



NIAGARA PENINSULA  
**CONSERVATION**  
AUTHORITY

# 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

*"The environment is where we all meet, where all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share. It is not only a mirror of ourselves, but a focusing lens on what we can become."*

LADY BIRD JOHNSON, 1967





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## IN MEMORIAM

DOUGLAS EDWIN ELLIOTT

APRIL 5, 1925 – JUNE 10, 2013

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority was saddened to learn that Doug Elliott, founding member of the NPCA passed away.

Born in Welland, Ontario, Doug Elliott transformed an early love for the outdoors into the pioneering role he has played as a conservationist in this region of Ontario and Canada – a role he selflessly embraced, and one that has borne results that will continue to enrich the lives of everyone who cherishes the rich diversity and beauty of this region's natural heritage for generations to come.

Doug Elliott began his role as conservationist in the 1930s and 40s before the word "conservationist" was part of the popular vocabulary and when, as he recalls; "People in this country still felt we had lots of land. We don't need conservation." He was a member in those days of the Welland Anglers Association, the Welland Outdoorsmen Club and later, the Welland County Conservation Club, which he became president of in 1952. Under his leadership, the club spearheaded tree plantings and other projects aimed at improving water quality conditions in one of our major watersheds, the Welland River.

In the 1950's, Doug championed the idea of establishing a Conservation Authority, which now plays a lead role in delivering watershed-based programs. Doug was instrumental in communicating the need for such a body to the more than two dozen large and small municipalities that governed the area at the time. In the spring of 1959, a majority of representatives for those municipalities gave their approval and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority was created.

As a founding member of the NPCA, Doug served on its board for 38 years, including seven years as Chairman. Through those years, he played a key role in acquisition and ongoing stewardship of 2,800 hectares (more than 7,000 acres) of some of the wonderful properties now being managed for the enjoyment of residents and countless others who visit.



Doug Elliott receiving Queen's Jubilee Medal from Cindy Forster, MPP

He played a leadership role in major water protection projects including ongoing remediation efforts in the Welland River watershed.

And yet, that is not all.

Doug took time out to serve his country during the Second World War. From 1943 through 1945, he was based in England, serving with the Royal Canadian Air Force. As a veteran, he remained an active member of the Canadian Legion, Branch 612, located in the Niagara Municipality of Pelham. Through that group, his efforts have included raising about \$8,000 in coffee money for our Canadian troops in Afghanistan, and helped to win a designation of a stretch of Highway 20 through Pelham as "Veteran's Way," in honor of those who have served Canada in all past wars.

Until his recent illness no longer allowed him to be active, Doug represented the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, another organization of which he had long been a member. He was involved in a committee to ensure that the remediation of an old Atlas Steels industrial dump along the Welland River is carried out in a way that protects the quality of the river's waters.

In 2012 the NPCA nominated Doug Elliott as a candidate for a Diamond Jubilee Medal marking the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's ascension to the Throne as Queen of Canada. Doug Elliott's service to community shines on and he will be missed by all who had the pleasure to know him.



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

BART MAVES

As Chairman of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's Board of Directors, I am pleased to share our 2012 Annual Report with you.

2012 marked my second year as Chairman of the Conservation Authority's Board. And while I am also an elected representative for Niagara Falls, it is important for the people the NPCA serves to know that this Board is comprised of representatives appointed from the member municipalities - Niagara Region, City of Hamilton and Haldimand County. This is to ensure that there are voices on our Board from every community across the watershed.

This Conservation Authority and its Board has had a proud history of working closely with our municipal partners and with other public and private partners to provide solid leadership from both an economic and transparency perspective. It is a history our Board wishes to build on in what are very challenging times for public agencies.

Decisions affect all sectors of the NPCA's operations and programs and to that end, we moved forward in 2012 with work towards a new Strategic Plan that is aimed at reaching out and working with our public and private partners, residents, and businesses. Work on the Strategic Plan began in 2011 and continued in earnest in 2012 with the establishment of five working



Chairman Bart Maves and Vice-Chairman Bruce Timms (2012)

groups of volunteers representing a broad spectrum of people in the community, business, agriculture, development, conservation, communications and other sectors. These participants contributed their expertise and countless hours over the year to discuss and recommend ideas that the Conservation Authority and its Board is now in the process of incorporating into a Strategic Plan. We anticipate that this process will be finalized by the end of 2013. Our Board cannot say enough for the interest and support we have received from these individuals.

