



Rooted in Resilience : Growing Stronger Together





The Niagara Peninsula watershed is situated within the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Attiwoonderonk, and the Anishinaabeg, including the Mississaugas of the Credit—many of whom continue to live and work here today.

This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties (No. 3, 4, and 381) and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement.

Today, the watershed is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. At NPCA, we strive to further our commitment to shared stewardship of natural resources and deep appreciation of Indigenous culture and history in the watershed in small ways, every day.



Message from the CAO

As we reflect on 2024, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the progress we have made and the resilience we have shown as an organization. The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority continues to grow in both impact and purpose, guided by our mission to protect and restore the Niagara Peninsula watershed for the benefit of people and nature.

The year marked a transformative milestone with the relocation of our headquarters. More than a new space and a change of address, it represents a renewed commitment to collaboration, operational excellence, and deeper community engagement. Our new home reflects our future-focused vision and positions us to better serve our communities.

We also advanced a number of significant initiatives across our integrated watershed programs. From large-scale restoration efforts and enhanced water quality monitoring to innovative data-driven planning, our work is making a measurable impact on the health of the Niagara Peninsula watershed. The continued success of the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan—now with 96 per cent of current delisting actions complete—demonstrates the power of long-term collaboration and the tangible environmental benefits that follow.

Our restoration efforts expanded in 2024, improving critical habitat and climate resilience. These projects are not only improving natural systems but also providing greener, healthier spaces for our communities. None of this would be possible without the support of dedicated volunteers and the growing network of individuals and organizations committed to a shared conservation mission.

Community remains at the heart of our work. This year, we launched Conservation Area and Watershed strategies rooted in public input, ensuring our plans reflect local needs and values. Whether it was through citizen science, consultation sessions, or stewardship programs, we made space for the voices of the watershed. We also deepened municipal partnerships, including a new Memorandum

of Understanding with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake—strengthening stewardship efforts at Virgil Dam Conservation Area and reinforcing our shared commitment to responsible land care.

Internally, 2024 was a year of growth and adaptation. Team members embraced new roles, welcomed new challenges, and brought fresh ideas to the table. In the face of transition, we remained focused and resilient, often exceeding our targets and advancing projects ahead of schedule. I could not be prouder of the leadership and dedication displayed across the organization.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank my predecessor, Chandra Sharma, whose vision and dedication over the past five years helped shape NPCA into the dynamic, community-centred organization it is today. Under her leadership, we achieved major milestones in conservation, public engagement, and organizational growth. It is an honour to continue building on the strong foundation she laid.

Looking ahead to 2025, we do so with confidence and momentum. We are poised to continue expanding our impact, building meaningful partnerships, and delivering results that protect the Niagara Peninsula watershed for generations to come.

On behalf of the entire NPCA, thank you to our staff, the Board of Directors, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation, and our partners for your steadfast support. Together, we are building a future where nature and community thrive side by side.

The future is bright, and we are just getting started.



Leilani Lee-Yates - BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP
CAO & Secretary-Treasurer
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority



Message from the Chair

As we marked the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's 65th anniversary in 2024, I found myself reflecting on how far we have come, evolving into a leading organization in conservation and environmental stewardship—always rooted in resilience.

Through the acquisition of five new properties, we took important steps toward our long-term land protection goals identified in NPCA's Land Securement Strategy. These newly protected spaces support biodiversity and climate change and reflect the trust our funding partners place in NPCA's work. We are well on our way to achieving our land acquisition target by 2031.

The year also saw impressive environmental restoration efforts, including habitat work along Twelve Mile Creek—an example of how partners can come together to protect vital ecosystems.

Last fall was especially memorable as we celebrated two defining moments at Ball's Falls Conservation Area: the 50th Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival and the official designation of Ball's Falls as a Heritage Site. This recognition reinforces the site's deep historical and cultural roots and honours the community that continues to bring it to life each year.

Leadership transitions are a part of every organization's evolution, and in 2024 we said farewell to former CAO Chandra Sharma. Her vision and steady leadership left a lasting impact, guiding NPCA through important transformation and growth.

As one chapter closed, another began with the appointment of Leilani Lee-Yates as CAO. Stepping into this role from her previous positions as Director of Planning and Development and Acting Director of Watershed Strategies and Climate Change, Leilani brought with her a deep understanding of NPCA's operations and priorities. Her thoughtful leadership and collaborative approach have already begun to strengthen internal and external relationships, while fostering innovation and continuity across the organization.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the people who power this work every day. To our Board, Public Advisory Committee, staff, partners, and volunteers—thank you. Your tireless efforts continue to make a real difference.

As we look to the future, I remain confident in the direction of this organization. NPCA is not just preserving natural spaces, we are building a legacy of connection, collaboration, and conservation for generations to come.



John Metcalfe
Chair, Board of Directors
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

2024 Board of Directors

NPCA's Board serves the Niagara Peninsula watershed on behalf of their communities and municipalities. Their leadership contributes to policy and program decision making.

James Stewart Beattie
(Vice-Chair)

Hamilton

Brad Clark

Hamilton

Donna Cridland

Niagara

Robert Foster

Niagara

Brian Grant

Niagara

John Metcalfe (Chair)

Haldimand

Patrick O'Neill

Haldimand

Michelle Seaborn

Niagara

Mark Tadeson

Hamilton

Albert Witteveen

Niagara



Our Guiding Principles

Watersheds transcend municipal boundaries

We are committed to working with the watershed community to support and create climate-resilient and connected natural systems.

Natural green infrastructure is critical to life

Our day-to-day work conserves and restores our communities' integral ecological, socio-economic, public safety, and health services.

Diverse experiences and ideas lead to better and stronger collective impact and outcomes

We seek to exemplify inclusion and equity through meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Innovation requires learning from each other and the past

As a result, we are progressive, resilient, adaptable, and strive for continuous improvement to remain a trusted and valued partner.



