



**NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
FULL AUTHORITY**

WELLAND

AGENDA

April 18, 2012 – 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

BUSINESS:

(1) MINUTES - FULL MEETING – March 21, 2012

Attached are the Minutes of the Full Authority Meeting held March 21, 2012.

(2) BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

(3) CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

(4) CAO'S REMARKS

(5) DELEGATION

Mr. John Blaszyński wishes to address the Board regarding an alleged prohibition of works in the valley by NPCA staff prior to May 4, 2006.

(6) STRATEGIC PLAN

Mr. Todd MacDonald of Performance Concepts will be making a presentation to update the NPCA Board on the progress of the Strategic Plan to date.

(7) 2011 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Representatives from MacGillivray Chartered Accountants will be presenting the Draft 2011 Year End Financial Statements to the Board. A copy of the Draft Financial Statement is included in the agenda package. The Auditors met with the NPCA Chairman, Vice-Chairman and staff to discuss the financial statements.

(8) BUDGET STATUS REPORT – REPORT NO. 20-12

Attached is Report No. 20-12 together with copies of the Current and Capital budget summaries to date.

(9) PFOS COMPONENTS AT THE BINBROOK RESERVOIR (UPDATE) – REPORT NO. 21-12

Attached is Report No. 21-12 regarding this matter.

(10) CAVE SPRINGS MASTER PLAN – UPDATE – REPORT NO. 22-12

Attached is Report No. 22-12 outlining this matter.

(11) PROJECT/PROGRAM STATUS REPORT – REPORT NO. 23-12

Attached is Report No. 23-12 regarding the status of Authority Projects/Programs to date.

(12) OTHER BUSINESS

(13) IN-CAMERA

(a) Proposed Land Sale Matter – CR-03-12

(b) Tree by-law – Report No. CR-04-12

ADJOURNMENT



TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority
DATE: April 12, 2012
SUBJECT: Budget Status Report - Report No. 20-12

Attached is the budget status report for the period ending March 31, 2012.

Expenditures and revenues in the operating budget are generally in line with the approved budget.

Project (Capital) expenditures will be realized once projects are initiated throughout the year.

There are no significant variances to report at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Budget Status Report for the period ending March 31, 2012 be received.

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



TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: DATE: April 11, 2012

SUBJECT: PFOS Compounds at the Binbrook Reservoir (update) – Report No. 21-12

The Hamilton Airport remediation project is moving forward. Tradeport International advised Conservation Authority staff that they are working with the City of Hamilton to refine a proposal that will treat and stabilize the PFOS contamination on the airport site. Further information will be available in the upcoming weeks, when the consultant working on this project provides an interim report to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE).

The City of Hamilton will be organizing a Public Information Centre in June to discuss the PFOS issue and the remediation of the Hamilton Airport site. The format will be a drop-in open house, where the community can speak with representatives from the various agencies and learn more about PFOS.

The NPCA Website and the Binbrook Conservation Area web page were updated with new information about PFOS. The updates make it easier for the public to find information about PFOS and MOE fish consumption guidelines.

Conservation Authority staff followed up with the Ministry of the Environment to discuss the March 8 memorandum regarding "*Updated sport fish consumption advisories for Binbrook Reservoir (Lake Niapenco)*". In addition to PFOS, the memorandum referred to concentrations of Mercury that exceeded fish consumption advisory levels. Ministry staff explained that it is common to have elevated concentrations of Mercury in man-made reservoirs. The Mercury conditions at Binbrook are typical of other sites throughout Ontario.

The 2011 sport fish sampling program found PFOS concentrations exceeding guidelines for a number of species in the Welland River, between the Hamilton Airport and Port Davidson. In 2012, fish sampling will continue to focus on this stretch of the river with additional work in downstream sections towards the Niagara River.

Staff from the Hamilton and Niagara offices of the Ministry of the Environment were invited to meet with NPCA staff. The main objective of the meeting was to get clear indication on the status of previous studies and gain an understanding of the 2012 work plan.

In July 2011, MOE staff took sediment samples from 9 locations throughout the Binbrook Reservoir. There were no sediment samples downstream of the Dam. The results and analysis of these samples will be provided by the MOE. Authority staff hope to have this information available at the Board Meeting.

