



NIAGARA PENINSULA
CONSERVATION
AUTHORITY

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

“When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.”

Paulo Coelho, 1988

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Let me take this opportunity on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority to share with all of our friends and supporters our 2011 Annual Report.

This is a special honour for me since it is the first Annual Report for which I have had an opportunity to share a few thoughts since I was elected in 2010 to serve as Chairman of a Board representing this time-honoured public agency.

When I say time honoured, I am talking about a public body with a history now stretching back more than half a century when, in the spring of 1959, the Conservation Authority was established with the approval of the provincial government and municipalities across the Niagara Watershed. I am also referring to a public body that since its inception has had a history of working with committed volunteers in the watershed. This includes members of nature clubs, anglers, groups and other community organizations who have helped the NPCA move forward with watershed restoration, preservation around tree planting, erosion control and other projects.

In 2011 the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority embarked on the important process of developing a Strategic Plan to guide the organization into the future. A committee of the Board was formed and worked with our consultant Todd MacDonald of Performance Concepts in the early phase to engage stakeholders to gain an understanding of how the NPCA was viewed through internal and external consultation processes.

In the fall, a number of public consultation sessions were held which were well attended by various members of the public. These consultations with the development industry, the agricultural sector, dedicated environmentalists, and especially the general public, were incredibly important to the NPCA Board and senior staff.

Valuable insights were gained about our strengths, our weaknesses and the necessary “change” pathway going forward. It is understood that carefully considered change is necessary.

The NPCA has turned inwards and taken a hard look at its operations, policy framework and future priorities. A number of internal process and staff changes have been made in an effort to meet customer needs and deliver balanced regulatory services that recognize conservation and economic progress can co-exist.

Moving forward, the next phase of the Strategic Planning process will involve a more in-depth evaluation of the NPCA's lines of business with a focus on identifying opportunities for performance improvements. This part of the process will look at operations incorporating 5 basic themes which comprise the basis of the NPCA's operations.

During a time when all levels of government are feeling the pinch with their budgets and austerity seems to be the rule of the day, the work of volunteers and others who support the aims of the Conservation Authority through their donations of grants and time mean all the more.

In that spirit, we are pleased that in November, at the Authority's annual Conservation Achievement Awards celebration, we were able to thank more than 400 individuals, businesses and groups for their selfless support of our efforts to enhance the great natural resources of this watershed. The dedication of these volunteers will live on in the work they have done to keep these resources healthy and vibrant for present and future generations.

I would also like to recognize the members and donors of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation. Through their efforts funds were raised to help support local conservation projects.

It is the collective commitment of individuals, groups and businesses across this watershed who work alongside our board and staff to make it possible for the Conservation Authority to continue playing a lead role in protecting and preserving the richness of our resources for the benefit of everyone.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'B. Maves'.

Bart Maves,
Chairman

MESSAGE FROM THE CAO SECRETARY TREASURER



It is my pleasure to share some of the highlights of the activities that the Conservation Authority engaged in with our many partners and supporters across the Niagara Watershed during the year 2011.

Our Conservation Authority plays a lead role as a steward of a watershed that embraces more than 138 water courses in an area that spans more than 2,400 square kilometres and is home to some half a million Ontario residents. I wish to mention our supporters as we are forever indebted to our member municipalities and other partners as our staff and board works to fulfill this important role.

The cooperation and collaboration we have enjoyed with all levels of government - with local businesses, nature clubs, schools, and so many other groups and individuals - speaks to what I believe is a growing realization that in a world where too many regions are thirsting for fresh-water resources, we are truly blessed to be living here. Over the past six years, our staff has worked with numerous volunteers and hundreds of property owners to identify and quantify the natural features of this region. The results of that first-of-a-kind inventory of our natural heritage serves to confirm the role our watershed (bordered north and south by two of the greatest lakes in the world, Erie and Ontario) plays in sustaining a rich diversity of plants, birds and other biological organisms that make an immeasurable contribution to the quality of life for all of us who live in this region.

In 2011, our staff, along with our partners and volunteers, experienced that growing realization of our rich bounty through the numbers of people who continue to visit and enjoy the natural and recreational amenities of our 36 conservation areas.