Once finalized, the Strategic Plan will provide a roadmap for the future, ensuring we continue to be accountable from a service delivery perspective, and strengthening our communication with community stakeholders on matters that affect their interests and well-being. This includes making any changes necessary to improve our delivery of services.

Before I close, I wish to offer the Board's thanks to the many individuals who have lent their expertise and perspectives to this Strategic Plan process. I would also like to offer our thanks, once again, to our member municipalities - Region of Niagara, City of Hamilton and Haldimand County, NPCA staff, and the countless number of individuals and groups who support our efforts.

Bart Maves



## MESSAGE FROM THE CAO SECRETARY TREASURER

TONY D'AMARIO, P.Eng.



It is once again my privilege to share a yearly review of the ongoing work our Conservation Authority has undertaken.

As I reflect on some of the highlights we share with you in this, our 2012 Annual Report, I am reminded that 2012 marked the 54th year of the NPCA's formation.

The founding years of our Conservation Authority have always been a matter of pride for us. In 2012 our Board and staff had occasion to celebrate them again when we learned that Doug Elliott, a native of Welland, Ontario, lover of the outdoors and truly one of the individuals instrumental in the creation of this and other Authorities across the province, would be bestowed with a Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Doug served on our Authority's Board for 38 years, including seven years as Chairman. During that time, he played an instrumental role in negotiating the acquisition of many of our Conservation Areas, including Long Beach, Ball's Falls, Woodend, Chippawa Creek, the Wainfleet Bog and Binbrook.

Doug's legacy cannot be underestimated. Every time one of us takes a walk along the sandy shores of Lake Erie at Long Beach or watches hawks and eagles circling in the updrafts above the Niagara Escarpment at Beamer Conservation Area or enjoys a festival or heritage exhibits at our Ball's Falls site, we are reminded that Doug and his fellow conservationist pioneers played an invaluable role in leaving those gifts to us.

The passion and commitment they showed continues to inspire us as a Board and staff today as we continue working with so many of you – local municipalities, farmers and other businesses and landowners, provincial and federal agencies and others across the Niagara watershed – to fulfill our mission as watershed stewards.

Our Conservation Authority remains committed to providing exceptional service to achieve a sustainable environment that benefits everyone who needs and enjoys clean, safe waters and a diversity of wildlife and other natural features for business, healthy living and recreation.

We also take pride in passing an ethic of sustainable environmental stewardship on to new generations of residents across the Niagara watershed through ongoing programs such as Yellow Fish Road, Envirothon, Canopies for Kids and the ever popular Niagara Children's Water Festival, which you can learn more about in this report.

To all of those out there who have partnered with us in the past and who continue to partner with us to assist us in fulfilling our conservation mission, we cannot thank you enough.

We are always interested in reaching out to our residents who live and work in this watershed to ensure that our efforts contribute to a healthier, more prosperous future for us all.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tony D'Amario'.

Tony D'Amario , P. Eng.





## CORPORATE SERVICES



### Front Row (left to right):

Doug 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

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority was established on April 30, 1959 as one of 36 conservation authorities' operating in the Province of Ontario. The NPCA 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, delivering a variety of watershed-based programs.