MOE staff will be working over the next 5 months with Tradeport, the City of Hamilton, Transport Canada and the NPCA to develop a strategy for a Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) and an Ecological Risk Assessment. The target is to have everything in place for the study by the fall of 2012. The HHRA will involve detailed sampling of sediment, groundwater and wildlife downstream of the Airport. The study will clearly define the limits of the problem and recommend solutions for dealing with the contamination. The HHRA will involve a great

deal of public consultation at many stages throughout the process.

The HHRA proposed for the Welland River is similar to studies at Lake Gibson and at Lyon's Creek East. In these examples, Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) was found at elevated concentrations in the water body. The MOE, Environment Canada and the NPCA worked with the community, landowners and local experts to identify the scope and scale of the contamination. The study then determined options for dealing with the material and established safeguards to ensure the public and the natural environment were protected.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. 21-12 regarding PFOS Compounds at the Binbrook Reservoir be received.

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

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

TO: The Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: April 11, 2012

SUBJECT: Cave Springs Conservation Area Master Plan (update) – Report No. 22-12

In August of 2008, Conservation Authority Staff held a public open house to present a Draft Master Plan for the Cave Springs Conservation Area. A copy of the concept is attached to this report for reference.

The key elements of the plan were:

1. New parking area
2. Enhanced trail system
3. Interpretive signs
4. Removal of former residence and out buildings
5. Construction of Escarpment Bench observation platform
6. Preserving the historic barn for continued agricultural use (rental)

The NPCA received a number of comments from the public following the meeting. Most attendees supported the concept, however there were some concerns that the residence should be maintained and used as a rental property or interpretive centre. Staff inspected the structures a second time and confirmed that the investment would be too significant to maintain them in habitable condition.

Shortly after the public consultation, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) began working on a Park Planning Manual for the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (NEPOSS). NPCA staff were involved in drafting the manual as part of the Conservation Authority Working Group. The Manual would provide details on the approval process for Provincial approvals by MNR and the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Manual was finalized in late 2011.

NPCA staff are working on a submission for Master Plan approval. In the period of time since the plan was presented to the public, the agricultural operator renting the barn has advised that it is no longer required for their use. Staff maintain that the structure has historical significance and should be protected. A revised concept will be brought to the Board for consideration in May. Once staff have received endorsement from the Board, the Draft Master Plan will be submitted for further public consultation and Provincial Approvals.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. 22-12 regarding the Cave Springs Conservation Area Master Plan be received.

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

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



TO: Chairman and Members of the Authority

DATE: May 1, 2012

RE: PROJECT/PROGRAM STATUS REPORT - REPORT NO. 23-12

WATER MANAGEMENT

I. Watershed Development Services Division

1) Municipal and Development Plan Input and Review

- i) Since January staff continue to respond to a steady stream of planning and building permit applications. Staff would also advise that activity is occurring on many older subdivision and other complex files that have been dormant for the last few years. Inquiries in Niagara Falls, Port Colborne, Hamilton and West Lincoln are among the most frequent.
- ii) Welland River: Staff continue to spend a considerable amount of time responding to property inquiries from landowners, real estate agents, etc. regarding floodplain mapping for the Welland River in Wainfleet, West Lincoln, Pelham and Welland.
- iii) Staff participated in a Workshop regarding the revised Regional Environmental Impact Study Guidelines. The NPCA administers preparation of and completes reviews of these on behalf on the RMON.
- iv) An Acting, Manager of Development Services has recently been appointed while the fulltime Manager is away on a medical leave.

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

i) Permits

To date, 13 permits have been issued and several permits extended. Currently permits are being dealt with on an "as needed" basis. The new Supervisor, Construction Permit Approvals, has recently started and will be working to clear the backlog of applications.

ii) Violations

The new Construction Compliance Technician has recently started and will be working to resolve the approximately 25 outstanding complaints, most from the end of 2011. A full Violation Status Report will be prepared for next months meeting.

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. This year the watershed biologist has assumed this role and has been consulted on 4 matters to date.

iv) Municipal Drain Maintenance Review

The NPCA previously represented Conservation Authorities located in Central Ontario on the Drainage Advisory review committee (DART) Committee. Recently the DART Committee's long awaited document Drainage Act and Conservation Authorities Act Protocol – Drain Maintenance and Repair, was posted on the EBR. NPCA staff submitted a letter suggesting some minor amendments and confirming our support for the initiative.