Ball's Falls Conservation Area (including the Centre for Conservation) has become a drawing card for special exhibits and events that are now being booked up to two years in advance. Our 37th Annual Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival has taken its place as a Fall tradition, attracting a near record 28,000 visitors in 2011, just as the Hawkwatch at our Beamer Memorial Conservation Area has become a Spring tradition for growing numbers of people of all ages.

The NPCA has also had our share of challenges in 2011. At our Binbrook Conservation Area, we continued to work with the Ontario Ministry of Environment, City of Hamilton's Health Services Department and other agencies to monitor for the presence of PFOS, a chemical contaminate that migrated off the property of the Hamilton Airport upstream until the airport discontinued its use. Fortunately, tests showed that the chemical does not pose a hazard to park users, but this situation is a reminder of how our natural resources are impacted by our day-to-day activities.

It is a reminder of a need for us as individuals and communities to continue working together to ensure our precious natural areas are protected and preserved for present and future generations. We are forever grateful to each and every one of you in the Niagara Watershed for assisting us in this mission.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tony D'Amario'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'T' and 'D'.

Tony D'Amario, P.Eng.
CAO/Secretary-Treasurer



CORPORATE SERVICES



FRONT ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):
DOUGLAS RANSOM,
BRUCE TIMMS, VICE-CHAIRMAN,
BART MAVES, CHAIRMAN,
MICKEY DIFRUSCIO,
APRIL JEFFS

BACK ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):
CARMEN D'ANGELO,
BOB STECKLEY,
J. STEWART BEATTIE,
DOUGLAS JOYNER,
BRIAN BATY,
TREVOR EASTON,
BARRY SHARPE,
DAVID BARRICK,
TONY DALIMONTE,
DAVID EKE

Now celebrating 53 years as a steward of our natural heritage, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority was established on April 30, 1959 and serves approximately 500,000 people in a 2,424-square kilometer area encompassing the entire Niagara Region, 21% of the City of Hamilton and 25% of Haldimand County.

Throughout the NPCA's decades of service in the area of land and watershed stewardship, our efforts have focused on a variety of natural resource programs.

Our environmental and human resources are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and general well being

of the citizens in our watershed and to that end, the NPCA had the foresight to pursue the acquisition of some of the most sensitive and scenic conservation lands found in Niagara - lands that are now held in trust for generations to come.

The activities of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority are governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 15 members appointed by the member municipalities. The Directors are committed to serving the local rural and urban communities on behalf of the watershed municipalities and contribute their leadership and expertise in decisions that determine the policies and programs of the Authority.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following members served on the Board in 2011

NIAGARA REGION

Bart Maves,
Chairman
City of Niagara Falls

Bruce Timms,
Vice Chairman
City of St. Catharines

David Barrick
City of Port Colborne

Brian Baty
Town of Pelham

Dominic DiFruscio
City of Thorold

Trevor Easton
Town of Grimsby

Lord Mayor Dave Eke
Town of
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Mayor April Jeffs
Township of Wainfleet