Niagara Peninsula
CONSERVATION
nature for all

CONSERVATION AREAS



27%

Increase in Visitors to
Conservation Areas



160,000

Paid Visitors at 4
Flagship Parks



25,000 +

Guests at Signature
Events



12,265

Students Engaged in
Outdoor Education



150 FREE

NaturePlus Passes at
Local Libraries and
Community Orgs



1,065 *NaturePlus*
Pass Members

FLOOD MANAGEMENT



11

Flood Bulletins Issued



250

KILOMETERS

Floodplain in the
Process of Being Mapped

TWENTY- TWENTY FOUR

VOLUNTEERS



2,542

Active Volunteers



229

New Volunteers



7,602

Volunteer Hours



\$130,754

Time Commitment
Value

RESTORATION



22.99

Hectares Reforested



5.8

Hectares of Wetland
Restored



.73

Hectares of Riparian
Habitat Restored



41,833

Trees Planted



5,826

Shrubs Planted



2,020

Wildflowers Planted



3

New Pollinator
Gardens

BY THE NUMBERS YEAR IN REVIEW

OUR WATERSHED



479,069

Residents



242,4000

Hectares
Watershed Jurisdiction



41

Conservation Areas



3,167

Hectares
Land Holdings



202

Local Waterways



15

Municipalities



84

Surface Water
Monitoring Stations



46

Groundwater
Monitoring Wells



5

New Land
Acquisitions

FINANCE



\$4.8 MILLION

In Grant Funding



\$5.5 MILLION

In Self-generated
Revenue

Strategic Plan

2021-2031

Grand Opening of New Office in Thorold



Our Priorities and Goals



Through extensive engagement with internal and external stakeholders, NPCA developed six strategic priorities to guide its work over the coming years. Each strategic priority includes specific goals, actions, and deliverables for NPCA to undertake with its partners and community stakeholders to achieve a thriving environment that sustains life for future generations.

While some goals are long-term and may take several years to complete, important strides are made each year to move this work forward. The following pages of the annual report will highlight each of our six strategic priorities, share stories of impact, and showcase the progress made to date on the Strategic Plan goals that guide our work.

Progress Scorecard Legend



COMPLETED



IN PROGRESS



TO BE INITIATED



1 Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds



2 Supporting Sustainable Growth



3 Connecting People to Nature



4 Partner of Choice



5 Organizational Excellence



6 Financial Sustainability

HEALTHY AND CLIMATE RESILIENT WATERSHEDS

Rockway Conservation Area



Improving watersheds for safe communities and enhanced ecosystems.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Support evidence-based decision-making for climate-resilient watersheds and shorelines

Robust data collection program established by 2023 and data gaps filled by 2026



Protect people and properties from natural hazards and climate impacts

A climate risk and vulnerability action plan developed by 2023 integrated with provincially-mandated watershed-based resource management strategy



Restore and enhance natural habitat, water resources, and forest cover

Increased area (ha) of protected and restored habitat by 2031 measured annually



Manage NPCA lands to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover

Management plans completed for 100% of NPCA properties by 2031

Highlights

INTEGRATED WATERSHED STRATEGIES

- Launched new Conservation Area and Watershed-based Resource Management strategies
- Completed NPCA Land Inventory
- Completed Natural Asset Inventory and Valuation project
- Restored 115m of the Twelve Mile Creek to protect native Brook Trout habitat
- Secured 55 ha of new protected conservation area land (NPCA at 30% of target)
- Enhanced the Integrated Watershed Monitoring program
- Collected 771 surface and 52 groundwater water quality samples
- Deployed 15 water quality sensors
- Monitored 33 hydrometric stations
- Planted 41,833 trees, 5,826 shrubs, and 2,020 native wildflowers
- Reforested 22.99 ha and restored 5.28 ha of wetland
- Achieved 96% completion of current Niagara River Remedial Action Plan



Partners of Twelve Mile Creek Restoration

Land for Tomorrow: NPCA Expands Protected Areas by 55 Hectares

NPCA took a bold step toward its 2031 land acquisition goal, securing five new properties—Lathrop, Fralick, Klassen, OPG, and Goertzen—totalling 55 hectares. Each parcel tells a story of restoration, resilience, and renewal. These milestones, made possible through generous landowners, federal and municipal funding, and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation, bring us to 30 per cent of our target. Together, we are safeguarding vital natural spaces and building a legacy of conservation for future generations.

Guiding the Future: Strategic Foundations for a Resilient Watershed

Rooted in science and shaped by community input, NPCA completed two cornerstone initiatives in 2024: the *Conservation Area Strategy* and the *Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy* (Watershed Strategy). These strategies provide a clear path forward for protecting people and property in the Niagara Peninsula watershed and enhancing the visitor experience across NPCA conservation areas. The Watershed Strategy embeds climate change considerations into every aspect of NPCA's work, guiding future actions to manage climate risks and build lasting environmental resilience.



Nature at the Centre of Climate Solutions

Natural Asset Inventory and Valuation initiative highlights the power of natural solutions in building resilient communities. Revealing fascinating insights, this project redefines how we perceive nature, showcasing its invaluable role in combating climate change and emphasizing the shift from engineered infrastructure to natural solutions. The initiative's success garnered national attention, with staff invited to speak at key conferences, including a Canadian Wildlife Federation webinar, positioning NPCA as a leader in nature-based climate action. The associated summary document has proven to be a valuable resource, offering partner municipalities a guide in their own natural asset planning journeys.

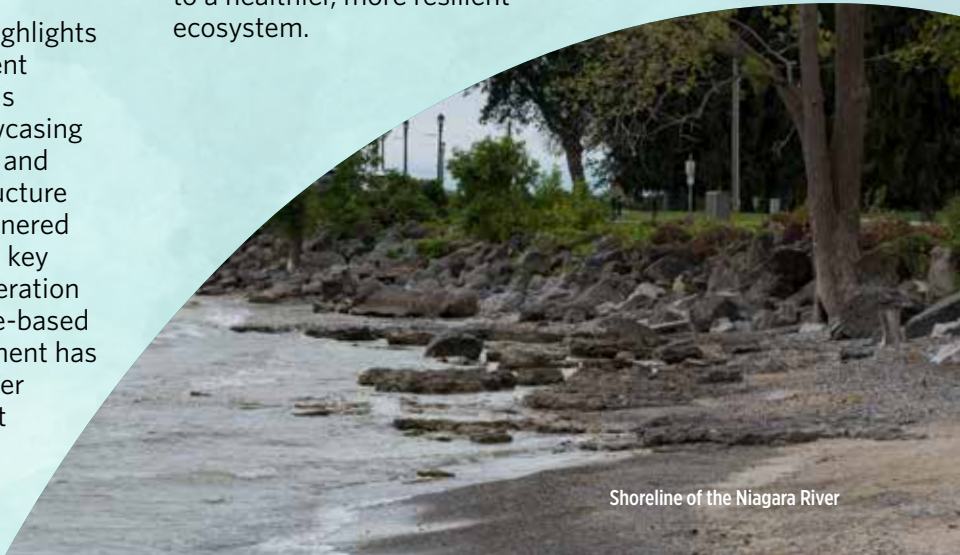
Restoring Twelve Mile Creek: A Commitment to Habitat and Community

In partnership with Trout Unlimited Canada, NPCA restored 115 metres of Twelve Mile Creek in Pelham, breathing new life into this vital waterway. By tackling severe erosion and enhancing aquatic habitats, the project supports the native Brook Trout population and fosters biodiversity. This restoration exemplifies NPCA's dedication to ecological health and highlights the power of community collaboration in safeguarding the long-term vitality of the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

Closer to a Restored Niagara River: 96% of Current Actions Achieved

The Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) has made incredible strides, with 96 per cent of the current delisting actions completed. In 2024, the 'Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations' beneficial use impairment (BUI) was recommended for a 'not impaired' designation, having officially met all target actions. This recommendation reflects years of collaborative efforts, including over a decade of monitoring and surveying by RAP partners.