3) Natural Heritage System (NHS) Project

Staff has completed edits to the final report and it has been posted on the website. A presentation will be made to the Board in May on both the current NHS and the previously completed NAI.

II. Watershed Technical Services Division

1) Source Water Protection Plan

- The first Source Protection Plan (SPP) public consultation period started March 2nd, and extends until April 10th. Four open house public meetings were held during the week of March 26 -30, 2012. An update was also presented to the Niagara area planners.
- Once the public consultation period is finished, the Source Protection Committee (SPC) will review the comments that were received and make revisions to the SPP as it deems appropriate. The SPP will then be released for a second public consultation period before being submitted to the province.
- Event-based modelling was completed for the DeCew, Welland and Port Colborne water treatment plant intakes, and the final report was submitted by Stantec Consultants. The results of this IPZ-3 (event-based) modeling work will be included in the next Assessment Report (and SPP) when they are updated in about 5 years.

2) Water Quality Monitoring Program:

- Water quality staff is analysing 2011 water quality data (chemistry, biological, temperature, and dissolved oxygen) for the annual water quality report.
- Water quality staff is currently planning field work for the 2012 season. Surface water quality monitoring is tentatively scheduled for 72 stations (same as 2011) depending on funding.
- Staff has collected water samples from Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network wells in March as part of its regular monitoring program. The next sampling event is Fall 2012.
- Staff has finished the Hamilton Airport 2011 Biological Monitoring Report.
- Planning for biological monitoring is currently underway and will include the Hamilton Airport stations and the Glanbrook Landfill.

- WQ staff is still assisting the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and Conservation Ontario with the Niagara Twenty Mile Creek Integrated Climate Change Study. This project will require an upgrade to the Water Survey Canada stream gauge enclosure, installation and deployment of level loggers into groundwater monitoring wells, and installation of a rain gauge.
- Staff also assisted in a number of provincial initiatives such as: (1) Ministry of Natural Resources Groundwater Indicator Program for the Low Water Response Program and Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network; (2) Niagara Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Isotope information; and (3) the Ministry of the Environment Conservation Authority GIS Portal.

3) Geographic Information Systems

a) Source Water Protection Support Activities

- Last month saw support activities focus on website updates and preparing map displays for the open houses associated with the Draft Plan commenting period.

b) Watershed Development Services Support Activities

- Staff continues with tasks for implementing the Property Info application and has recently automated the process to integrate the ownership and assessment fabrics from the Authority's three member upper tier municipalities into a seamless parcel layer as the base for this system.

c) Watershed Stewardship Support Activities

- Staff is busy updating program statistics based on the spatial restoration database now that the stewardship projects from the 2011 field season have been input.

d) Corporate GIS and Information Management Support Activities

- Staff has completed an update to our Conservation Areas mapping and property databases to reflect parcel acquisition history.
- A funding application was submitted to the Niagara Water Strategy to facilitate a vendor supplied update to the Niagara Watershed's topographic base (1 meter contour supporting Digital Terrain Model). This is a critical information asset that addresses many Authority and municipal business needs and will specifically enable the continued compilation and maintenance of the NPCA's large scale hydrology base data.
- A high level workplan was conceptualized for the Niagara Water Strategy's contemporary mapping of watercourses from an environmental risk and management perspective direct action.
- A 'base mapping cache' web map service is being developed as a requirement of the Niagara Navigator (NPCA public web mapping tool) platform migration. This cache will be able to be used as the base for additional business specific web mapping applications as needed.
- The NHS or Nature for Niagara's Future project report was published on the NPCA website. Preparation of the accompanying data package continues as time permits and will be available upon request when completed.
- Comments on the draft of the Large Scale Integrated Hydrology Data Update Pilot Project have been received and the report is currently being finalized.

