating Committee is scheduled to meet in March to review and endorse a RAP Communications Plan for 2009 and plan the steps required to prepare the Stage 2 Update report for submission to the International Joint Commission (IJC) in 2009.
- The Welland River Eutrophication Study Technical Working Group met in mid-February, 2009. The 2008 field season data was discussed and plans made for the 2009 field season.

3) International Liaison

- In collaboration with a representative from the Canadian Consulate General in Buffalo, the RAP Coordinator addressed the audience at the Shaw Festival on February 23 at the showing of the documentary: *Flow: For the Love of Water*. The public outreach opportunity was coordinated across the Niagara River to launch the BWT100 celebrations; promote the Niagara River RAP; promote the NPCA's 50th anniversary; and, announce *Our Shared Waters Web site* (www.oursharedwaters.com).
- The International Joint Commission's Centennial celebration of the International Boundary Waters Treaty will be held in multiple locations within the Niagara area. From June 5 – 14, 2009, the Niagara River Corridor will be host to a variety of events, climaxing with the official celebration of the Boundary Waters Treaty on June 13 at Niagara Falls.

4) Niagara River Toxics Management Plan (NRTMP)

The NRTMP Secretariat is considering whether the current mandate and structure of the NRTMP is the most suitable framework for addressing the remaining water quality challenges. Discussions are underway between the NRTMP agencies on the future role of the NRTMP. A NRTMP "State of the Niagara" conference will be included in the IJC's Centennial celebrations in June/09.

LAND MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Ball's Falls Conservation Area

"The Niagara Heritage Collection - Historical Architecture of Niagara by the Peninsula Needle Arts Guild" ended March 8. The "Biscornu" workshop and the presentation on "Amazing Lace" was offered on March 7th were offered this month in conjunction with the 8 week exhibit, many of which were attended by return participants. Members of the Peninsula Needle Arts Guild offered demonstrations in the atrium on February 28th. Approximately 211 visitors have attended since mid February.

Visitors to the Centre were able to participate in activities for Groundhog Day, wetlands, and Valentines Day during the past month.

"Ontario Frogs: The Ribbet Exhibit" opens in the Temporary Gallery on March 14 and runs until April 13th. A teacher-directed education program is being offered in conjunction with this exhibit.

Upcoming weekend activities in the atrium (included with park admission) and related to Centre exhibits continue to be well received by visitors. Most are self directed.

March 11 – Wonders of Wetlands

March 14& 21 - Dig it (NPCA)

March – Saturdays & March Break – Froggy Fun, Wonders of Wetlands

The Archival Preservation Series will begin March 21st and focus on books. This is the first of three workshops that will be presented by Mary Gladwin, Oxford County Archivist.

Staff continue to prepare for the March Break programs. Registration is filling up. On March 5 Angela Wallace taped a 2 minute segment with Cogeco to promote the Camp. A number of activities will also be offered for visitors to the Centre during March break, including a scavenger hunt and “Sphagnum P.I. “, an activity related to the “Ribbet Exhibit” and the Core gallery.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation has agreed to contribute \$5,000 to the Ball's Falls Collections Storage project if the Department of Canadian Heritage MAP application for funding is approved. Staff anticipate that we will receive word on the status of our application by late April.

The NPCA has applied for the Canada Summer Jobs student employment for a total of 4 positions to provide visitor programming at Ball's Falls, Chippawa Creek and Long Beach.

The Cree Hand Drum Workshop scheduled for February 22 was cancelled; however staff hope to re-schedule the public workshop for July. Staff have contacted some local schools to invite them to a special pilot program at the Centre. Facilitators Jackie Labonte and Bill Russ will share native teachings centered around the drum as students work to complete a 13 sided deer skin hand drum to take home. Beamsville Secondary School, Campden Public School and Jordan Public School and all have expressed in interest in attending.

Centre staff have prepared a number of flyers and press releases on upcoming programs. The education program brochure has also been revised to incorporate these new programs.

Applications are arriving for the 35th annual Thanksgiving Festival. The application deadline is March 15th.

New signage is now installed at the highway and entrance to the Centre. The public is getting a good look at our new NPCA logo and new Ball's Falls waterfall style logo. The sign at the Centre will have a stone base installed to match the natural stone used on the Centre for Conservation. There are panels on the signs that can be changed out by staff as necessary to promote events. We have been receiving positive comments on the look of these new signs.

Staff are implementing upgrades to the trail system in the park to improve walking conditions and clearly identify trail routes for our visitors. Improved trail surfacing, drainage, and edge retention are planned for trails to the upper falls and portions of the forest frolic trail. Between the Centre and lower falls a series of new trails will link the switchback trail to the existing trails across 6th Avenue leading to the lower falls. New wayfinding signage is proposed for key points along the routes both for orientation and educational purposes. New trail maps are also being prepared by staff for visitors to pick up at the Centre when they enter the park.