Work on the Lyons Creek East Sediment Cleanup project continued with the completion of a four-season ecological study and initiation of a sediment management options study to determine next steps for addressing of historical polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination. Findings were shared at a public meeting with more than 50 attendees, whose input will help shape next steps. This work is a vital part of the RAP and a shared commitment to a healthier, more resilient ecosystem.



Shoreline of the Niagara River

A Stronger Future Through Science and Collaboration: Enhanced Integrated Watershed Monitoring

NPCA launched its Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program to better track and protect the health of local ecosystems. This science-based initiative helps ensure clean water, resilient habitats, and climate-ready communities across the Niagara Peninsula watershed. Through collaboration with municipal partners and community groups, NPCA is building evidence-based strategies that help protect the environment while addressing the challenges of a changing climate.

NPCA continued its valuable partnership with the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN), celebrating its 60th anniversary. Since 2003, NPCA has collected 1,600+ water samples from 13 locations across the watershed, contributing to a provincial database that tracks water quality and identifies impacted areas.

Deciduous Forest Monitoring

NPCA's monitoring team began installing permanent terrestrial plots in 2024, focusing on deciduous forests within NPCA conservation areas. This initiative will track trends in vegetation, breeding birds, and amphibian communities, helping to evaluate ecosystem integrity. With annual assessments of species richness and habitat quality, the program strengthens NPCA's commitment to preserving a healthy and vibrant environment for future generations.

Fish Monitoring Program

NPCA's new fish monitoring program launched in 2024, completing 10 surveys of unrated municipal drains to assess fish communities and habitat health. In partnership with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, this initiative supports evidence-based decision-making for climate-resilient watersheds. By monitoring fish populations in both municipal drains and conservation areas, NPCA contributes valuable data to support the long-term health of aquatic ecosystems in the Niagara Peninsula watershed.





Decree tree planting with Niagara Region

Restoration Stories: Where Resilience Begins

Lakewood Conservation Area Ecological Restoration

NPCA began restoring Lakewood Conservation Area, a 6-hectare site along Lake Erie’s shoreline. Key efforts included removing invasive plants, planting more than 450 native species, and enhancing sand dunes to boost biodiversity and climate resilience. Restoration will continue through 2027, with community involvement driving future progress. This project is possible through funding support from the Niagara Community Foundation, Canada Water Agency, and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Camp Wetaskiwin Revetment Project

Nestled within Short Hills Provincial Park, Camp Wetaskiwin is a large 34-hectare Scout’s camp located in the forested valleys through which Twelve Mile Creek flows. To help prevent erosion of the creek and protect native Brook Trout habitat, NPCA used recycled Christmas trees as a revetment to 70 metres of the creek’s exposed banks. Native shrubs were planted to further stabilize the creek, with work continuing into 2025 to safeguard this vital waterway.

Trees for All

The program kicked off its multi-year tree planting efforts. With support from 12 municipalities, more than 41,000 native trees and 5,800 shrubs were planted at eight community events. With incredible funding support on its way, the Trees for All program is poised to receive \$2 million from the federal 2 Billion Tree program to plant 80,000 potted trees on public lands by 2028. A new Community of Practice, in collaboration with Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, will focus on native seed collection. This support positions the program to reach its goals, boosting watershed health, habitats, and overall climate resilience.

Lincoln Mini Forest

More than 770 native trees and shrubs were planted in Beamsville’s Rotary Park to create a new mini forest. Working with the Town of Lincoln and Ontario Green, NPCA used the Miyawaki method—a technique that encourages dense, fast-growing tree communities that share resources—to help transform a marginal space into a pocket of diverse forest.



Restoration Project at St. Johns Valley

Restoration by the Numbers

22.99	Hectares Reforested
5.28	Hectares of Wetland Restored
0.73	Hectares of Riparian Habitat Restored
41,833	Trees Planted
5,826	Shrubs Planted
2,025	Wildflowers Planted

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

15 Mile Creek with QEW in background



Helping to create resilient communities through coordinated land-use planning, hazard management, green infrastructure, and excellent client service standards.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Maintain a high standard of client services, tools, and procedures for planning review and permits

Improvement in client service metrics year over year



Lead an integrated watershed management approach to support planning and policy for protecting and enhancing watersheds

100% of sub-watershed plans for future growth areas updated by 2031



Lead the implementation of sustainable technologies and green infrastructure best practices for climate resilience and sustainability

A green infrastructure and sustainable technologies program established at NPCA by 2026

Highlights

PLANNING, GROWTH & CLIENT SERVICES

- Issued 355 permits
- 100% of permits within client services timelines
- Reviewed 1,014 planning applications
- Conducted 215 planning ecology site visits
- Received 415 compliance incident reports
- Supported 10 municipal official plan updates
- Reviewed 5 secondary plans
- Began mapping 250km of floodplain

100% of permits within client services timelines



Growing Resilient Communities Together: Planning & Policy

NPCA plays a vital role in building resilient communities across the watershed through its environmental planning and policy work. In collaboration with municipal partners, NPCA helps ensure that new growth and infrastructure are directed outside of natural hazards.

In 2024, NPCA supported several major municipal planning initiatives, including Official Plan updates and Secondary Plans that will facilitate future growth. This included input on priority economic development projects such as the new Asahi Kasei battery separator plant in Port Colborne, where NPCA ensured timely reviews to meet the project's tight scheduling.