4) Flood Control

a) Monitoring & Major Maintenance

i) Staff continues to monitor the water levels at the Binbrook reservoir on a regular basis. As noted in the previous monthly status updates, a routine inspection of the Binbrook Dam indicated the valves and valve actuators needed to be replaced. The faulty actuators and valves have been removed and replaced and all electrical work has been completed. NPCA staff is currently finalizing the modifications to the on-site Sutron PLC logic with the manufacturer and expect the PLC modifications to be completed mid-April.

ii) Staff continue to routinely monitor the water levels at our 14 stream gauge stations, climactic data at our 15 climate stations, and undertake routine maintenance, calibration, and inspections at all 25 installations, as part of the NPCA's routine flood forecasting and warning duties. It is noted that the public is able to access this real-time water level and rainfall information through the NPCA's website.

b) Floodplain Mapping

The Consultant working on the Central Welland River is currently undertaking additional work including an alternative analysis in order to double validate the existing mapping as described in a January report to the Board. Work to finalize the Lower and Upper Welland River remapping project is "on hold" pending the above.

III. Watershed Stewardship Division

The Watershed Restoration Program is responsible for improving water quality, water quantity and biodiversity within the NPCA Watershed. The Restoration Program advances these areas through the implementation of a comprehensive cost-sharing program that offers local landowners financial incentives to implement water quality and habitat improvement projects on their properties, thereby, rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest.

In total, over 75 restoration projects are being planned and implemented this year across all watershed planning areas.

1) Project Implementation – Watershed Plans

- In total 25 woodland restoration / riparian projects will be implemented across the watershed this year. Projects are in the planning phase.
- Over 25 construction projects such as wetland restoration, aquatic in-stream works, erosion and bank stabilization projects are currently being planned.
- Over 20 Best Management Practice (BMP) projects such as nutrient management projects, livestock fencing, cover crops and erosion control projects (rock chutes and check point dams) are currently being planned.

2) Outreach & Education

Canopies for Kids

- The goal of Canopies for Kids is to engage elementary students from all school boards in the NPCA's jurisdiction to learn through hands-on involvement, the benefits that trees provide. The science-based program is adapted for grades 1 to 8 and meets the Life Systems Strand of the Ontario Curriculum. The program will provide a deeper look at how trees improve biodiversity, water quality and air quality. Studies have shown that trees can reduce asthma rates related to poor air quality, contribute to increased physical activity, mood improvement and promote psychological well-being. Students will learn about the benefits of trees and forests and how they help our ecological, economic and social environment.

This year, 50 applications from across the entire watershed were received by the January 27th, 2012 deadline. The following 10 schools were selected by the review committee to participate in the program:

Fort Erie:	St. Joseph – Catholic Crystal Beach - Public		St. Catharines:	Apple Wood – Public Burleigh Hill – Public St. Anthony – Catholic
Grimsby:	Lakeview – Public			
Niagara Falls:	Cardinal Newman – Catholic		Wainfleet:	St. Elizabeth – Catholic
Port Colborne:	St. John Bosco - Catholic		Welland:	St. Mary – Catholic

The intent is to continue this program until all schools with less than 5% canopy cover in the playground area can be accommodated. There are approximately 80 schools in our jurisdiction that are in need of this program. Funding for this program is currently being provided by WaterSmart Niagara, St. Catharines Green Committee, and the NPCA.

Earth Day

- The NPCA will be hosting an Earth Day event at Balls Falls on Earth Day, Sunday April 22nd from 10 am – 2 pm. The venue will be open to the public, with the price of regular park admission, the public will enjoy value added programming which includes building a toad home, interpretive Eco tours, tour of the Grist Mill and the opportunity to build a nesting box, decorate it and either take it home or donate it to an NPCA stewardship project. Rona (Welland) has donated the material and supplies for the nesting box kits, including the lumber, nails and hammers. The Earth Club from E.L.Crossley is preparing the kits (cutting the wood) for assembly by the public. If you are interested in attending or helping out please contact Jocelyn Baker.

Landowner Stewardship Guide

- Building on the success of the One Mile Creek Landowner Stewardship Guide, staff are working to modify this guide to a watershed wide “How to” guide for landowners. Main topic sections will focus on improving water quality and biodiversity. The guide is currently undergoing final edits. The St. Catharine’s Green Committee is interested in

funding a portion of the printing costs; negotiations are underway, with the ultimate goal of launching the document in the Walkers Creek Watershed in partnership with the Committee and the Walkers Creek Residents Association.