Mayor Douglas Joyner
Township of West Lincoln

Douglas Ransom
Town of Lincoln

Mayor Barry Sharpe
City of Welland

Bob Steckley
Town of Fort Erie

HALDIMAND COUNTY

Tony Dalimonte

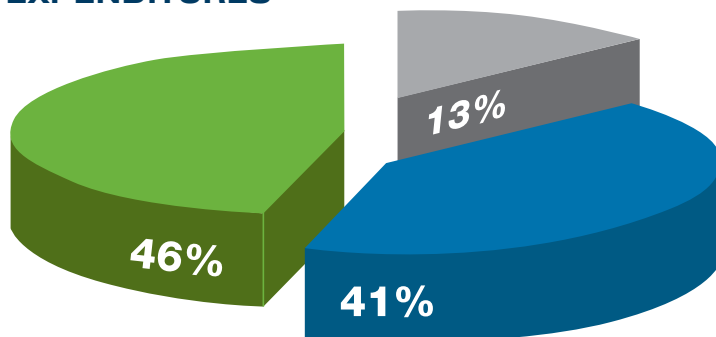
CITY OF HAMILTON

J. Stewart Beattie
Carmen D'Angelo



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

EXPENDITURES



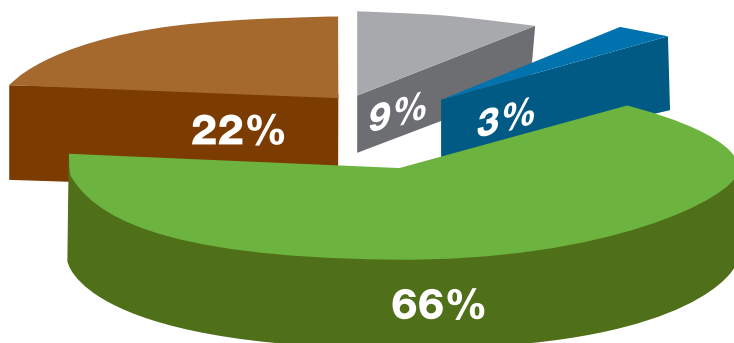
■ **Corporate Services**
\$1,339,467

■ **Water Management**
\$4,290,236

■ **Land Management**
\$4,713,606

TOTAL (100%)
\$10,343,309

REVENUES



■ **Provincial**
\$997,259

■ **Federal**
\$321,991

■ **Regional/Municipal**
\$7,296,953

■ **Self-Generated**
\$2,505,247

TOTAL (100%)
\$11,121,450

For further information or to obtain a copy of the Audited Financial Statement please contact Mary Stack, Director of Communications.



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WATER MANAGEMENT

“Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.”

Chief Seattle, 1855

Water Management is one of the Authority’s core program areas and plays a paramount role in protecting the health of our waterways and natural areas for present and future generations. With the continued economic pressures that affect all aspects of our community, the programs undertaken by the Authority strive to provide a balance between responsible resource management and the infrastructure, development and economic needs of the many diverse stakeholders we serve.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2011 ACTIVITIES

WATERSHED REGULATIONS

Responsible for Administration of O.Reg 155/06, Flood Control Structures, Flow Monitoring, Flood Forecasting and Warning, Floodplain Mapping and Erosion Control Projects.

The Authority approved approximately 90 applications for the 2011 calendar year pursuant to the NPCA’s ‘Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation (Ontario Regulation 155/06).

Pursuant to an agreement with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to review works in or near water to determine whether there is any potential for work to harm fish habitat, Authority staff worked as a liaison between the DFO and proponents to recommend appropriate fish habitat compensation projects. In 2011, staff reviewed 47 applications under the agreement.

In 2011, staff continued to monitor water levels at the Binbrook Reservoir on a regular basis and adjust the valve settings as required based on forecast weather. The public can access real-time water levels and rainfall information at the Reservoir through the NPCA’s website.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FIVE BY FIVE DESIGN STUDIO

The NPCA continued to represent Conservation Authorities located in Central Ontario on the DART Committee with representatives of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Drainage Superintendents Association of Ontario, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario- Rural Caucus, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Conservation Ontario. The purpose of the committee is to develop a consistent approach to reviewing municipal drainage projects under Conservation Authority Regulations. NPCA staff reviewed 12 municipal drain projects during the 2011 calendar year.

In 2011, staff undertook Floodplain Mapping for the Lower Welland River, Thompson Creek in Niagara Falls, the Shriner's and Beaverdams Creeks in Niagara Falls and Thorold, the Singers Drain in Thorold and the Wignall Drain in Port Colborne with the assistance of consultant AMEC Engineering. The work was carried out to generate the 100-year regulatory Floodplain Mapping for these waterbodies.

The Authority received funding from the Niagara Water Strategy to undertake gauge station network improvements and expansions for both rainfall and water quality monitoring. By the end of 2011, nine rainfall stations were integrated into the NPCA system and three water quality monitoring units were installed.

In addition, an abandoned gauge station on Big Forks Creek in Wainfleet was recommissioned and a new "state of the art" water quality station was built on the Welland River in Pelham.

WATERSHED PLANNING

Staff processed 211 Planning Act related applications ranging from complex Zoning Bylaw Amendments to simple variances in 2011. In addition, 363 formal Building Permit Reviews and Property Inquiry letters were processed.

NPCA's Scenario Development Team, a broad-based group of representatives from the private and public sectors, reviewed learning scenarios developed by the MARXAN model – an advanced software tool the Authority has employed to identify and quantify a multitude of natural features in the Niagara Peninsula watershed - for the purposes of choosing a preferred scenario to meet the team's vision of a healthy and sustainable Natural Heritage System in the watershed. Staff met with the Authority's Steering Committee on this project to discuss the choice of a preferred scenario for determining what constitutes a sustainable system of natural features in the watershed. A final report on the project (named 'Nature for Niagara's Future by the Scenario Development Team) was completed by the end of the year.