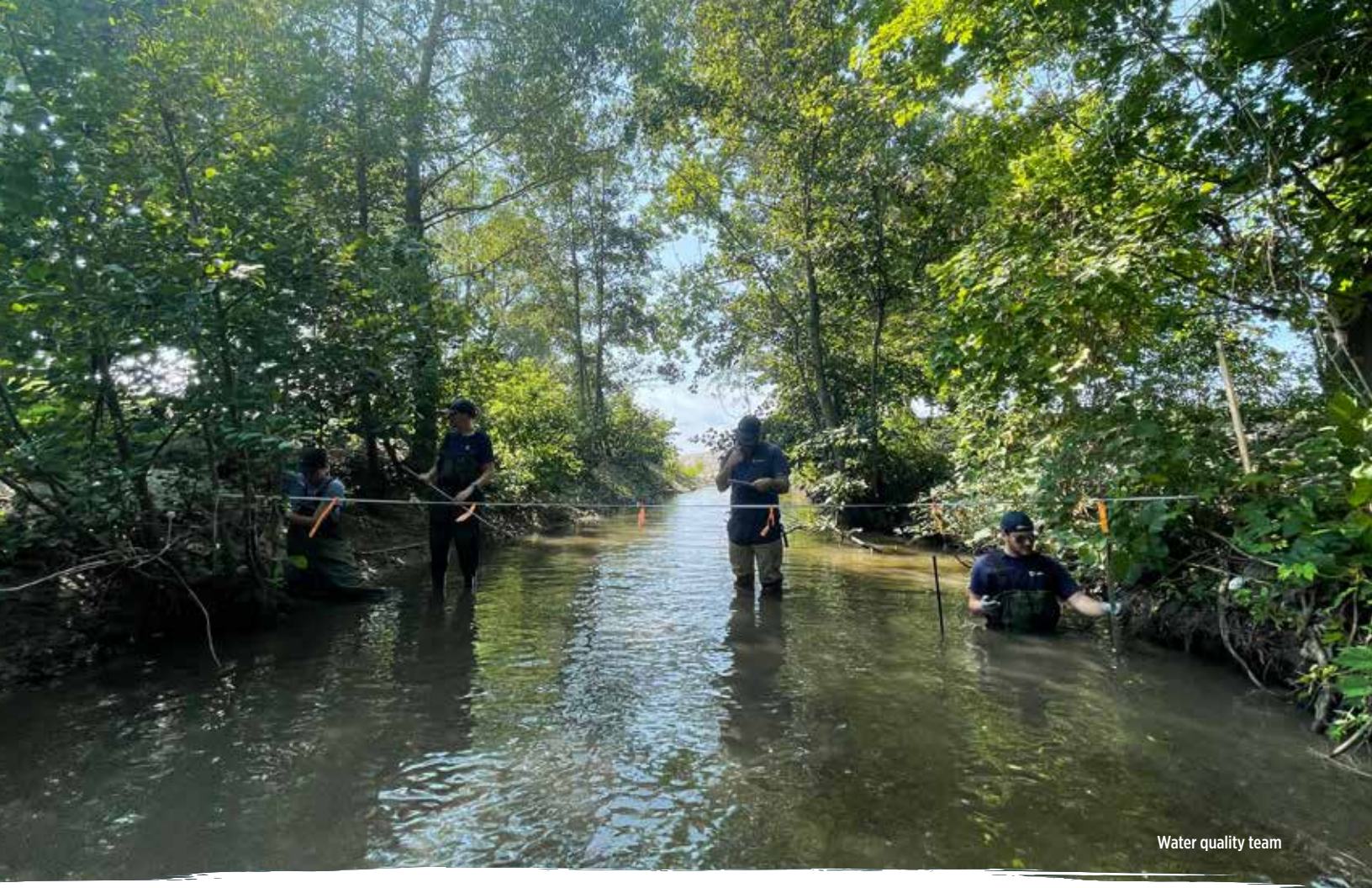
NPCA's technical staff actively participate in environmental assessments, infrastructure master plans and other municipal infrastructure projects, contributing expertise in hydrology, ecology, and engineering. This collaboration supports infrastructure projects including road widenings, bridge replacements, water and wastewater works, and recreational trails.

Municipalities also rely on NPCA's natural hazard mapping and other data products to guide planning decisions. The NPCA maintains a variety of data products such as vegetation community mapping, digital elevation models, and watercourse classification to support our municipal partners in their decision making.

As the Niagara Peninsula watershed grows, NPCA is investing in capacity and partnerships to meet demand, facilitating economic development while upholding our core mandate: to protect people and property from natural hazards.

APPLICATION TYPE	2024
BUILDING PERMIT CLEARANCE	346
CLEARANCE OF CONDITIONS	16
CONSENT	36
DRAFT PLAN APPROVAL EXTENSION	13
DART PROTOCOL	8
DRAFT PLAN MODIFICATION	4
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	7
FORMAL PROPERTY INQUIRY	89
MINOR VARIANCE	77
MUNICIPAL PRECONSULTATION	251
NIAGARA ESCARPMENT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT	36
OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT	14
OTHER	41
PLAN OF SUBDIVISION	18
REGIONAL OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT	1
SECONDARY PLANS	5
SITE PLAN CONTROL	32
PLAN OF CONDOMINIUM	3
ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT	17
TOTALS	1014

MUNICIPALITY	APPLICATIONS	PERMITS
FORT ERIE	109	38
GRIMSBY	39	11
HALDIMAND	38	10
HAMILTON	68	34
LINCOLN	78	40
NIAGARA FALLS	106	28
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE	89	31
PELHAM	51	11
PORT COLBORNE	54	31
REGION OF NIAGARA	1	-
ST. CATHARINES	89	34
THOROLD	60	7
WAINFLEET	73	40
WELLAND	83	23
WEST LINCOLN	76	17
TOTALS	1014	355



Water quality team

Policy in Action: Compliance & Enforcement

NPCA continued its commitment to protecting people and property from natural hazards by strengthening its compliance and enforcement efforts across the watershed. This service area plays a pivotal role in the protection and conservation of local valley lands, shorelines, watercourses, and wetlands.

With a dedicated team of compliance officers, NPCA processed more than 400 reported compliance matters, issued 78 Notices of Violation, and initiated Provincial Court proceedings for several files. This work ensures the requirements of Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act as defined by *Ontario Regulation 41/24* and NPCA's development policies are adhered to.

Collaboration remained central to this work, with NPCA deepening partnerships with local municipal enforcement teams and regulatory agencies including Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

COMPLAINTS BY MUNICIPALITY	2024	%
FORT ERIE	53	12.8%
GRIMSBY	15	3.6%
HALDIMAND	17	4.1%
HAMILTON	26	6.3%
LINCOLN	29	7.0%
NIAGARA FALLS	27	6.5%
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE	35	8.4%
PELHAM	30	7.2%
PORT COLBORNE	30	7.2%
ST. CATHARINES	29	7.0%
THOROLD	16	3.9%
WAINFLEET	49	11.8%
WELLAND	28	6.7%
WEST LINCOLN	22	5.3%
NO LOCATION	9	2.2%
TOTALS	415	100



Clean, Protected, and Resilient: Safeguarding Our Drinking Water

At the heart of community resilience is access to clean, safe drinking water. In 2024, NPCA advanced policy updates that address threats within vulnerable areas and partnered with the Regional Municipality of Niagara to address future upgrades at the Welland, Rosehill, and Niagara Falls water treatment plants. The NPCA also completed a project identifying vulnerable non-municipal drinking water systems and provided general recommendations for municipalities to enhance education, outreach, and policy approaches for private potable water supply sources.