Yellow Fish Road Program

- This year will be the 12th year that the NPCA has been coordinating the Yellow Fish Road (YFR) program locally on behalf of Trout Unlimited. Since 2006, 38 school groups have been reached, including over 480 students. There have been 1201 drains painted and approximately 4000 door hangers distributed. The NPCA will be distributing the new YFR brochures to all watershed schools in the spring 2012 to try to increase participation in the program this season. NPCA staff continue to liaise with Trout Unlimited for ordering supplies and tracking participants. Trout Unlimited is hoping to have their annual Yellow Fish Road Day on Friday June 8th. The NPCA will seek out a community group or school to participate in the YFR program that day to celebrate YFR Day here in Niagara.

Niagara Envirothon

- The 5th annual Niagara Envirothon (an outdoor environmental skill testing competition for high school students) began on April 4th at the Jericho House retreat in Wainfleet, where students participated in hands-on learning workshops. Competition day is April 18th, where the 13 teams representing 7 different schools across Niagara compete for regional title and to move on to Provincial completion. NPCA staff have been working with the Jericho House on a naturalization project, making it an ideal location to hold our event.

Registered schools include:

Beamsville District Secondary School (Lincoln)
Ridgeway Crystal Beach High School (Fort Erie)
Denis Morris Catholic High School (St. Catharines)
E.L. Crossley Secondary School (Pelham)
Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School (St. Catharines)
Stamford Collegiate (Niagara Falls)
Lakeshore Catholic High School (Port Colborne)
Westlane (Niagara Falls)
St. Michael Catholic High School (Niagara Falls)

Community Fisheries Involvement Programs

- The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) has been collecting fisheries data in the Welland River Watershed for almost a decade. There are two active programs that allow the NPCA to collect this information, the Angler Catch & Release Program, and the Angler Diary Program. Both programs rely on local anglers to support the data collection. The Fish Tagging Program captures fish through netting and angling, marks the fish with an identification tag, and then relies on anglers to call in to report having caught a tagged fish. The Angler Diary program encourages anglers to

record information about their recreational fishing activities. These programs were originally created to monitor the success of the Walleye Stocking Program in the Welland River (partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Conservation Authority, Fort Erie Conservation Club and the Port Colborne and District Conservation Club) and to assist with the prioritization of restoration work within the Welland River.

LAND MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Overall Conservation Area Operations

The unseasonal warm weather has resulted in questions about the operating season for many of our park facilities and programs. Outdoor activities are taking place much earlier than in previous years and visitors are surprised that our washroom facilities, gatehouses and historic buildings are not yet open.

The majority of our facilities are seasonal. Water supplies and utilities are not designed to endure sub-zero temperatures or frost. In addition, many of the staff who maintain and look after the buildings are not brought on until mid-April.

Although it seems like early summer, our operations remain "off-season". Staff are taking advantage of the warm weather to get a jump on some projects, and the results will be evident when the regular season begins.

Ball's Falls Conservation Area

Staff have been following up offers of additional shelving for the gift shop at local sales and liquidations. The empty hall way outside the gift shop now has chairs and two tables for visitors to wait indoors and have a coffee or snack.

Ball's Falls is awaiting results from the MAP Grant Application aimed at supporting the From Crystals to Gems Exhibit in 2012. Officials have said the grant looks positive and results will be revealed at the end of March but no word has been given.

The 2012 Jubilee event planning continues. Jubilee memorabilia has been received for distribution. Staff spoke with the Niagara this Week Editor to do an advanced Promotion event for this and other special events. This advanced promotion event will be the approach taken in future to ensure community interest and advanced publicity.

Applications for both Provincially funded and Federally funded employment programmes for Ball's Falls, Binbrook Conservation, Long Beach and Chippawa, and St. Johns Centre conservation areas have been prepared and submitted. Job postings have been listed on the NPCA and Ball's Falls web site. Niagara College and Brock University have also received job postings specific to Ball's Falls.

The Museums and Technology Fund grant continues to move forward with the purchase of software and computer equipment. Free furnishings continue to be wrangled. An ad and press release requesting candidates for the position went out to several museum specific postings and the NPCA. Over 60 applications were received and of that 12 candidates were selected. Seven candidates were interviewed and the Job has been offered to the successful candidate.

