



Niagara Peninsula
CONSERVATION
nature for all

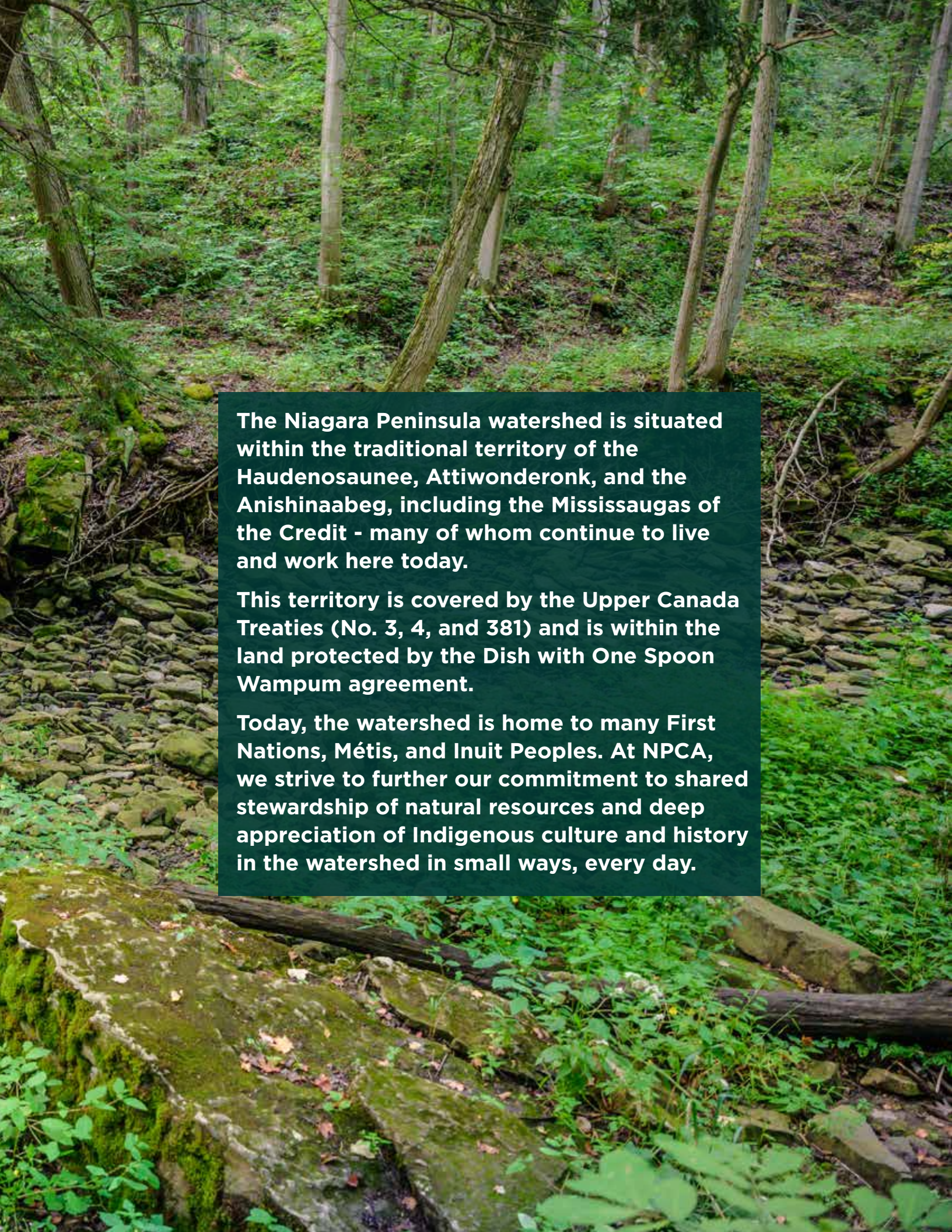
ANNUAL²⁰²⁵ REPORT

Building a Legacy of Conservation, Together

Across the Niagara Peninsula watershed, communities, municipalities, Indigenous partners, volunteers, landowners, and staff are working together to protect and restore the natural systems that support healthy, resilient communities.

The work highlighted throughout this report reflects a shared commitment to stewardship, collaboration, and creating a lasting *legacy of conservation* for generations to come





The Niagara Peninsula watershed is situated within the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Attiwonderonk, 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.