Our 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 2012

### 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

DOUG RANSOM  
Town of Lincoln

MAYOR BARRY SHARPE  
City of Welland

BOB STECKLEY  
Town of Fort Erie

### HALDIMAND COUNTY

TONY DALIMONTE

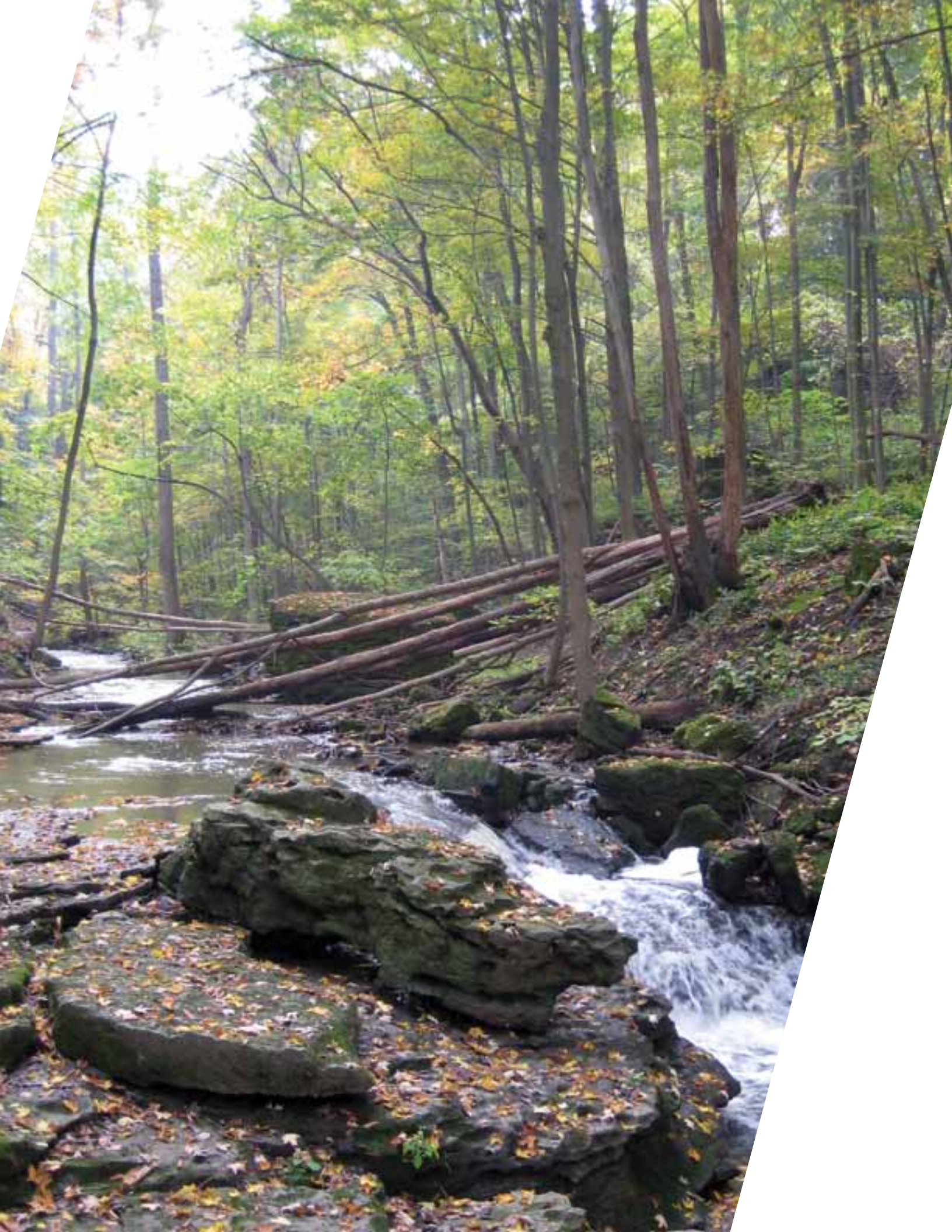
### CITY OF HAMILTON

J. STEWART BEATTIE  
CARMEN D'ANGELO

*"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."*

HENRY FORD

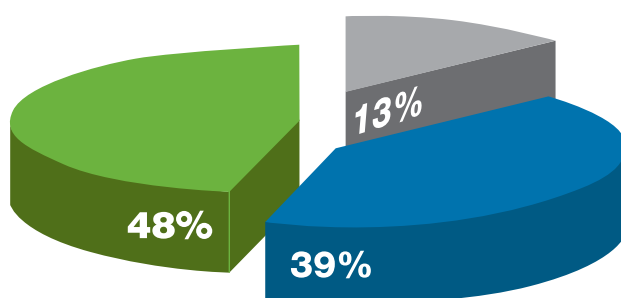






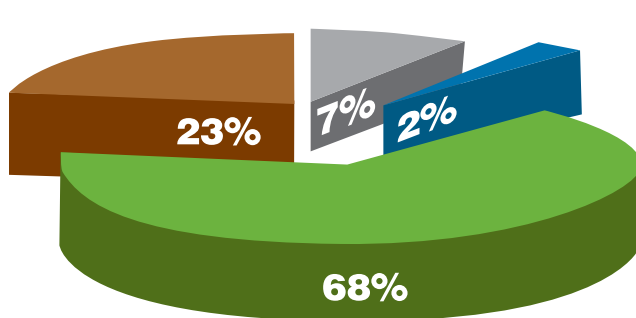
## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### EXPENDITURES



Corporate Services	\$1,293,356
Water Management	\$3,815,506
Land Management	\$4,717,029
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,825,891</b>

### REVENUES\*



Provincial	\$785,563
Federal	\$255,578
Regional/Municipal	\$7,441,925
Self-Generated	\$2,421,864
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,949,930</b>

\* Does not include land donation (\$1,350,000)

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



## WATER MANAGEMENT

Water Management remains as a core activity area for the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority striving to provide balanced programs and services.