With ongoing collaboration from municipalities and support from the Government of Ontario, NPCA is helping ensure the sustainability and security of drinking water sources across the watershed.

Mapping for a Safer Tomorrow:

Growing Resilience Through Floodplain Mapping

NPCA advanced key floodplain mapping projects for Coyle Creek, Draper's Creek, and Oswego Creek—laying the groundwork for safer, more climate-resilient communities. These updates support smarter development decisions and better prepare municipalities and residents for future flood risks.

Another round of public consultation is planned for Coyle and Draper's creeks, giving residents a continued voice in shaping resilient, flood-ready communities before mapping is completed in 2025. Oswego Creek is nearing the finish line, with final mapping and project wrap-up also targeted for 2025.

Adopting new, scientifically sound floodplain mapping will support smarter development, reduced flood risks, and stronger climate resilience across the Niagara Peninsula watershed.



Flood Risk Management

- Protecting people and property from natural hazards
- 11 Flood Bulletins issued
- Ongoing watershed monitoring to reduce flood risks

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

Heritage Designation at Ball's Falls Conservation Area

Creating equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people, and educating the next generation of environmental leaders

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Create equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people

Public greenspace within urban or near-urban areas increased by 2031

Lead nature education, environmental stewardship, and volunteerism

An outreach, stewardship and education strategy developed by 2024

100% of actions from outreach, stewardship, and education strategy implemented by 2031

Improve cultural connections and heritage appreciation

A cultural heritage strategy developed by 2025

100% of actions from cultural heritage strategy implemented by 2031

Promote the watershed as a destination of choice for adventure, culture, and ecological tourism

A marketing and ecotourism strategy developed by 2025

100% of actions from marketing and ecotourism strategy implemented by 2031

Highlights

CONSERVATION PARKS & OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Welcomed 160,000 paid day-use visitors at four flagship conservation areas – a 27% increase
- Welcomed 500,000 visitors at the free, passive conservation areas
- Engaged 12,265 students in outdoor education camps and programming within 10 conservation areas
- Shared 150 free NaturePlus passes through local libraries and community organizations
- Celebrated 50 years of the Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival
- Attracted 25,000+ visitors to our signature events
- Ball's Falls designated as a Heritage Property
- 5 Niagara Geopark and APGO GeoHikes at NPCA Geosites



Nature for All: Expanding Access Through Library Lending

Thanks to the NaturePlus Pass program, more than 150 community membership passes were made available through local libraries and post-secondary institutions—including Niagara College, Brock University, Hamilton Public Library, and participating community organizations. These passes provide free access to NPCA's conservation areas where parking fees apply, helping more people discover the beauty of nature. It's one more way NPCA is growing connections between people and nature.

Signed out 1,500+ times!

Harvesting Heritage: 50 Years of Fall Festivity

In 2024, NPCA celebrated a golden milestone—the 50th anniversary of the beloved Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival. The event was reimagined with elevated programming, headlined by a lively country music concert featuring Canadian artists Tebey and Nate Haller. Thousands gathered to enjoy heritage, music, food, and family fun—showcasing just how deeply rooted this tradition has become.

Preserving the Past, Inspiring the Future

A proud moment in 2024: Ball's Falls Conservation Area received official Heritage Designation from the Town of Lincoln. The unveiling of the commemorative plaque during the 50th Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival marked a meaningful celebration of our shared heritage and commitment to protecting historical and cultural landmarks for generations to come.

Rooted in Resilience and Growing Stronger Through Education

NPCA partnered with the Niagara Geopark and APGO to launch virtual GeoHikes—self-guided interpretive trails featuring QR-coded geosites—at key conservation areas. Created by McMaster University students, these immersive tools highlight the geological significance of NPCA parks, bringing Ball's Falls, Beamer Memorial, Wainfleet Wetlands, Morgan's Point, and Cave Springs to life online.

Where Learning Comes to Life: Outdoor Education & Camp Experiences

NPCA's education and camp programs left a lasting impression in 2024. From s'mores by the fire to hands-on nature games and engaging outdoor lessons, more than 12,000 students and campers from across the watershed experienced the joy of learning in nature.

Creating the Next Generation of Great Lakes' Champions

NPCA's first Great Lakes Student Conference connected 100+ students with hands-on learning and career exploration, fostering deeper understanding of Great Lakes issues through field experiences and classroom lessons.



PARTNER OF CHOICE

Reawakening All of Our Senses

Strengthening our relationships with stakeholders, partners, the watershed community, and Indigenous Peoples.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Strengthen government relations towards collective outcomes and impact

Agreements with all three upper-tier municipalities in 2023 and lower-tier municipalities by 2025

Foster relationships with the community, non-government organizations, businesses, agriculture, industry, and academic institutions for collective outcomes and impact

A stakeholder and community engagement strategy developed by 2025

100% of actions from stakeholder and community strategy implemented by 2031

Improve engagement with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples that supports shared stewardship

Indigenous engagement guidelines developed in 2022

Staff provided with Indigenous awareness training

Highlights ENGAGEMENT, PUBLIC OUTREACH & EDUCATION

- 4 Municipal Service Level Agreements
Niagara-on-the-Lake Virgil Dam MOU - new
- Hosted 3rd annual Reawakening event at Ball's Falls
- Led, co-led or supported 53 stewardship events and 21 community presentations
- Engaged 2,542 active volunteers and welcomed 229 new volunteers
- Volunteers planted 4,733 trees, shrubs and plants and 2,459 wildflowers and grasses
- Added 3 new pollinator gardens to the watershed
- Benefited from 7,602 volunteer hours for a time-commitment value of more than \$130,754
- Hosted volunteer appreciation events—a Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival dinner and an annual celebration at Club Roma
- Reached a social media community of 39,431 followers social media community
- Featured in 573 media stories
- Engaged 15,239 residents through the *Get Involved* portal

Rooted in Collaboration: Growing Impact Through Partnerships

NPCA works hand in hand with partners, including 1 upper-tier municipality, 2 single-tier municipalities and 12 lower-tier municipalities, to build strong relationships, identify shared goals, and advance collaborative solutions that benefit the entire watershed.