Plans for the Thanksgiving Festival are underway. A new Jury has been selected including Ellen Mitchinson (Advisory Board) and Betsy Foster (Niagara Region Tourism.) The Jury spent two days going through approximately 130 applicants. The concept of using the CFC for a “celebrations centre” during the Thanksgiving event is gathering momentum. It will feature caterers and event planners. The traditional music venue located at the barn will be moved to the other side of the creek, hopefully drawing visitors across and to the CFC. The new stage set-up will be less expensive and open up more space for vendors. Several initiatives are underway to improve customer service and communication for the event.

An Earth Day event is scheduled for Sunday, April 22nd at Ball’s Falls. Activities will include build and decorate your own bird nesting box to take home, build and decorate your own toad home to take home, guided tours of the Balls Family Grist Mill, guided ecotours to the Upper Balls Falls. The event is supported by Rona (Welland) and E. L. Crossley Secondary School, E.A.R.T.H Committee. Activities are included in regular park admission.

The Victoria Avenue entrance sign will be altered to promote services and programmes. Staff attended a number of events to conduct public outreach for Ball’s Falls including the Hamilton District School Board Career Day on March 5 and the Beamer Hawk Watch on Good Friday.

The Ontario Mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative welcomed Environment Minister Jim Bradley as their guest and discussed progress under their continued collaborative relationship at Ball’s Falls on March 9th.

The Pathways to Peace exhibit will continue to run until April 30th. The Traitors, Treason and Tunes event for March 31 attracted 80 visitors. The event received coverage from COGECO TV, Bullet News Niagara and local media.

Grounds staff have been doing additional ongoing maintenance and spring preparations including new windows, and helping to refresh the Mill’s exhibition for May. This development is very exciting because the Mill’s exhibition remained unchanged for several decades! It will now be an operating Mill and should capture the interest of visitors both old and new. The opening will coincide with an anticipated Historical Restoration Award, the Jon Jouppien Award.

The gardening committee have returned to prepare the vegetable gardens in the historical area. A refurbished water pump has been acquired and installed at the Ball Homestead exterior. A new raised garden is being put in place at the Furry Cabin.

Staff are working on the graphic designs for new map boards to be installed out in the park this season. Site maintenance of the landscape areas at the Centre has started, and staff are looking at ways and means to enhance the floral display in the garden beds at the patio and east entrance for our visitors hosting weddings and events.

Long Beach and Chippawa Creek Conservation Areas

The seasonal camping fee payment deadline has passed. Currently, Long Beach has 77 seasonal reservations, and Chippawa Creek has 65 seasonal camping reservations. This represents about \$280,000 in revenue to NPCA. These numbers will increase slightly over the next couple months. The current reservation numbers are good, and are on-par with seasonal reservations for other years.

Over 75 applications were received for the Assistant Superintendent position at Long Beach. This position was vacated in September 2011, when Gregg Furtney became the Superintendent at Binbrook Conservation Area.

Contract staff are being recalled April 10 to begin turning on campground systems and setup for the seasonal camper arrivals on May 14 and opening on May 18. Work for the month includes hiring summer staff, drinking water / sewage system startup / testing (including support to other Areas), spring grounds cleanup, grass mowing early due to mild weather, fixing broken lines, table repair, tree cutting / inspections, trail inspections / repair, lots of cleaning / sprucing up, and other operations tasks.

Potable water tank cleaning at the campgrounds (as per O.Reg 319) is set for the week of April 9 to ensure drinking water supplies are maintained as safe.

Although the presence of the Region of Niagara's Wainfleet Lake Erie Access Beach has impacted on Day Use visitation at the Area, campground staff will again be performing maintenance, monitoring and regulatory compliance tasks at the site in 2012. The work done in 2011 directly resulted in the employment of a Wainfleet resident in a summer position in 2011, will do so again in 2012, and helped offset Day Use revenue impacts to some extent. Regional staff have commented that NPCA staff at Long Beach are ideally located and suited to performing the tasks required at the Access Beach in a very cost-effective way because it dovetails with similar park operations at the Conservation Area.