The Water Management Department comprises of 3 divisions working to achieve corporate priorities.

### WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The watershed development services division is primarily responsible for plan review under the regional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Niagara Region and administration of Ontario Regulation 155/06: waterways, valleylands and wetlands regulation. Watershed plans have been developed to consider the best means to maintain water quality and quantity in each of our 32 land management areas. The results of completed plans are also used to inform the work undertaken by the watershed stewardship division.

- Screen and process applications and act as a liaison between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and proponents to recommend appropriate fish habitat compensation projects. In 2012, staff consulted on 69 such matters under the agreement.
- Reviewed and processed 315 planning applications and 306 municipal building permits pursuant to the

NPCA's 'Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation (Ontario Regulation 155/06 – and MOU).

- Responded to numerous inquiries from landowners, real estate agents and other parties, many of which were in regards to new floodplain mapping in the Welland River system in the municipalities of Wainfleet, West Lincoln, Pelham and Welland.
- Issued 149 permits under the Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alteration to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation for protecting watercourses from any negative ecological impacts.

### WATERSHED TECHNICAL SERVICES

The watershed technical services group is responsible for a wide range of specialized technical support functions including flood control, monitoring and warning, water quality monitoring, source water protection and geographical information systems.

- In 2012, staff completed their work on the development of a source protection plan which was submitted to the Minister of Environment in August. The work included presentations to the City of Thorold and Lake Gibson committee, troubleshooting and quality assurance/quality control (qa/qc) of provincial data base uploads, and coordinating other source water protection requests from the province.





- Continued to monitor water levels at the Binbrook reservoir and adjust the valve settings as required based on weather conditions. The public can access real-time water levels and rainfall information at the reservoir through the NPCA's website [www.npca.ca](http://www.npca.ca).
- Surface water quality monitoring continued at 72 stations across the watershed. Samples from these stations are tested for bacteria, nutrients, metals and a host of chemicals.
- Staff continued to monitor water levels at Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) wells in the watershed and assisted in collecting water quality samples from these wells. This provincial network provides information that assists not only in addressing groundwater issues that may affect the survival of fish and other aquatic life, but may impact on groundwater supplies for agricultural, commercial, industrial and other residents in rural municipalities.
- The NPCA is committed to working with our public and private partners to protect, preserve and restore surface and below ground waters for the benefit of all who depend on these systems as a sources of drinking water or benefit from them for recreational or economic purposes.
- In the fall of 2012, staff also collected benthic (organisms living on or near the bottom of water bodies) samples downstream in the watershed, including our Binbrook Conservation Area, from the Hamilton Airport. Identified by the Ontario Ministry of Environment in recent years as a potential source of the chemical contaminant PFOS, staff have continued to work closely with the MOE, City of Hamilton's Health Services Department, Tradeport International Corporation and other agencies to resolve this issue.
- Staff also assisted the MOE with two key projects in our watershed – tracking nutrient concentrations in Beaver Creek and maintaining our Ball's Falls Conservation Area's Climate Change Station.
- The Authority's GIS staff was engaged in a peer review of water quality data, and ongoing water quality issues in the province.
- Hosted the quarterly Regional Flood Forecasting and Warning Meeting to ensure that the Authority's flood forecasting and warning efforts are consistent with those of neighbouring Conservation Authorities in the Hamilton, Grand River and Long Point regions.
- Provided technical engineering support to partner municipalities' Development Services, and Restoration and Lands Divisions as requested.
- Staff made a presentation at the ESRI ArcGIS Conference on Source Water Sewage System Analysis in Toronto, and participated in provincial meetings for the Ontario Geological Survey Data Needs Assessment and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Low Water Responses Program review.
- GIS staff also provided technical support for the Liquid Assets Report and Water Use Survey.
- During the Hurricane Sandy storm in the fall of 2012, staff remained in close contact with



provincial and municipal emergency response teams for updates on possible watershed flooding concerns for which the NPCA received notes of appreciation for providing accurate and timely information during this time of concern.