2024 Public Advisory Committee

Agriculture: Albert Witteveen and Lennie Aarts

Business/Industry: Lesley Clarke

Development/Building: Jonathan Musso

Environmental: William Rapley

Métis Citizen: Tracy Boese

Planning: George McKibbin

Public-at-Large: David Cribbs, David Wyllie, Naheed Qureshi

Urban Indigenous: Cindilee Ecker-Flagg

Volunteer/Conservation Area User: Philip Beale

Youth: Lageera Chattheecha

Virgil Dam Conservation Area Stewardship

In November, NPCA and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake formalized their partnership for the Virgil Dam Conservation Area, outlining shared responsibilities—including the management of critical irrigation infrastructure—demonstrating how collaboration strengthens sustainable land and water resource management across the watershed.



Welcoming the World to Niagara's Geosites

In collaboration with Niagara Geopark partners, NPCA proudly welcomed UNESCO Global Geopark evaluators from Ireland and Denmark to key geosites across the watershed. Their tour began at Ball's Falls and continued through Beamer Memorial, Rockway, St. Johns, Morgan's Point, and Wainfleet Wetlands. Joined by local and international experts, the visit highlighted the region's rich geological heritage and NPCA's ongoing role in education, conservation, and supporting the pursuit of official UNESCO Global Geopark designation.

Advancing Indigenous Engagement

Development of internal Indigenous Engagement Guidelines is underway, supporting respectful collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Rooted in Respect: Growing Relationships with Indigenous Partners

NPCA continues to exemplify its commitment to shared stewardship and engagement with local Indigenous peoples. This commitment takes shape through ongoing relationship-building, shared learning, and community events and collaborative initiatives that honour cultural knowledge and care for the land. From environmental education to ceremonial plantings, these efforts strengthen connections, foster understanding, and support a shared vision for a resilient and inclusive watershed.

Highlights:

Spring Amphibian Walk

Hosted by Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) featuring a presentation on local amphibians and a guided walk through the Pow Wow grounds.

Summer Birding Experience

A follow-up event with MCFN celebrating migratory bird species and sharing stories and observations.

Notre Dame College School Tree Planting

Organized with Indigenous leaders, students, and community partners — featuring ceremony and song. (18 native trees)

St. Alfred's Elementary White Cedar Planting

Included cultural teachings from Indigenous leaders on the significance of White Cedar. (6 native trees)

Celebrating the Harvest and Honouring all of our Relations

In partnership with the Niagara Folk Arts Festival and Kakekalanicks Consulting, NPCA hosted the third annual *Reawakening* event at Ball's Falls Conservation Area. Titled "Sounds from the Forest," this immersive 90-minute sonic tour invited participants to celebrate the harvest and honour all relations through guided walks featuring Indigenous teachings and live music. The event fostered reflection on shared responsibilities to the natural world and supported Indigenous-led initiatives within the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

Together We Grow: The Impact of NPCA Volunteers

European Water Chestnut Removal at E.C. Brown



Did you know that more than 2,000 volunteers and partners engage with the work of NPCA?

Hands-On Restoration at E.C. Brown

Throughout four stewardship days, more than 100 volunteers joined NPCA staff to remove invasive European Black Alder (EBA) at E.C. Brown Conservation Area. This collaborative effort protected vital meadow habitat for pollinators, amphibians, and birds. With support from partners like the Invasive Species Centre and Town of Pelham, as well as students from Ridley College and Niagara College's Ecosystem Restoration program, large volumes of EBA were cleared, and the site was re-seeded with native wildflowers.

Making Waves in Invasive Species Control

In partnership with the Invasive Species Centre, NPCA hosted two community paddles at E.C. Brown to remove European Water Chestnut.

Did you know that after two paddle events only 907 plants found in 2024 — down from 7,000 in 2022. The work continues!

Rooted in Action: Orkin Canada Helps Grow Biodiversity at Long Beach

In May, NPCA staff were joined by a team from Orkin Canada to plant 300 native trees and shrubs at Long Beach Conservation Area. This collaborative effort strengthens the ecological resilience of the Lake Erie shoreline by enhancing habitat for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. By restoring native biodiversity and improving water quality, the project reflects the power of partnership in building a greener, healthier future—rooted in action and growing stronger together.

Green Herons Take Flight: Youth Champions of Watershed Stewardship

The Green Herons demonstrated their commitment to environmental stewardship with a series of impactful cleanups in the Jordan Harbour and Twenty Valley area—efforts proudly supported by NPCA. From launching a turtle habitat dock to organizing shoreline cleanups and removing debris, these passionate youth are making a lasting difference in the health of local ecosystems. Their hands-on leadership in conservation reflects a deep connection to the watershed and inspires others to take action. The Green Herons are not just volunteers—they're a vital part of a growing movement toward a healthier Niagara Peninsula watershed for generations to come.

Rooted in Tradition: Volunteers **Bring Heritage Village to Life**

The dedicated volunteers of the Heritage Village generously shared their time, knowledge, and craftsmanship to revitalize the barn and gristmill displays at Ball's Falls Conservation Area. Their work brought new life to the space with the addition of a broom-making exhibit and updated cobbler and leatherwork displays. These refreshed features became focal points of guided tours and interpretation during the 50th anniversary of the Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival, enriching the visitor experience and celebrating the cultural heritage of the Village of Glen Elgin.



Soaring into Spring: 50 Years of Raptor **Migration Monitoring at Beamer Memorial**

Beamer Memorial Conservation Area continues to be the watershed's top spring hawk migration lookout. In 2024, Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch celebrated 50 years of monitoring with strong migration numbers, increased membership, and rare sightings, including two Black Vultures and two American Goshawks. From March to May, over 14,000 raptors can be spotted annually as they journey north. Visitors are welcome to learn from expert counters daily and experience this remarkable natural event.



Community Spotlight:

Mark Harrison & Volunteers:

Clean-ups at Morgan's Point Conservation Area have strengthened environmental resilience, helping preserve vital greenspaces for future generations.

Eastern Bluebird Monitoring:

Volunteers continue to support this work at Ball's Falls Conservation Area—helping track and strengthen the recovery of this vital species.

TD Tree Day Volunteers:

Through their dedication to planting trees in Thorold, Welland, and Grimsby, our volunteers are nurturing a sustainable ecosystem and strengthening our community's environmental future.