FRONT ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): BRIAN WRIGHT, MBA, P.ENG., MANAGER WATERSHED TECHNICAL SERVICES, MARY STACK, DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS, MARIA BELLANTINO-PERCO, MARK NEUFELD, CHAIR, DAVID RENSHAW, DEBBIE GULLETT, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, MAEVE MCHUGH, MOE LIAISON

BACK ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): CHRIS SHRIVE, ROBERT BATOR, BRIAN BATY, SOURCE PROTECTION AUTHORITY LIAISON, GLEN HUDGIN, NIAGARA REGION PUBLIC HEALTH LIAISON, DEAN OSTRYHON, DON RICKER, TIM RIGBY, REGIONAL COUNCILLOR, BRIAN ANTONSEN ABSENT FROM PHOTO: DREW SEMPLE

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

Staff developed a Source Protection Plan and Explanatory Document. Presentations were made to municipal councils for Thorold, Port Colborne and Niagara Falls, as well as Niagara Region's Integrated Community Planning committee, as part of a pre-consultation process to update municipalities and government agencies (including the NPCA) that will be responsible for implementation of the SPP.

Work on the IPZ-3 (Event-Based Modeling) progressed as anticipated. Event-based modeling was undertaken for the Decew, Welland and Port Colborne water treatment plant intakes.

The final draft report on Welland River Eutrophication was completed. It summarizes water quality data collected from 2008 to 2010 for the Welland River watershed as part of the Niagara River Area of Concern Remedial Action Plan.

The Authority assisted the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Conservation Ontario with the Niagara Twenty Mile Creek Integrated Climate Change Study.

Staff collected water samples for the 2011 field season at 73 stations throughout the watershed. Results will be included in 2012 water quality reports. Staff also conducted biological monitoring at 17 stations in the watershed, including one located at the Hamilton Airport, from September to November.

Groundwater level data was collected at 15 monitoring wells in the watershed as part of the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network.





GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

- The Authority's GIS staff launched a new project for automating the generation of property information related to the Authority's planning and regulatory services. The information will be made available on the NPCA's website to our many partners through requests based on civic address, property identification number (PIN), and assessment roll number (ARN).
- Staff continued work on an Integrated Hydrology Pilot Project for an Ontario-wide Water Resources Information Program which encourages information sharing among agencies responsible for water management.
- GIS staff produced maps for the draft Source Protection Planning Policy. A web mapping application was developed to highlight water well decommissioning programs that exist across the province, including the program for the NPCA.
- Staff performed a complete suite of spatial analyses and communicated the results in support of the Niagara River RAP Habitat Delisting Workshop.

WATERSHED RESTORATION

- The Watershed Restoration Program is responsible for improving water quality, water quantity and biodiversity within the NPCA watershed and in 2011, more than 100 restoration projects were completed.

WATERSHED PLANS

- In 2011, NPCA staff engaged in a total of 35 woodland restoration and riparian projects across the watershed through partnerships with private landowners, Land Care Niagara, Ontario Power Generation and the Niagara Restoration Council. More than 100,000 trees and shrubs were planted, more than 10,000 native wildflowers and grass plugs were planted, and more than 10 kilograms of native seed was sown on restoration sites in the Niagara watershed.
- More than 15 wetland restoration, aquatic in-stream works, and erosion and bank stabilization projects were completed.
- More than 40 BMP projects, such as nutrient management, livestock fencing, cover crops and erosion control projects were implemented across the watershed.



- Staff worked with Ducks Unlimited under a decade-old stewardship partnership to complete five large wetland projects in 2011. The Authority received approximately \$300,000 in funding support for wetland projects.
- Staff accessed funding from Environment Canada's Great Lakes Sustainability Fund for water quality and habitat improvement work in the Niagara River Area of Concern. In 2011, the Authority received \$193,000 to support this ongoing work.

CANOPIES FOR KIDS PROGRAM

- There was a high response to this new program introduced by the NPCA in 2011 in the area we serve. The program is aimed at planting shade trees in school grounds and in engaging young students and volunteers to learn through hands-on involvement the benefits that trees contribute to our environment and health.
- The program proved to be so popular with area elementary schools in 2011 that applications for 2012 began the last week of November, 2011 and continued through January, 2012.
- Schools selected to participate in the program did so through interactive school assemblies and workshops provided by Authority staff.