- Staff continued working on pilot project aimed at adding available information on fisheries and drainage areas to the Authority's large scale 1:2000 surface water base to help identify with more certainty where fisheries issues need to be addressed in the watershed.

## WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

The watershed stewardship program works to implement restoration projects identified in NPCA Watershed Plans, through cost-sharing programs with land owners that help to improve and maintain water quality and wildlife habitat throughout the watershed.

- Implemented 20 woodland restoration and/or riparian projects in shoreline areas across the watershed, and more than 20 other construction projects, including ones dedicated to wetland restoration, and erosion and bank stabilization.
- A floodplain wetland restoration project was completed with landowners living along the Welland River in the Wainfleet area. This wetland project contributes to healthier aquatic wildlife, including a bird, fish and amphibian protective plan; thus contributing to sustaining a diversity of life in our watershed.

- Staff worked with landowners to design and construct a stream crossing for the movement of farm equipment across a small tributary of the Welland River. The crossing will provide access to farm fields while preventing farm equipment from driving through the creek, causing erosion and sedimentation.
- Staff also worked with partners on a rural water quality program to improve surface and groundwater quality in Haldimand County. This volunteer program provided financial incentives to farmers to improve and protect water quality on lands used for agriculture.
- Staff also worked with private and public partners on more than 10 Best Management Practice (BMP) projects, including nutrient management, livestock fencing, cover crops and erosion control.
- In partnership with Transport Canada, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and an adjacent landowner, a cleanup of debris on and near the Canadian Pacific Railway Bridge crossing over the Welland River was undertaken.

## CANOPIES FOR KIDS PROGRAM

- In 2012 the NPCA was pleased to continue this program, which was introduced for elementary schools in 2011. The purpose of the program is to engage young people in planting shade trees on school grounds and through that activity, offer them educational information on the benefits that trees contribute to our environment and health. Schools participated through interactive school assemblies and workshops provided by Authority staff. Staff lent its expertise to school





teams on planning and siting the planting of large and small native tree species. There is no cost to the participating schools and 10 schools 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. In 2011 and 2012, more than 100 large trees and 300 smaller trees were planted at 20 elementary schools across the watershed as part of this program. Staff monitoring shows that the schools have done an excellent job caring for the trees.

### YELLOW FISH ROAD PROGRAM

- 2012 was the 12th year that the NPCA coordinated the Yellow Fish Program in this watershed on behalf of Trout Unlimited Canada. The Yellow Fish Road Program is aimed at raising public awareness about the environmental impacts of disposing hazardous substances down municipal sewer and storm drains. The contribution of young people for raising that public awareness is key to making this program work. In that spirit, staff continued to contact and work with schools and clubs in the watershed interested in participating in the program.

### COMMUNITY FISHERIES PROGRAMS

- The Angler Diary Program has been coordinated by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority since the programs' inception in the spring of 2001. The program was created to monitor the success of the Walleye Stocking Program (in partnership with the Ministry of Natural

Resources, 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.

- The Angler Diary is provided every spring to interested anglers / program participants. Anglers are asked to record the dates, times and locations of their fishing trips, the species of fish that were sought and what fish were caught. They also record estimated or measured length for the fish they caught and whether the fish were kept or released. There is also a section for general comments where anglers often record wildlife sightings or the type of bait that was used.
- Since the Angler Diary Program has proven to be a success within the Welland River watershed the NPCA has expanded it to include the Twelve Mile Creek watershed. This program will be targeting the native brook trout populations within the cold water section of the creek. The NPCA's Angler Diary Program, in conjunction with our Angler Catch & Release Program, continues to collect data from anglers in the Welland River and Twelve Mile Creek. The program aims to assess the health of fisheries in the watershed.
- In 2012, the NPCA distributed 42 Welland River Angler Diaries and 10 anglers participated in the Twelve Mile Creek Angler Diary program. This year for the first time, the Guide to Eating Sports Fish in Ontario was included with the diaries. In the past, some anglers have kept all of the fish that they catch and the NPCA wanted to raise awareness about consumption guidelines in Ontario.