Rockway Conservation Area

To our community



2025 was a year of meaningful progress across the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

Together with our municipal partners, community members, Indigenous partners, volunteers, staff, and supporters, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) continued to advance work that protects natural systems, strengthens climate resilience, and connects people to nature.

This year's accomplishments reflect the strength of collaboration across the watershed and a shared commitment to protecting the natural systems that support healthy, resilient communities.

One of the year's most significant milestones was reached through the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP), where the governments of Canada and Ontario officially approved the removal of one of the Niagara River Area of Concern's historical environmental impairments related to fish and wildlife populations. This achievement reflects decades of restoration work, scientific monitoring, and partnership, and marks another important step toward the eventual delisting of the Niagara River as an Area of Concern.

This year, we also surpassed our minimum 10-year land securement target through the acquisition of five new properties totaling 125.8 hectares across Niagara, Haldimand, and Hamilton. These lands strengthen the resilience of our watershed by protecting wetlands, forests, wildlife habitat, and important ecological connections for future generations.

As climate impacts continue to shape our communities, work also advanced on several initiatives focused on understanding and reducing environmental risk. This included progress on floodplain mapping projects across the watershed and the launch of the Lake Ontario Coastal Resilience Pilot Project, a collaborative initiative that will help communities prepare for future shoreline and climate-related challenges.

At the same time, conservation areas, education programs, and community initiatives continued to create opportunities for people to connect with nature. From hands-on learning experiences for students to volunteer-led stewardship projects and accessible outdoor recreation, these experiences help build stronger connections between people and the environment around them.

Behind all of this work is a dedicated team supported by strong partnerships at every level. We want to thank NPCA staff, Board members, municipalities, Indigenous communities, volunteers, funders, donors, researchers, and community organizations for their continued commitment and collaboration throughout the year.

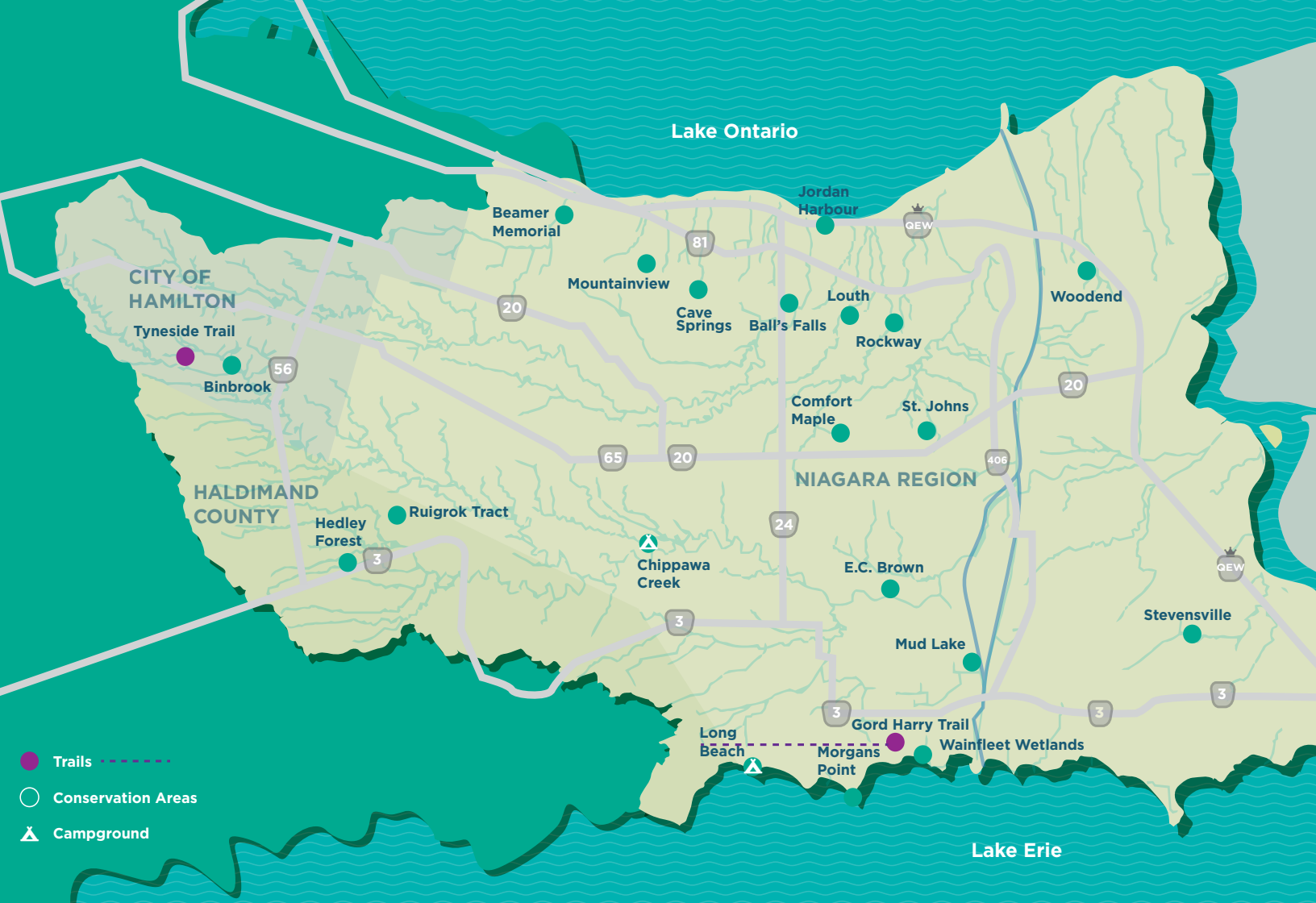
The progress highlighted throughout this report reflects the strength of collaboration across the watershed and a shared commitment to protecting the natural systems that support healthy, resilient communities. Together with our municipal partners, Indigenous communities, volunteers, researchers, landowners, and supporters, we are building a conservation legacy together - one rooted in stewardship, partnership, and a long-term commitment to the Niagara Peninsula watershed for future generations.