- Staff also worked with school teams on planning and siting the planting of large and small native tree species. There is no cost to the participating schools and a maximum of 10 schools up to Grade Eight were selected to participate. Each school received 10 trees native to Niagara, including Silver Maple, Tulip, Freeman's Maple, Red Maple, and Sugar Maple. In addition, each school received up to 30 smaller trees for students to hand plant.

YELLOW FISH ROAD PROGRAM

- Staff assisted five groups in 2011, including Girl Guides and elementary and secondary school groups in the region, participating in the Yellow Fish Road Program aimed at raising public awareness about the environmental impacts of disposing of hazardous substances down municipal sewer and storm drains.

ANGLER DIARY PROGRAM

- The NPCA's Angler Diary Program continues to collect data from anglers in the Welland and Twelve Mile Creek watersheds. In 2011, a total of 40 guides were distributed with a request to anglers to return their diaries to the NPCA at the end of the year. The program is important in assisting the Authority in monitoring the status of fish populations in area water bodies.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FIVE BY FIVE DESIGN STUDIO

NIAGARA ENVIROTHON

- In partnership with local naturalist clubs, the NPCA was pleased to play a lead role in the 4th annual Niagara Envirothon event held in April at the ARPAD Park in Niagara Falls. This event is a hands-on, environmental problem-solving competition for high school students that introduce them to possible careers in the field of conservation and environmental protection.
- The Authority's Steering Committee was planning for the 5th annual Niagara Envirothon that was to be held in April, 2012 in Wainfleet. The committee agreed to hold an official logo contest with the winning logo appearing on promotional materials, including banners and t-shirts.



SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SECONDARY SCHOOL

REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN

- In the mid-1980s, the governments of Canada and the United States identified 43 Areas of Concern in the Great Lakes Basin and Remedial Action Plans were developed to restore them to health.
- Responding to the call for remedial action, the NPCA has played a lead role in coordinating the Remedial Action Plan for the Niagara River Corridor.
- A number of key actions have been implemented in partnership with the Niagara River Restoration Council and Environment Canada to restore a water body that is not only world-renown but supports an important fishery.
- In 2011 those actions included the implementation of the Administrative Controls Protocol for Monitored Natural Recovery of contaminated sediment in Lyons Creek East and the review of recommendations for a three-year Welland River Eutrophication Study with an eye to the development of a phosphorus reduction strategy with local stakeholders to address algae build-up in the Welland River Watershed.
- The Authority also provided feedback to the governments of Canada and the United States as they negotiated amendments to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FIVE BY FIVE DESIGN STUDIO

LAND MANAGEMENT

“Joy in looking and comprehending is nature’s most beautiful gift.”

Albert Einstein

The NPCA’s Land Management Department is entrusted with the management and operation of 37 properties that have been acquired by the Authority since 1961. These properties total more than 7,200 acres (2,920 hectares) and are protected and maintained for both their natural heritage features and for recreational value such as camping and access to our various watercourses.

BALL’S FALLS

- The Centre for Conservation at Ball’s Falls continued to draw many special events, including workshops, travelling exhibits, weddings and other activities that contributed to an overall growing popularity of the area, and a high demand for booking, with some events being booked several years in advance.
- In 2011, the following events drew many visitors to the area: the Gardening and Blacksmithing courses, the Seeds in Disguise

exhibit (held in the fall in partnership with one of our many private partners, Stoke Seeds), the Our Feathered Friends exhibit (produced by the Canadian Museum of Nature) and the Winter Sports exhibit (on loan in November and December from the Cambridge, Ontario-based Fashion History Museum and featuring a unique assortment of winter sports costumes from the first half of the 20th century).

- The 2011 Christmas season proved to be a successful one at Ball’s Falls with approximately 9,000 elementary school children registered for the annual Christmas in the Country education program, which ran from November 28th through December 19th. The Royal Botanical Gardens held their annual Christmas Event on November 28th, drawing more than 1,000 people to the area. The Authority also launched a Christmas with Santa program that drew approximately 90 children and parents (encouraging numbers for a first-time event).