- In October 2012 staff installed two large trap nets in the Welland River near Merritt Island to catch more fish to be tagged and released in an area of the watershed that is a popular for fishing. An annual report on the results of the program will be prepared and made public.

*“Rivers are places that renew our spirit, connect us with our past, and link us directly with the flow and rhythm of the natural world.”*

TED TURNER

## NIAGARA ENVIROTHON

- In partnership with local naturalist clubs, the NPCA was pleased to continue playing a lead role in the 5th annual Niagara Envirothon, an outdoor, environment skill competition for high school students. The Envirothon was held at Jericho House retreat in Wainfleet in April . A total of 13 teams from seven secondary schools across the watershed participated. The Jericho House, an ecumenical and inter-faith centre for youth, was a great location and was able to engage students in a naturalization project at the site.

## 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. The NPCA has continued to play a lead role in coordinating the Remedial Action Plan for the Niagara River Corridor. A number of actions have been implemented in partnership with the Niagara River Restoration Council and Environment Canada to restore a water system that is world renowned and vital to the health and economies of communities in the lower Great Lakes Basin.











## LAND MANAGEMENT

The NPCA's owns and operates a number of Conservation Areas totaling 7,200 acres (2,920 hectares). These lands are protected and maintained for their natural heritage features and diverse recreational and educational opportunities.

### BALL'S FALLS

- Designated a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Ball's Falls is a site offering numerous programs and activities all year round.
- In 2012 the NPCA applied to the Canadian Museum Operation Grant program for funding and began meetings with the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Tourism over plans to develop a strategic plan for museum operations at the Ball's Falls site.
- Implemented a video on Facebook and the Ball's Falls website showcasing the facilities rental program for this Conservation Area.
- Six outstanding, circa 1860's costumes were donated to Ball's Falls and will be used to improve historical interpretation at the site.
- The Authority received \$15,000 in funding from the Museum Assistance Program towards the 'Crystals to Gems Exhibit'.
- Hosted representatives from the United Nations Education, Scientific and Culture Organization (UNESCO) World Biosphere Reserve Program to tour the Ball's Falls site and speak with staff. They were touring Niagara Escarpment sites as part of a Man and Biosphere Program.

- Presented a Queen's Jubilee community event including a citizenship ceremony in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- The 38th Annual Thanksgiving Festival – an event that has become a popular feature of the fall season attracted a total of 16,816 (adult admission) visitors.
- In the fall of 2012, the Authority was pleased to host a travelling exhibit from the Royal Ontario Museum on Iroquois Beadwork at the Centre for Conservation.
- 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. A public Earth Day event took place on April 22 with lots of interesting activities for visitors.

### BINBROOK

- The NPCA introduced 'Movie Night at the Park, featuring the popular family-oriented Hollywood film 'The Lorax. The event was extremely well-received.
- In October 2012, a Toronto film company shot a television commercial for Cannon cameras at the site.
- The annual waterfowl hunting season saw a decline in the number of hunters participating. The Authority's Board decided to undertake a review of this event that includes contacting hunters to determine what enhancements can be made to improve participation.





- In November 2012 a beach expansion project was completed. The project doubles the size of the beach area available to visitors during the summer season. Willow vegetation from this beach expansion project was placed along the shoreline to stabilize soils and provide habitat and shade for wildlife.
- Staff engaged in discussions with Niagara Boarder Pass to examine the feasibility of installing a cable wake board facility and hope to have it set up at this site for the 2013 season.

### EC BROWN

- Staff initiated a formal trail access agreement with the Welland/Niagara Central Airport to discuss access through its property on the Welland River, E.C. Brown Conservation Area and the E.C. Brown Wetland. These discussions were encouraging and may result in construction of a trail in 2013.

### MOUNTAINVIEW

- Work continued on the maintenance of a new access trail up the Niagara Escarpment to connect with a stretch of the Bruce Trail running through the 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 for hiking.

### LONG BEACH AND CHIPPAWA CREEK

- In 2012 design plans were completed for new washroom facilities at the Chippawa Creek site. Staff began working on building plans which will be submitted to the Township of Wainfleet for a permit.

- An incident of bubbling water at the Chippawa Creek campsite following heavy rains was determined to be caused by gas from a potentially unsealed natural gas well. While no further natural gas was detected, as a precautionary measure, the Authority continues to monitor for natural gas at the site.
- Algae on Long Beach posed a serious problem in 2012 due to weather conditions. Staff worked as quickly as possible to clean up mats of algae on the beach following storms.
- Campgrounds and other recreational amenities were enjoyed by visitors.