Binbrook CA

Staff attended the Toronto Fishing Show with the Glanbrook Conservation Committee to promote the Spring Crappie Derby. Nearly 17,000 people attended the event.

Advanced reservations are going well. All of the Saturdays and half of the Sundays in June have been reserved. In July 90% of the Saturdays are already booked.

The ice fishing season ended March 5 with record number of hut rentals and visitors participating in this program. Ice and high water levels in the reservoir shifted the handicap fishing platform and a dock at the old boat launch ramp. The fishing platform will be repaired, however the dock was already scheduled for removal.

A new picnic pavilion with park store and boat rental area is proposed in the capital works this year for the park. This building was identified in the park master plan as a priority item to support revenue generation for picnic pavilion rental space, park concession area, boat rental and concession area, and boat storage near the lake. Staff are in the early planning and permit stage for the proposed building with tender to contractor anticipated this spring for early summer construction.

Long Beach and Chippawa Creek

Computers have been updated for the 2009 operating season. The staff will be opening for camping reservations on April 8th. Spring work planning is complete and crews are cleaning-up the areas after a long winter.

St. Johns Boardwalk Upgrades

New components for the St. Johns Boardwalk have been fabricated and are waiting for good weather

EC Brown Wetland

Flooding of the site reached high levels again in January and staff were on site mapping the flood line. The high water mark reached the 100year flood line at the east end of the property and River Road was briefly closed, east of O'Reilly's Bridge when the river topped over the road surface. The flooding resulted in the wood lookout platform next to the river to float off it's pilings and lodge onto some of the root wads in the pond on site. Staff were on site once the flood waters receded to remove all debris and salvage platform sections to recycle the wood for re-use. It is being recommended by staff that the wood platforms not be replaced this season, unless we are prepared to remove and replace them each flood season.

Hedley Forest CA

New trail work is underway at Hedley Forest to complete the trail system planned for the property. Staff were on site with GPS equipment to accurately mark out the trail route, and brush clearing and trail construction started March 4th. All trail work should be completed by the end of March, weather permitting and provided a boardwalk can be installed over the creek during the spring melt. This new trail system when completed will provide the public with a total of 3km of walking trails on site, starting and ending at the parking lot.

Wainfleet Bog Conservation Area

For a ½ day during March Break, staff will be conducting the Water Festival Bog Activity in Wainfleet to increase awareness of this significant natural feature within the community, region, and internationally.

Willoughby Marsh Conservation Area

In February the Species at Risk 2008-20099 Project was completed with the final project report and findings submitted. Findings on habitat preferences included low-medium light density, high soil moisture levels, edge communities, leaf litter presence and low nutrients. Limitations of its persistence appear to be fragmentation and distribution by animals, branching / pleurocarpous growth and site conditions. Other aspects of unauthorized vehicular site use and dumping in natural areas also pose potential threats to its existence. To assist in protecting this species municipal residents have been provided with instructions on proper disposal of large items. Monitoring of invasive species and plots will continue, and site signage will be improved. In addition, an article on the status on the species was completed and will be provided to area residents upon published by Carolinian Canada to help increase public awareness. The site will continue to be managed with a view to protecting this species and the ecosystem it relies on for survival.

NPCA Hunting Program

Staff have issued an additional 10 hunting permits. To date staff has received and issued 66 hunting permits/permission for 2009. Of these, 10 permits are issued to individuals residing outside of our administrative area.

Bruce Trail Access to Conservation Areas

NPCA staff met with staff from four of the 7 Conservation Authorities along the Niagara Escarpment to talk about Bruce Trail Membership privileges being offered at Conservation Areas. The group agreed that further dialogue is required with the Bruce Trail Conservancy. This is expected to take place at the March 27th meeting of the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System.

NPCA Volunteer Activities

The list of 2009 NPCA volunteer activities has been finalized and mailed to high schools, libraries and interest groups and volunteers in our administrative watershed.

A workshop for volunteers was held at Ball's Falls on Saturday Feb. 29 to help in monitoring the quality of wetland habitat. As in previous years, this program assesses the presence in quantity and types of frogs, toads and marsh birds. The program is offered in partnership with Bird Studies Canada. Information from these surveys will be used to determine if any restoration measures are needed and track the effectiveness of past restoration works. Over 70 volunteers attended the workshop and signed up for various survey areas across our watershed.

Property Assessments

Staff are filing Request for Reconsiderations with MPAC for Hedley Forest; Port Davidson; Gainsborough; Stevensville; Long Beach; EC Brown CA; EC Brown (new property).

Assessment values and property features are being investigated by staff for Cave Springs; Ball's Falls; Jordan Marina; Wainfleet Bog; Chippawa. A decision on filing requests for reconsideration with MPAC to be determined before the end of March filing deadline, pending this investigation.

For 44 of our 56 properties staff are recommending that the current assessment be accepted. These properties had assessed increases less than the regional average, were classified as tax exempt for assessment purposes, or had high tax exempt values under the managed forest or conservation land tax programs.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

50th Anniversary Events Planning

Staff and committee members are working on details for the planned celebrations.