Binbrook Conservation Area

New highway signs are now in place on Highway 403 and Highway 6 directing visitors to the park. The signs include the new Conservation Ontario logo and are consistent with the other blue and white highway signs produced and installed by Canadian TODS (Tourism-Oriented Directional Signing). Staff will be updating our sign inventory and mapping the gps locations for these new signs.

A new gatehouse floor has been installed with some touch up painting to be completed this spring. Additional work on the phone and security system will improve staff communication and provide better customer service to our visitors.

Plans are well underway for the Glanbrook Conservation Committee Fishing Derby on May 12th, 2012. Conservation Area staff will be on hand to assist with the event, which highlights the sport fishing opportunities at the Binbrook Reservoir. This year the Fishing Derby is a catch-and-release format.

Binbrook Staff will be attending and showcasing at the Binbrook Home Show (May 5th and 6th), continuing with outreach to the local community.

The warm weather has allowed contractors to accelerate splashpad upgrades. As a result this project is well ahead of schedule. The new treatment facility will be in place and expected to be up and running by May 1st.

Binbrook was the site for more television filming. On March 27, the park was used to film a segment for the crime show *Cold Blood Season 4, episode 9*. The site is becoming very popular with Toronto production companies that are looking for sites outside the GTA.

Beamer

Staff were out completing site preparations for the annual Hawk Watch event held Good Friday. New for this year was the installation and dedication of two memorial benches at the base of the main viewing tower. The benches are in memory of Bruce Duncan, founder of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch; and Dave Copeland who initiated and fostered the hawk watch at this property. The Good Friday event attracted an estimated 700 visitors. Conservation Authority staff were at the event to assist with parking, traffic control and to promote the NPCA. Activities included an information/activity tent and Balls Falls outreach with activities and information related to birds.

Last year a segment of the Bruce Trail at the base of the escarpment was re-routed to avoid a hazardous area under erosion. The Bruce Trail organization has recently published this new trail segment in their promotional materials to members.

EC Brown Wetland

On a routine site visit staff noticed some damage and weathering of two interpretive signs that were in place over the winter. The weathering was found to be a defect in the sign resin manufacturing, and we are working with the sign manufacturer to replace all the interpretive signs under warranty. Staff are also working with the sign company, for no extra charge, to add web-based QR codes to the signs for park visitors to try using and access our web-site. This will be a test case for some of our other sites. The new signs are currently under fabrication and will be installed later this spring.

Balls Falls Conservation Area

A Pollinator Bee Booth will be purchased and installed at Ball's Falls Conservation Area as part of the educational program to increase environmental awareness on: insects, pollinators and the bees ecological role in the environment. Primary funding of this resource was generously granted from the TD Friends of the Environment. Visitors to the site will be seeing, hearing and learning the valuable role of this species, threats to its survival, and how humans can help in everyday activities to maintain a healthy ecosystem and its species.

St. Johns Conservation Area

NPCA staff are preparing for the stocking of the St. Johns pond. The stocking is made possible through the generous support of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation. The pond opening is scheduled for Saturday April 28, 2012 at 12 noon.

The entrance and parking lot resurfacing project, scheduled for 2011, was deferred when the City of Thorold Contractor shut down before the project could be completed. The contract price was guaranteed and the project carried over to 2012. Conservation Authority staff are working with the contractor to ensure that the St. Johns Project receives the highest priority.

St. Johns Centre Conservation Area

The first meeting of the St. Johns Centre Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, March 28th. The group discussed future directions for the site, programming opportunities and reviewed the agreement with local Boards of Education. The meeting concluded with a tour of the barn and stables where the Spring Lamb program is conducted.

NPCA Hunting Program

To date, 110 permits have been issued for hunting on Conservation Authority lands. Of this total, hunting permits are issued to 21 individuals residing outside of our administrative area.

Turtle Monitoring Program

Over 80 Turtle Monitoring locations of road crossings have been established as part of the volunteer monitoring network. This will assist in determining the decline of turtles related to vehicular mishap. The identification of areas with high turtle mortality will result, in addition to types of species in an area, species at risk and related habitat needs and areas where road crossing features modifications can be suggested.