### JORDAN HARBOUR

- The NPCA worked in partnership with volunteers from the Niagara Fishing Ambassadors and other not-for-profit partner groups for a Harbour Cleanup and Garbage Derby event. About 40 volunteers participated, collecting more than half a ton of garbage in and around the shorelines of Jordan Harbour.

### ST. JOHNS

- Steps were taken in 2012 to protect the trail at this site from valley erosion measures in cooperation with neighboring landowners. Staff will continue to monitor the area to ensure the measures taken will work effectively to protect a recreational and fish habitat area valued by many members of the public.
- Staff also worked to remove invasive species, including goldfish, large mouth bass and other species not common to this water system, to



protect a sensitive population of freshwater brook trout (one of the only populations of its kind in the entire watershed.) A total of 28 large mouth bass were removed and relocated with the assistance of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

### WOODEND

- Staff continued work on a vegetation survey at Woodend. Summer vegetation was inventoried and unique plant species and potentially critical overwintering animal habitat was identified.

### STEVENSVILLE

- In partnership with two of our local partners, the Fort Erie Conservation Club and Pheasants Forever, the Authority planted native prairie grasses and flowers at this site to provide a sustainable food supply for native wild turkeys and pheasants, along with habitat cover for these indigenous birds.
- Staff continued work on a new bridge to replace the aging wooden bridge in the park. The bridge allows access over Black Creek to an extensive network of walking trails.

### MUD LAKE

- Staff continued wetland management efforts at this important site for wildlife dependent on healthy wetland systems. Data from the monitoring program shows that key habitat objectives are being met, including an increase in the number of plant species, adding to biodiversity.
- In support of the local 'Port Colborne Canal Days, a major summer event each August, the NPCA

partnered in a bike-racing event through the Mud Lake Conservation Area as part of a race through other trail systems.

### BEAMER

- Monitoring at this is continuing site following the replanting of native vegetation and the removal of non-native invasive vegetation.
- In April 2012 the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch held its annual Open House during the spring Hawkwatch season that monitors birds of prey passing over the Conservation Area. The Authority also observed the installation and dedication of two memorial benches at this site. The benches were dedicated to Bruce Duncan, a founder of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, and Dave Copeland, who was a pioneer in sparking widespread interest in enjoying the flight of birds of prey. This wonderful location on the Niagara Escarpment is a place where visitors can also enjoy a scenic view of Niagara's fruit belt and Lake Ontario.

### COMFORT MAPLE

- Staff continued to do restoration and maintenance work at this site which hosts one of Canada's great Sugar Maples; a five-century-old heritage tree.

### VIRGIL

- In 2012 staff continued its maintenance of the Virgil Dams and Reservoir Conservation Area, spanning 50 hectares (123 acres) of land in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The site contains valued woodland, wetland and other natural features and





includes a nut grove with more than 15 types of nut trees and tulip trees. It also features hiking trails that provide a good venue for observing a variety of birds and other wildlife.

### WAINFLEET BOG

- Staff worked toward the restoration of the peat cars, found on this site prior to the Authority acquiring it two decades ago. These cars help tell the history of the Wainfleet Bog. This site contains one of the highest populations of white-tailed deer in Niagara. Staff also stressed the need to avoid any conflict between hunters during a seven-day, annual “shotgun season” for deer and visitors to the site.
- A new sign and map board was installed at the entrance to the site.
- In July 2012, fire caused by a lightening strike was discovered and following two weeks of continuous effort, it was extinguished with the assistance of Wainfleet Township Firefighters and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Ending the fire was lengthy because it covered 30 acres and mainly occurred in depths of peat below ground level. Fortunately, habitat loss at the site, which was closed during the incident, was relatively low due to moist soil conditions at the time. Staff will continue working with our partners to monitor the burn area to determine impacts on vegetation and wildlife and to establish procedures to address any future fires.
- In September 2012 the NPCA was pleased to provide a tour of the bog to the International Association of Hydrogeological Conference,

highlighting the hydrology, history and ecological significance of the site.

### WAINFLEET WETLANDS

- Staff continued to monitor the operation of pumps installed in the fall of 2011 to control water levels in the quarry lake at this conservation area.