PHOTO COURTESY OF FIVE BY FIVE DESIGN STUDIO

- The Annual Thanksgiving Festival has become a highlight of the fall season in Niagara. An estimated 28,000 visitors attended the 37th festival over October 7th, 8th and 9th, experiencing three days of exceptional weather to enjoy the wide mix of artisans, entertainers and food concessions that are featured each year at this event. In 2011, the NPCA surpassed the 2010 turnout of more than 20,000.
- Staff got a new website up and running that allows visitors to access key information about the Ball's Falls Conservation Area, including current and upcoming activities and special events. The website can be accessed at www.ballsfalls.ca and has already been building interest in social media with Twitter, Facebook and YouTube links.
- The NPCA hosted a media event at the Binbrook area on November 6th to announce a grant from the TD Bank's TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for trail improvements in the park. The Authority thanks the Foundation for its generosity
- The Binbrook site was used as a film set for an episode of the Canadian documentary series 'Mayday'. The episode depicted a tragic crash that occurred in Gander, Newfoundland in 1985, killing all 256 passengers and crew. These film productions bring revenue and recognition to the parks and our staff make every effort to schedule them at off-peak times to ensure that our regular visitors' enjoyment of our parks is not impacted.
- The Hamilton Airport, located upstream from the Binbrook Reservoir and Welland River, took measures in 2011 to prevent further surface water that might be contaminated with PFOS (Perflourooctane Sulfonate, ruled by international toxicology bodies as a persistent, toxic chemical once used by some airports as a fire-fighting agent) from leaving the site and reaching the Welland River and Binbrook Reservoir.

BINBROOK

- The annual ice fishing season ran from January, through February and into March. The 'Hard Water' Ice Fishing Derby attracted a total of 393 participants – making for one of the most successful derbies yet and well above the 288 attendance total for 2010.
- At year's end, staff was preparing the Binbrook site for the 2012 ice fishing season beginning in January.
- NPCA staff have continued to work with the City of Hamilton, Ontario Ministry of Environment and other agencies to address this matter, and the Public Health Services Department for the City of Hamilton has



consulted toxicologists and concluded that the PFOS levels found in Binbrook Reservoir fish and sediment do not pose a significant risk to users of the park. Anglers are asked to consult the Ministry of Environment's Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish (which can be found by accessing the Ministry's website at www.ene.gov.on.ca) for consumption guidelines for various species of fish caught in the Binbrook Reservoir and Upper Welland River.

- In September, 2011, the NPCA posted a detailed "Frequently Asked Questions" piece specific to PFOS and the Binbrook Conservation Area on the Authority's website at www.npca.ca. Staff will continue to work with other agencies to ensure everything is being done to address this situation. The Authority will also continue to ensure that the public is informed of any status updates.

MOUNTAINVIEW

- Staff oversaw the cutting of a new access trail up the Niagara Escarpment to connect with a stretch of the Bruce Trail running through this Conservation Area. The trail follows the route of what appears to be an old overgrown logging or equipment route and provides a good access trail

LONG BEACH AND CHIPPAWA CREEK

- Staff worked with the Ontario Ministry of Environment to improve operations at a septic lagoon at the Long Beach Conservation Area. Work is ongoing to ensure that the treatment process is effective.
- The Chippawa Creek Conservation Area's campgrounds and other recreational amenities enjoyed good business through September and early October. The sheltered campsite facilities at the park were particularly popular.
- The Chippawa Creek park also played host to a number of cross-country track and field meets in 2011, as well as group camping events. These activities have grown significantly over the past few years and provide a good source of revenue for the NPCA, especially during the shoulder season.
- A Russian Folk Festival, drawing people from across Ontario and New York State, enjoyed its third year at the Chippawa Creek park. It is yet another special event that is exposing growing numbers of visitors to the NPCA's parks and increasing revenues for the Authority.
- Staff worked on drainage and infrastructure upgrades at the Chippawa Creek site and carried out a hazard tree assessment.



JORDAN HARBOUR

- In 2011, staff began reviewing options for installing a new pavilion by the dock and boat ramp at this park.

ST. JOHNS

- In partnership with the City of Thorold the NPCA worked together to resurface the entrance road and parking lot for this area. The work was completed in the spring of 2012.
- Turtle basking structures were installed in the pond at the St. Johns park in late August.
- The opening of Trout Season was well attended on April 23rd.