Species at Risk

Monitoring continuing with the re-installation of moisture data loggers for several Eastern Flowering Dogwood. This information along with light densitometer reading will assist in determining possible moisture and light needs of the tree which may be helpful in protecting this species from the devastating Anthracnose disease.

Propagation of the endangered Red Mulberry Tree is also continuing. Staff recently met with Recovery Team representatives on the progress and future recovery steps of the Ontario Red Mulberry populations. Some next steps include genetic testing of all seedlings, and a full Team decision on planting before planting in the wild.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Good Friday Hawkwatch Open House

The Authority collaborated with the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch on the Open House event. Memorial Benches were installed in memory of Dave Copeland and Bruce Duncan who were long term members of this group. The event was very well attended and visitors enjoyed many displays and activities as well as lots of fresh air and exercise during their trek along the various trails.

Earth Day Activities

A number of requests to assist with Earth Day (April 22, 2012) activities have been received. The NPCA is providing information to as many organizations as possible to assist with their efforts to promote environmental stewardship. The NPCA will be hosting a special event at Ball's Falls as part of our ongoing outreach activities. Visitors will have an opportunity to build and decorate a bird nesting box and tours of the site will also be offered. Regular Day Admission applies, but all other activities are free. It's very gratifying to see our watershed communities coming together to celebrate this event.

St. Johns Conservation Area Trout Season Opening

The annual Trout Season Opening Day at St. Johns Conservation Area will be held on Saturday, April 28th beginning at 12:00 noon. This is a great opportunity for families to enjoy the celebrations. A valid fishing license is required and conservation limits will apply.

Science and Engineering Fair

The Fair is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year and the NPCA has been a sponsor for 18 years. Staff was on hand on April 4th to present awards. We presented 4 awards for projects which 'create awareness of the need to manage natural resources including water, forests, land, fish and wildlife habitats for the benefit of both present and future residents of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's area of jurisdiction.' The recipients were: Emily Stewart - Ecole elementaire catholique Saint-Antoine; Project: L'eau proper: oui ou non; Stephen Cho - St. Alexander; Project: Understanding the Greenhouse Effect; Julian Ellis Geronimo - Michael J. Brennan; Project: Which Paper Towel is the Strongest; Jessica Horton – Ecole elementaire catholique Saint-Francois-d'Assise; Project: L'impact de l'ersosion du sol sur l'agriculture mondiale.

The projects were outstanding and it is very gratifying to see the efforts that go into the projects as well as the organization of the fair.

Source Water Protection

Public Open Houses were held on March 26 (Niagara Falls), March 28th (2 sessions – Thorold and Port Colborne) and March 29th (Grimsby) regarding the DRAFT PROPOSED SOURCE PROTECTION PLAN. Attendance was minimal. Public comments are being received and will be incorporated into any changes and then another consultation period will ensure before finalizing the Plan.

In addition to Newspaper advertisements, notices were sent to the member municipalities and landowners that may be impacted by the proposed plan. The NPCA Chair was on hand at the Niagara Falls meeting, and other members of the board and Source Protection Committee attended other sessions.

Traitors, Treason and Tunes-War of 1812 Event at Ball's Falls

About 80 people attended the event on March 31st including Malcolm Allen M.P., and Cindy Forster M.P.P., and Mayor Bill Hodgson. Special thanks are extended to Mayor Doug Joyner for the great job he performed as M.C. Guests had a great time as they celebrated a wonderful afternoon of entertainment including a talk by Rev. Canon Robert Brownlie speaking about the Ancaster Assize and a great performance by the band Muddy York.

Town of Lincoln Communities in Bloom

The Town of Lincoln NPCA staff is continuing to work with Town of Lincoln on the Communities in Bloom competition.

Niagara Children's Water Festival

As of this time 40 schools have registered for the program.

Fundraising Update

A meeting of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation was held on April 3rd, at which time the Annual Meeting also took place. A discussion was held concerning recruiting new members and staff is working on developing Terms of Reference in this regard.

The Bob Welch Memorial Golf Classic will take place at Whirlpool Golf Course on Tuesday, June 5th. Approximately 450 packages have been mailed out and it is hoped that we will have a sellout at 144 golfers.

Recommendation:

Report No. 23-12 outlining the status of Authority projects/programs be received for information.

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