### GYPSY MOTH SURVEYS

- Staff completed an annual gypsy moth survey at Chippawa Creek, Ruigrok Tract, St. Johns, Smith-Ness, Hedley Forest and Willoughby Marsh Conservation Areas. Surveys revealed minimal defoliation at these sites and little to no impacts of gypsy moths, consistent with recent years showing a general decline in gypsy moths.

### GORD HARRY CONSERVATION TRAIL

- In 2012 the NPCA was pleased to move forward with improving and expanding this Trail, which was officially opened to the public in 2006 in memory of Gord Harry, a former, longtime member of the Authority’s staff who went on to serve as Chairman of the Board and Mayor of the Township of Wainfleet.
- The Authority worked with staff in Haldimand County and with representatives for the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) to establish trail connections between Niagara Region and Haldimand County. This effort will help fulfill the TCT’s vision to connect trail systems from coast to coast in time for Canada’s 150th anniversary in 2017. Staff is working to complete this connection with sections of trail along Feeder Canal Road and abandoned railway line owned by the County of Haldimand.



### NPCA HUNTING PROGRAM

- In 2012 the NPCA began posting its Hunting Request Forms on the website to Increase efficiency and an additional 43 hunting permits were issued for a total of 329.
- Once again, the largest hunting seasons per number of hunters during the deer shotgun season was in the month of November. The second largest deer hunting season is in December.

*A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song.*

LOU HOLZ



Conservation Achievement Awards Recipients





## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Communications staff worked on several initiatives with local partners and the media to raise awareness of projects, programs and new initiatives.

- Each year the Authority is pleased to host the Bob Welch Memorial Golf Tournament, an important fundraiser in support of conservation projects. This event is named in honour of the late Niagara MPP, Robert S. K. Welch, former cabinet minister and deputy premier who went on to serve as a commissioner on the Canada/U.S. International Joint Commission. The 2012 tournament raised \$14,000, thanks to corporate sponsors and other supporters. Funds are being directed to capital improvements at the Jordan Harbour Conservation Area.
- On November 28th, 2012, the NPCA was once again pleased to host its annual Conservation Achievement Awards reception at the Centre for Conservation at Ball's Falls. This is the Authority's opportunity each year to honour volunteers and others for their valuable contributions to authority programs.
- In 2012 the NPCA's Strategic Planning Committee worked with Strategic Plan Sub-Committees, made up of numerous community members, who volunteered their time and expertise to assist the Authority in the process of developing a Strategic Plan.
- Throughout the year, NPCA Staff received numerous requests from groups of professionals and other delegates to visit our sites and share information on conservation-related efforts.
- Requests included a visit from the Henan Association for Science and Technology to meet with the Authority to learn about our role as natural resource managers here.
- Continued to work with the Twenty Valley Tourism Association on numerous shared outreach and marketing initiatives.
- The NPCA participated in a Whitepaper produced to engage Authorities and the Ontario government in discussions on how to more effectively manage Ontario's watersheds. The Whitepaper concluded that local and provincial efforts to protect these resources would benefit from further support from the province and other stakeholders.
- The NPCA has been an avid supporter of the Schools in Bloom program since 2003, coordinated through the City of Niagara Falls. The program offers students an opportunity to participate in hands on learning in planning and constructing natural landscapes on school grounds.
- The NPCA continues to be a proud sponsor and supporter of the Niagara Regional Science and Engineering Fair which celebrated its 50th Anniversary.

*One individual cannot possibly make a difference, alone. It is individual efforts, collectively, that makes a noticeable difference – all the difference in the world!"*

DR. JANE GOODALL



## 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 donations and support of various fundraising projects.

## NIAGARA CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL

In 2012 the Authority was proud to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the annual Niagara Children's Water Festival, a joint initiative we are involved in with three principal partners; Niagara Region, City of St. Catharines and Ontario Power Generation.

- The program took place at the Ball's Falls Conservation Area from September 18th through 21st with record attendance from a total of 97 schools, topping more than 5,000 students and involving 400 presenters and volunteers. Numerous Activity Centre's were featured at this ever-popular event, focusing on water conservation, water protection, water-related technology and other curriculum based environmental topics.

*"The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards."*

ANATOLE FRANCE



*"Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own."*  
ROBERT FROST





NIAGARA PENINSULA  
**CONSERVATION**  
AUTHORITY

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