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Striving for excellence through high service delivery standards and accountability to the environment and its people.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Attract, retain, and invest in high caliber, diverse talent to deliver superior outcomes

A talent management strategy developed in 2022

100% of actions in the talent management strategy implemented by 2031

Improve internal operations and processes

A digital transformation strategy developed in 2023

100% of actions in the digital transformation strategy implemented by 2031

Provide high standards of customer service

Customer service guidelines developed in 2022

All staff provided customer service training

Demonstrate leadership in addressing climate change and sustainable practices through NPCA lands and operations

A corporate climate change action commitment and launch of a strategy in 2022

100% of actions in corporate climate change strategy implemented by 2031

Highlights

WORKPLACE CULTURE

- Celebrated 65 years of conservation in new administrative headquarters
- Welcomed new CAO & Secretary-Treasurer, Leilani Lee-Yates
- Advanced NPCA's corporate climate resilience journey
- Procured \$2.3 M in capital projects
- Created 86 youth employment opportunities through green jobs and internships
- Provided 42 staff development and training opportunities
- Hosted internal Section 28 training workshop for staff
- Retained more than 30% of staff for over 10 years
- Improved internet access at 3 conservation areas
- Co-chaired Conservation Ontario's Conservation Area Workshop Committee

Rooted in Resilience: Celebrating 65 Years and a New Beginning



NPCA proudly celebrated 65 years of conservation and the grand opening of our new administrative headquarters. Together with staff, Board, partners, and local dignitaries, we commemorated this milestone and our shared commitment to growing stronger together.

Taking Action: NPCA's Journey Toward Climate Resilience

NPCA demonstrates leadership in addressing climate change by integrating climate goals into its operations and strategic priorities. Through watershed-based resource management, ecosystem restoration, and land securement, NPCA builds resilience against climate impacts like flooding and extreme weather. The ongoing development of the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) and decarbonization efforts will guide future actions, helping NPCA reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support a more sustainable, climate-resilient future for the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

Investing in the Future of Conservation Leadership

Rooted in our commitment to resilience and excellence, NPCA invested in 42 staff development opportunities—from leadership and technical training to mentorship and career certification. In partnership with Brock University's Goodman School of Business, 14 staff gained project management credentials, equipping them to lead with confidence and creativity.

Across teams, learning continued in the field and beyond. Members of the Ecology and Watershed Monitoring team sharpened their species ID skills through the ROM Fish ID Course, while NPCA hosted an internal Section 28 training workshop to strengthen regulatory expertise.

Learning also extended beyond our walls as NPCA attended job fairs across the watershed to engage and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. Whether in classrooms, conservation areas, or community spaces, we're growing stronger together by nurturing knowledge, leadership, and innovation.

GIS Day Celebration

NPCA staff marked GIS Day with interactive presentations, trivia, and cake—celebrating the power of geospatial tools in conservation work.

Safely Navigating the 2024 Total Solar Eclipse

In anticipation of the rare total solar eclipse, NPCA staff collaborated across teams to prioritize safety for both visitors and employees. Through coordinated emergency planning, clear communications, and proactive safety measures, conservation areas remained protected and prepared during this remarkable natural event.





Strengthening Foundations: Protecting the Future

NPCA completed several key capital projects that support both community use and watershed protection. From infrastructure upgrades to flood monitoring enhancements, these initiatives reflect our commitment to safety, accessibility, and environmental resilience.

Game On!

From strikes at the annual bowling tournament to summer volleyball showdowns, NPCA staff brought their A-game! These friendly competitions sparked laughter, team spirit, and fierce—but fun—rivalry. Win or lose, we're growing stronger together, one serve (or spare) at a time.

Capital Improvements that Enhance Safety, Access, and Climate Readiness

Highlights:

Woodend Conservation Area Driveway Reconstruction

A full rebuild of the 1,120-metre driveway, safe pond crossings, and pull-off areas to accommodate school buses and large vehicles—supporting safe access to the Walker Living Campus and improved maintenance efficiency.

Emergency Preparedness Grant

A \$50,000 grant from the Government of Ontario enabled the installation of two new stream gauge stations that improve the accuracy and reach of NPCA's Flood Forecasting and Warning network.

- **Four Mile Creek** - Lakeshore Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake
- **Six Mile Creek** - Thunder Bay Road, Fort Erie

North Creek Stream Gauge Recommissioned

A previously decommissioned monitoring site on North Creek in West Lincoln was reactivated, expanding flood monitoring coverage in the Smithville area. The new station supports NPCA's flood monitoring network, contributing to more accurate, real-time flood forecasts available to the public online.



1,120-metre driveway at Woodend Conservation Area

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

GIS Team



Digital Transformation: Modernizing Systems to Improve Service, Insight, and Efficiency

NPCA advanced several digital initiatives that enhanced internal operations, improved customer service, and supported data-driven decision-making. These investments reflect our commitment to innovation, accessibility, and continuous improvement.

Highlights:

Ball's Falls Wi-Fi Upgrade

Reliable Wi-Fi was installed for the 50th Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival, improving vendor connectivity with support from Bell Canada.

GIS Maturity Roadmap

An enterprise-wide GIS roadmap was developed, guiding future geospatial initiatives and supporting smarter operations.

Watershed Planner Migration

A new internal GIS web application, "Watershed Planner," has replaced the previous internal system, enhancing data accessibility and streamlining workflows for staff who rely on spatial data to support timely and informed decision-making.

NPCA HONOUR ROLL

Celebrating the service milestones of our resilient and committed team.

Celebrating 20 years

Mike Boyko – Park Manager, Binbrook

Guarding and showcasing Binbrook Conservation Area's beauty with unmatched passion!

Tara Gaade – Program Coordinator, Watershed Strategies & Climate Research

Strengthening watershed resilience through innovative scientific research.

Celebrating 15 years

Jeff Fazekas – Project Lead, Capital Projects & Land Assets

Keeps projects moving and assets safe, always.

Celebrating 10 years

David Deluce – Director, Planning & Development

Master of planning, shaping conservation's future.

Michael MacIntyre – Park Manager, Long Beach

Championing Long Beach Conservation Area's natural charm daily.

Celebrating 5 yrs

Brent Cumming – Manager, Land Care and Operational Infrastructure

Dedicated to strengthening NPCA's spaces and systems.

Cathy Coverdale – Manager, Financial Services

Anchoring accountability with financial strength and clarity.

Josie Rutka – Coordinator, Land Care

Transforming conservation areas with stunning beautification projects.

Lise Gagnon – Director, Corporate Services

Driving organizational excellence and financial sustainability forward.

Rob Petruccio – Specialist, Multimedia Marketing

Crafting captivating stories through multimedia brilliance.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Bear River Natural Conservation Area



Ensuring a financially stable and sustainable organization and continued service-delivery through innovative business models, diverse funding sources, and best practices.