Signature

John Metcalfe
Chair, Board of Directors

Signature

Leilani Lee-Yates
Chief Administrative Officer



Niagara Peninsula Watershed

What guides our work

As a watershed-based organization, we take a long-term approach to conservation - one that recognizes the connection between environmental health, climate resilience, public safety, and quality of life across the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

We are committed to protecting and restoring the natural environment through science-based decision-making, collaboration, and responsible stewardship. This work depends on strong partnerships with municipalities, Indigenous communities, landowners, researchers, volunteers, and community organizations.

Our approach is guided by accountability, respect, and service to the communities we support. We believe diverse perspectives and shared knowledge lead to stronger outcomes, and that meaningful conservation work requires both innovation and long-term thinking. Guided by our vision of Nature for All, we are committed to creating a healthy and vibrant environment with shared greenspace and clean water that sustains life for future generations.

478,966 residents	15 municipalities
252,525 hectares watershed jurisdiction	84 surface water monitoring stations
43 conservation areas	46 groundwater monitoring wells
3,167 hectares land holdings	5 new conservation lands acquired
202 local waterways	



St. Johns Conservation Area



Board of Directors

Niagara Region

- Councillor **Robert Foster**
- Citizen Rep. **Donna Cridland**
- Councillor **Brian Grant**
- Councillor **Michelle Seaborn**
- Councillor **Albert Witteveen**

Hamilton Region

- Citizen Rep. **James Stewart Beattie (Vice-Chair)**
- Councillor **Brad Clark**
- Councillor **Mark Tadeson**

Haldimand Region

- Councillor **John Metcalfe (Chair)**
- Councillor **Patrick O'Neill**



Our Priorities and Goals

NPCA’s Strategic Plan (2021-2031) guides how we protect, restore, and connect people to the watershed while strengthening the organization for the future. The priorities below reflect the work underway across our programs, conservation areas, partnerships, and operations to support healthy ecosystems, resilient communities, and exceptional public service across the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

Progress Summary

These icons, used throughout the report, identify progress made in 2025 toward the goals outlined in our Strategic Plan.



COMPLETED



IN PROGRESS



TO BE INITIATED



Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds



Supporting Sustainable Growth



Connecting People to Nature



Partner of Choice



Organizational Excellence



Financial Sustainability



HEALTHY AND CLIMATE RESILIENT WATERSHEDS



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 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

125.8 ha of new land acquired

500+ assessed for hemlock woolly adelgid & **288** trees protected

Reforested **20.71** ha. and **.99** ha. of riparian habitat restored

Planted **45,438** trees and **4,736** shrubs

Collected **660** surface and **52** groundwater water quality samples

4 water quality sensors deployed

33 hydrometric stations monitored



Niagara River

A major milestone for the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP)

The governments of Canada and Ontario officially approved the recommendation to remove one of the Niagara River Area of Concern's historical environmental impairments related to fish and wildlife populations.