WOODEND

- Staff completed the first stage of a vegetation survey at Woodend. Summer vegetation was inventoried, and unique plant species and potentially critical overwintering animal habitat were identified.

STEVENSVILLE

- Staff prepared plans for a new bridge to replace the aging wooden bridge in the park. When completed, the bridge will allow access over Black Creek to an extensive network of walking trails in the park.
- Staff worked with the Town of Fort Erie and Fort Erie Conservation Club to resolve the matter of the club's lease in the park.

MUD LAKE

- In the fall, Staff completed a field survey and benthic mapping for organisms in the lake that provide a valuable food source for waterfowl and other wildlife. This work provides valuable information for future restoration projects.

TWELVE MILE CREEK

- Plans for an asphalt trail project for this park were finalized and work on the trail was scheduled to take place in the spring of 2012

BEAMER

- In 2011, the area was replanted with native vegetation following the removal of non-native invasive vegetation, including Buckhorn.
- A trail cutting through the park was re-routed by Bruce Trail Association volunteer and is being well used. Staff worked with the volunteers to clear hazardous trees over the path.
- In April, 2011, the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Group held its annual Open House during the spring hawkwatch season that monitors birds of prey passing over the Conservation Area. The Open House focuses on educating the public about this amazing migration of birds and was attended by more than 400 people.



COMFORT MAPLE

- Restoration work was undertaken on the Comfort Maple, including the installation of new cabling and lightening protection devices on this 500 year old heritage tree.
- Seeds from the Comfort Maple were harvested for propagation at a nursery to preserve the genetics of the tree. The nursery will propagate the seeds and tend to saplings until the spring of 2014 at which time the NPCA is looking forward to replanting about 100 saplings at the Comfort Maple site and other Conservation Areas.

VIRGIL

- Staff attended Provincial Offences Court in December, 2011 for the first court appearance related to charges against an individual who cut a number of trees at the area.

WAINFLEET BOG

- New information signs were created for the entrance to the Wainfleet Bog Conservation Area, which is one of the most sprawling and biologically rich bog environments of its kind being preserved in all of Canada. The signs will be installed in the spring of 2012.

WAINFLEET WETLANDS

- In fall of 2011, the pump used to maintain water levels in the quarry lake at this Conservation Area was serviced and reinstalled.

GYPSY MOTH SURVEYS

- Staff completed the gypsy moth monitoring program at selected NPCA properties. The number and size of egg masses appeared to be down in 2011 compared to other years. Staff attributed this to weather conditions, signs of a natural virus as well as a fungus that reduces the insect's numbers. The population of gypsy moth was therefore expected to be low in 2011. Staff will continue to monitor egg masses on NPCA properties into the future.

NPCA HUNTING PROGRAM

- Staff enforced park rules and regulations to ensure that all NPCA areas were safe for users during Provincial Controlled Shotgun Season for deer in November.
- Staff issued more than 340 hunting permits for its Conservation Areas in 2011. These included permits for controlled waterfowl hunting programs at the Mud Lake and Binbrook Conservation Areas.





COMMUNITY RELATIONS

“Tell me and I will forget, Show me and I may remember, Involve me and I will understand.”
Chinese Proverb

- In April of 2011, the Authority held its annual Earth Day event at E.C. Brown Conservation Area, attended by Ontario Ministry of Environment staff, and by local elementary school students from across Niagara as well as members of the general public.
- On April 22nd, 2011, the Authority was once again pleased to join volunteer members of Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch for the 22nd annual Hawkwatch Open House at our Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby. More than 600 visitors attended for a day of fun learning activities and the chance to view hawks, eagles and other raptors circling in the skies overhead.
- The NPCA's annual Conservation Achievement Awards Reception was held on November 23rd at the Centre for Conservation at Ball's Falls, with 230 people in attendance. This is the Authority's opportunity each year to pay an extra special thanks to the many volunteers along with others in the many communities we serve for their invaluable contributions to protecting and preserving the natural heritage of this region. We cannot say enough for their selfless commitment to that cause.
- In November of 2011, Authority staff also attended the A.D. Latonell Symposium in Alliston, Ontario. This symposium was attended by more than 1,100 delegates from Conservation Authorities, municipalities, environmental organizations and the federal and provincial governments, and other stakeholders from across the province. The 2011 Pioneer Awards recipients at this event included Dr. Liette Vasseur, a professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Brock University, for research focusing on community-based ecosystem management, decision making and sustainable development.