OUR GOALS - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Ensure responsible, sustainable, and sound fiscal practices

Variance against the budget no greater than 20%



Optimize self-generating revenue using innovative approaches

Increased self-generated revenue



Improve asset management and close the state of good repair gap

Maintenance of Good Facility Condition Index

Highlights

FINANCIAL STABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

- \$5.5 million in self-generated revenue – representing 41.4% of total revenues
- 7.4% increase from 2023
- Secured \$4.8 million in grant funding
- 89% increase from 2023
- Completed \$7.7 million in capital projects
- 17 procurement initiatives
- Variance against budget only 1.4%
- Reliance on municipal levy continues to decrease from 64.5% in 2020 to 48.3% in 2024

NPCA remains committed to responsible fiscal management and organizational sustainability. In 2024, we exceeded expectations, achieving a variance of 1.4 per cent against our budget, in line with our strategic targets.

Through strategic funding initiatives and partnerships, NPCA has reduced reliance on the municipal levy, decreasing from 64.5 per cent in 2020 to 52.9 per cent in 2024. We secured \$4.8 million in grant funding and generated \$4.5 million in self-generated revenue, bringing our self-generated revenues to 41 per cent, up from 25 per cent in 2020.

For every \$1 of municipal funding, NPCA raised \$1.89 in additional revenues, demonstrating our success in optimizing resources and minimizing taxpayer burden. Our commitment to diversifying funding sources continued, with new revenue streams and robust partnerships across all levels of government and the community.

To further enhance asset management and address long-term repair needs, NPCA invested \$7.7 million in capital projects, completing 17 procurement initiatives in 2024. We also implemented a capital planning module within our financial software, paving the way for more effective long-term capital strategies in the 2025 budget process.

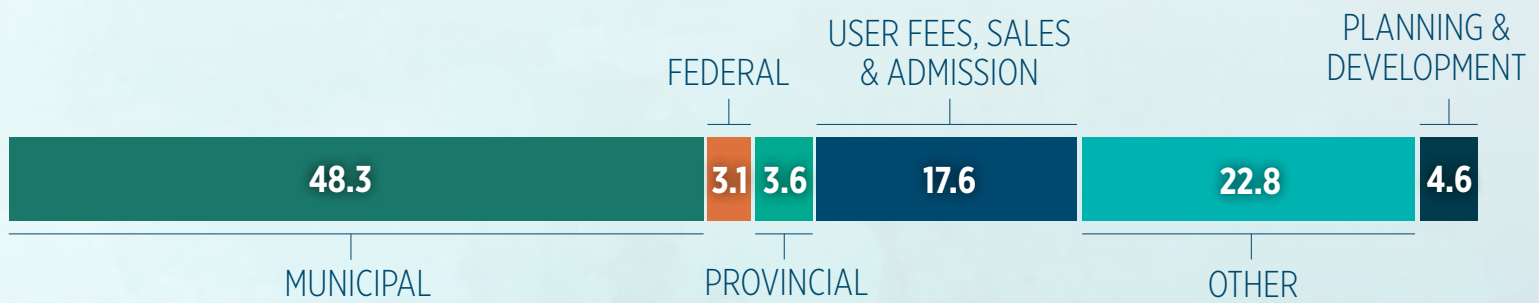
Through innovative approaches, NPCA continues to strengthen its financial health, reduce taxpayer reliance, and support sustainable growth for years to come.

NPCA Financials



Revenues

NPCA's operating revenues are classified into two streams — government (municipal, provincial, federal) and self-generated. The municipal levy represents 48.3 per cent of our total funding envelope, down from 53.9 per cent in 2023. NPCA generated revenues — fees for service activity, user fees, and admissions — contributed 41.4 per cent (\$5.5 million) to gross revenues, up from 40 per cent in 2023.



Expenses

In keeping with historical trends, labour costs represent the largest share of operating expenses at 61.4 per cent. Total operating expenses: \$15,977,018





NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation (NPCF) is a registered charity dedicated to raising funds that aid in the conservation of our natural environment for present and future generations. When you donate to NPCF, you help support conservation projects and programs that contribute to improving water quality, increasing greenspaces, wetland and habitat restoration, and environmental research and education.

Message from NPCF Chair

the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation (NPCF) continued to champion the work of the NPCA through fundraising efforts that support critical conservation programs across the watershed. We are proud to serve as a bridge between community generosity and environmental impact.

Through our *Nature for All, For Always* campaign, we remained focused on supporting land securement, tree planting, and local conservation initiatives. A highlight this year was a \$50,000 donation from RBC Foundation, a remarkable contribution toward NPCA's Trees for All program. These funds directly support restoration projects, helping to improve biodiversity and climate resilience across the watershed.

Our donors' support also enabled land acquisition efforts, bringing us closer to NPCA's target of 180 hectares of new protected lands by 2031. Whether through individual gifts or community partnerships, every contribution makes a difference in preserving natural spaces for future generations.

We also found new ways to engage the community and celebrate our shared love of nature. From the 50/50 draw and admission donations at the Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival which raised \$20,000, to the inspiring WomEnchant Winter Solstice concert—our most successful to date—these events helped raise funds while connecting people to our mission.

In partnership with the Rotary Club of Niagara Falls through a \$20,000 multi-year donation, we were proud to support ongoing development of The Gallery—a new educational installation at Ball's Falls Conservation Area—enhancing visitor experience and fostering deeper connections with local history and conservation efforts.

Looking ahead, the NPCF remains committed to its mission and to working closely with NPCA to ensure that conservation continues to thrive in the Niagara Peninsula watershed. Thank you to our donors, partners, and volunteers for your dedication and trust.

Together, we can achieve the vision of *Nature for All, for Always*.

Barbara Greenwood
Chair, Board of Directors
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation

Highlights:

Planted Roots for the Future

Contributed to NPCA's Trees for All program with a \$50,000 donation from RBC to support ecological restoration projects.

Supported Land Securement Efforts

Provided funding to advance NPCA's land acquisition strategy, protecting vital habitats and natural spaces across the watershed.

Fundraised with Purpose

Launched a successful 50/50 draw at the 50th Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival to raise funds for conservation efforts.

Celebrated Nature Through Music

Hosted the WomEnchant Winter Solstice concert, engaging the community while supporting conservation work.

Enhanced Visitor Experiences

Supported educational installation at Ball's Falls Conservation Area through a multi-year donation from the Rotary Club of Niagara Falls.

Built Community Partnerships

Collaborated with donors, service clubs, and corporate partners to advance NPCA's mission of protecting and restoring nature.

NPCA 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

WATCH THE NPCA YEAR IN REVIEW VIDEO



Follow us on social, scan the QR code above





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