Following years of restoration work, monitoring, and scientific assessment, the Niagara River RAP team submitted its recommendation to redesignate the Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) from Impaired to Not Impaired in July of 2025.

Comprehensive assessments confirmed that Niagara River fish communities are healthy and stable, while contaminant levels in colonial waterbird eggs are declining or remain below established thresholds.

This milestone reflects decades of coordinated action by governments, scientists, community organizations, and local partners working together to improve water quality and ecosystem health across the Niagara River.

With this latest success, only 3 of the original 14 impairments remain in the Niagara River Area of Concern.

Learn more at niagarariver.ca

Surpassing our land securement goal

NPCA acquired 5 new land parcels totalling 125.8 hectares across Niagara, Haldimand, and Hamilton - surpassing the organization's minimum 10-year land securement target of 180 hectares ahead of schedule.

Together, these acquisitions strengthen biodiversity, protect provincially significant natural features, and improve ecological connectivity across the watershed.

In West Lincoln, a donated property from the Kala Family strengthened protection of the St. Anns Slough Forest, a provincially significant wetland and Life Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI). In Haldimand County, three new properties expanded Ruigrok Conservation Area and helped safeguard portions of the Caistor Canborough Slough Forest ANSI - one of the watershed's largest intact natural features. In Hamilton, a 28-hectare property adjacent to Binbrook Conservation Area created new opportunities for restoration work along Lake Niapenco.

6 PROPERTIES TOTALLING 279.48 HECTARES WERE NEWLY RECOGNIZED BY ONTARIO NATURE AS PROTECTED AREAS, CONTRIBUTING TO CANADA'S NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO CONSERVE 30 PER CENT OF LANDS AND WATERS BY 2030.



Project partner representatives including (L-R) Natural Resources Canada, Hamilton Conservation Authority, Conservation Halton, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, and NPCA

Planning for a more resilient Lake Ontario shoreline

This year marked the launch of the Lake Ontario Coastal Resilience Pilot Project - a collaborative initiative focused on understanding coastal hazards along the Lake Ontario shoreline and helping communities prepare for changing lake and climate conditions.

Spanning three watersheds, the project brings together NPCA, Hamilton Conservation Authority, and Conservation Halton, with NPCA leading the initiative and coordinating the multi-partner effort.

The project is supported through funding from Natural Resources Canada and delivered in collaboration with Conservation Ontario, Brock University, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, and many additional regional and technical partners.

Partnership is central to the project, bringing together municipalities, Indigenous partners, technical experts, government agencies, and community stakeholders to identify shared priorities along the coastline and help develop practical, long-term risk mitigation strategies.

Work completed throughout the year included the project launch event, onboarding of the consultant team, bathymetric surveys, and early-stage planning activities. A Technical Advisory Committee was also formed with representation from coastal municipalities, First Nations partners, government agencies, and non-government organizations to help guide the project and ensure future solutions reflect community needs and on-the-ground realities.





Modernizing flood monitoring on the Welland River

Improving the reliability of real-time flood monitoring data.

A stream gauge monitoring station on the Welland River near the Old Siphon in the City of Welland has been tracking water levels during flood events since 1985. The monitoring station was modernized using upgraded infrastructure to better protect the equipment from potential damage and disruption.

The improved station now provides more reliable real-time water level data, helping support flood forecasting, emergency preparedness, and public safety along the Welland River.

**ISSUED
8 FLOOD
BULLETINS**

Protecting vulnerable forest ecosystems

NPCA expanded efforts to monitor and respond to Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), an invasive insect threatening eastern hemlock forests across Ontario. With support from the Town of Pelham, the Invasive Species Centre, and regional collaborators, staff advanced monitoring, mapping, training, and public education initiatives across the watershed.

Treatment work was also completed on 288 hemlock trees within priority sections of Rockway and St. Johns Conservation Areas to help slow the spread and protect vulnerable forest habitat. These efforts are helping build long-term capacity to respond to emerging forest health threats across the region.



Growing forests through partnership

The Trees for All program continued expanding restoration efforts across the watershed through partnerships with municipalities, community organizations, landowners, volunteers, and funding partners.

Working alongside all 10 lower-tier Niagara municipalities, Niagara Region, the City of Hamilton, Haldimand County, 18 partner organizations, and 25 private landowners, NPCA planted 45,438 native trees and 4,736 native shrubs across 44 sites throughout the watershed. These efforts will establish more than 20 hectares of new forest habitat, helping strengthen biodiversity, improve ecological connectivity, protect waterways, and support long-term climate resilience.