At the last meeting of the full committee, 2 sub-committees were formed to begin working on the details of the NPCA reunion day (July 25th at Long Beach) and the 50th anniversary Gala (August 12th at Ball's Falls). With the environment so prevalent in people's minds, this milestone gives us an opportunity to reinforce our programs and encourage the watershed residents to incorporate conservation practices in their everyday lives.

Annual Report

Preparations are underway for the production of the Annual Report. Staff anticipates that this will be complete by early April.

Eco School Presentations

Historically we have made presentations at the School Board meeting to present the plaques to the 2009 participating schools as part of the Eco School program. This year, due to scheduling conflicts, this was not feasible. Staff are personally visiting the schools to present the plaques. The program is continuing to be well received.

Website; Special Events and Volunteer Opportunities

The new website is functioning well and we have received numerous compliments on the design and ease of use. We are making a couple of minor adjustments to ensure that information is easy to find.

The 2009 special events list is posted on the NPCA website. The annual Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch open house at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area is being planned for Good Friday, April 10. Trout season opening at St. Johns Conservation Area is scheduled for April 25th. These events will be enhanced in celebration of the 50th anniversary. A list of upcoming Volunteer Opportunities was developed and is posted on the website. Community response is positive.

Niagara Children's Water Festival

Plans for the 2009 Water Festival are proceeding and staff are currently working on following up with potential sponsors. Plans for the Public Day scheduled for Sunday, September 13th are shaping up nicely. Invitations will again be extended to watershed municipalities inviting them to set up displays showcasing their environmental initiatives.

Source Protection Planning

A display incorporating the Source Protection Banner and outreach materials is currently set up in the Royal Bank in Dunnville. Staff are continuing to collaborate with our neighbouring Source Protection teams to incorporate communications messaging and activities.

Boundary Waters Treaty Centennial Celebration

NPCA staff are working with the BWT committee to finalize the celebrations for the BWT week of June 3 – 14, 2009. This is another opportunity for the Authority to support the power of partnerships and the great things that can be accomplished through working together.

Kellogg's Canada Marketing Opportunity with Ball's Falls C.A.

We are pleased that the Conservation Authority and specifically Ball's Falls was chosen as a participant in the *National Museum Campaign between CMA and Kellogg Canada Inc.* The goal for Kellogg is to align their family of cereals with the social value of museums, and the family experience of shared time together – whether at the breakfast table, or walking through one of Canada's 2,500 museums, galleries, zoos, heritage sites, sport halls of fame, and more. This is a tremendous opportunity for a national public awareness campaign for us, as it is an area that Kellogg's has never worked with as a sector before. It requires NO CASH commitment from the NPCA.

From April 1 to July 1 2009, Kellogg will put a promotional coupon on 3 million cereal boxes (both adult's and children's) across the country. The coupon will entitle the bearer to one free entry to a museum – in our case Ball's Falls - (to a maximum value of \$10, one per paying adult) when the bearer is accompanied by a full-fare paying adult.

To support this endeavour, Kellogg will launch a national media campaign highlighting participating museums as family destinations that will include:

- **National TV advertising for four weeks**
- National promotions in grocery stores – reaching over 8 million adults
- On-pack branding (front and back) of 3 million cereal boxes
- Regionally targeted print advertising in grocery flyers
- Promotional materials for use at participating sites
- Dedicated website promoting all participating museums with direct links to NPCA website

During the promotion we will need to accept the coupons, collect them, and mail them to CMA at regular intervals. There is NO CASH commitment required, however, it is important to note that neither Kellogg Canada nor the CMA will reimburse the Authority for the coupons collected.

This promotion opportunity affords us great exposure to potentially new visitors. Once more details become available from CMA and Kellogg Canada, staff will look at additional regional marketing opportunities to piggy back on this promotion.

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Golf Tournament

Plans are proceeding for the *2009 Bob Welch Memorial Charity Golf Classic* taking place on Tuesday, June 2nd at the Whirlpool Golf Course. Registration and sponsorship packages have been distributed to previous participants as well as a list of potential prospects and staff is continuing to work on securing sponsorship and silent auction items. Board members are encouraged to participate and assist in this event where possible.

Foundation Publications

The seventh issue of the Foundation's newsletter, '*Reflections On Conservation In Niagara*' is currently in production and will be distributed, along with a letter and donation card, to current donors and Friends of the Foundation.

Conservation Education Bursaries

Information and applications have been forwarded to schools and former recipients for this year's round of bursaries. These \$1,000 bursaries assist secondary and post-secondary students from the Fort Erie and surrounding area that are planning to pursue conservation-related studies. Deadline for applications this year is May 29, 2009.

Recommendation:

Report No. 23-09 outlining the status of Authority projects be received for information.

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Tony D'Amario, P.Eng., CAO/Secretary-Treasurer