- In 2011, the Guide to Developing Conservation Authority Watershed Report Cards, an update of a pilot project for producing watershed report cards, was revised under the leadership of staff from Conservation Ontario and 36 Conservation Authorities. The NPCA, which published earlier Watershed Report Cards in 2005, 2006 and 2007 was involved in developing the new reporting format which was scheduled to be used to inform the public about the state of our watershed in 2012.
- These Watershed Report Cards provide information on surface water quality, forest conditions and groundwater, as well as actions being taken to address any concerns. They are intended to provide the public and other agencies with easily understood information about conditions within the watershed.
- The NPCA was pleased, once again, to participate in the kickoff of the annual Schools in Bloom initiative, coordinated through the City of Niagara Falls. This program successfully works to beautify the school grounds of the city's high schools. The Authority is pleased to support the program by providing information and some funding for the use of native plant materials.
- On October 14th, 2011, the Authority was honoured to host two delegations from China. Members of the delegations were interested in learning about the structure of the NPCA and how it deals with such programs as water quality and invasive species.
- On October 26th, 2011, staff was pleased to host 40 staff from Walker Industries who helped plant more than 200 trees at the DeGow project site.
- NPCA staff was on hand at the 37th Annual Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival in October of 2011 to provide visitors with general information about the Authority's many programs and membership opportunities.
- Authority representatives were pleased to greet about 100 visitors attending the opening of the St. Johns Conservation Area Trout season on April 23.
- Staff provided feedback on a draft of the 'Living in Niagara Report 2011' – a project of the Niagara Research and Planning Council. This report, first released in 2008, provides a community based perspective on 11 areas of life in Niagara, including efforts focused on environmental stewardship, building recreational opportunities as well as working collaboratively to plan more sustainable communities across the region.



- Staff continued to meet with and receive feedback from a Steering Committee and a Scenario Development Team, made up of representatives from a broad diversity of public and private-sector stakeholder groups across the watershed, in the process of achieving consensus on a Natural Heritage System (renamed 'Nature for Niagara's Future' by the committee) for the watershed. The purpose of this project is to identify and evaluate natural features throughout the watershed to help inform any and all stakeholders in the region on the current status of Niagara's existing natural resources and how much of these resources should be preserved to maintain a healthy natural environment for people and wildlife. The Steering Committee and Scenario Development Team reached a clear understanding that Nature for Niagara's Future will be made available to any and all public and private-sector parties, and to members of the general public, but only as an information tool and not as a regulatory tool.
- Staff participated in several community initiatives to promote the work of the NPCA and our Conservation Areas. An updated Conservation Areas booklet was completed and distributed to tourism centres, municipal offices and libraries, hotels in the region and our Conservation Areas.

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

- The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation was established in 1969 as the fundraising arm of the NPCA.
- The Foundation provides additional financial assistance to support conservation initiatives of the NPCA by encouraging community support for projects that are not eligible for traditional government funding, or other funding that is not sufficient or available.
- Since its modest beginning more than four decades ago, the Foundation, with the support of so many individuals, businesses and organizations across the Niagara Peninsula, has managed to raise more than \$4 million in support of the Authority's conservation efforts.
- In 2011, the Foundation raised funding for NPCA projects through a number of events, including a Rain Barrel Sale in Welland and West Lincoln, the annual Bob Welch Memorial Golf Classic, the annual raffle at the Thanksgiving Festival and a well-attended Rock 'N Ribs event held at the Harbour Estates Winery in September.
- To this day, funds raised by the Foundation continue to support the many efforts to preserve and enhance the natural heritage lands entrusted to the NPCA for generations to come.



NIAGARA CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL

“Teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives.”

Thomas Berry

The 9th annual Niagara Children's Water Festival, a joint initiative with the NPCA, Niagara Region, City of St. Catharines and Ontario Power Authority, took place at the Ball's Falls Conservation Area from September 20th through September 23rd with 90 schools across the region and more

than 5,000 students, parents, and teachers participating. More than 27 Activity Centers were featured at this ever-popular festival, focusing on water conservation, water protection, water-related technology and related areas of interest.







NIAGARA PENINSULA
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