**100%
MUNICIPAL
SUPPORT**

Planting efforts included 32,100 bareroot trees and 3,100 bareroot shrubs installed through large-scale restoration projects, alongside community planting events that mobilized more than 750 volunteers to plant an additional 13,338 potted trees and 1,636 potted shrubs.

A major highlight of the fall season came through a partnership with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, which supported two large

community planting events at Gainsborough Conservation Area and Smith-Ness Forest, resulting in the planting of 3,000 additional trees.

This work was supported through partnerships and funding from Natural Resources Canada through the 2 Billion Trees program, Ontario Power Generation, Royal Bank of Canada, the Great Lakes Local Action Fund, watershed municipalities, and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation.

Restoring stream stability at St. Johns Conservation Area

Following winter storms and high spring flows, an aging erosion control structure near the headwaters of 12 Mile Creek at St. Johns Conservation Area collapsed, creating instability along this sensitive waterway.

In response, NPCA's Restoration and Land Care teams worked together to stabilize the stream bank and help protect the surrounding ecosystem. The banks were carefully regraded to reduce erosion and prevent further collapse, while a tiered crib wall was constructed to provide immediate reinforcement along the watercourse.

The restoration also included the planting of 150 native trees and shrubs in partnership with the Soaring Eagles education program. Over time, the growing root systems will help naturally stabilize the stream bank and strengthen the long-term resilience of the site.



SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



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

382

permits issued

99%

of permits within client services timelines

17

days on average to issue a permit

933

planning applications

376

compliance incident reports

8

municipal official plan updates

5

secondary plans reviewed

275

km of floodplain mapping

8

flood bulletins issued



Oswego Creek

Advancing watershed mapping and spatial data

NPCA advanced its large-scale surface water inventory mapping using high-resolution LiDAR data provided by the Province of Ontario. The updated spatial datasets improve how watercourses, drainage areas, and watershed boundaries are mapped across the Niagara watershed, supporting floodplain mapping, watershed management, permitting, and technical studies with greater accuracy and detail.

Advancing flood mapping across the watershed

NPCA completed two major flood mapping projects covering approximately 275 kilometres of watercourses along Oswego Creek, and Coyle and Drapers Creeks. Work also began on the Upper Welland Tributaries Floodplain Mapping Project, which will assess flood risks along an additional 250 kilometres of Niagara watercourses.

This work was supported through Natural Resources Canada's Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program (FHIMP), alongside matching federal funding.

This mapping plays an important role in helping guide development away from flood-prone areas while supporting emergency preparedness and long-term community safety.

Public engagement remained a key part of the process.

Throughout the year, NPCA hosted community information sessions and engaged residents through online project portals, creating opportunities for one-on-one conversations about local flooding concerns, floodplain mapping, and how this information is used to support informed planning decisions.

275
KILOMETERS
MAPPED OUT



Working together to support resilient communities

Supporting coordinated planning and stronger watershed relationships.

NPCA planning staff met with more than 100 planning and development staff from 14 municipalities across the Niagara watershed to discuss recent changes to conservation authorities' responsibilities and strengthen understanding of our role in natural hazard management. These meetings also created an important opportunity to build relationships, discuss local priorities, and improve coordination between municipalities and our staff.

At the same time, 8 municipalities were undertaking comprehensive Official Plan reviews to align with recent updates to the Planning Act and Provincial Planning Statement. NPCA environmental planning staff supported this work by reviewing natural hazard and source water protection policies and identifying opportunities for watershed management collaboration and partnership.

25 Years of Source Water Protection

This year marked 25 years since the Walkerton water contamination tragedy - a pivotal moment that reshaped how drinking water is protected across Ontario and led to the development of the Clean Water Act and Source Water Protection Program.

The Walkerton water contamination tragedy reshaped how drinking water is protected across the province. Today, conservation authorities, municipalities, Indigenous communities, farmers, industries, and community partners continue working together to identify and reduce risks to local drinking water sources through watershed-based planning and protection measures.

This milestone served as an important opportunity to reflect on the progress made over the past 25 years and the shared responsibility required to help ensure Ontario's drinking water remains safe, clean, and sustainable for future generations.

**Policy in Action
Strengthening our Compliance
& Enforcement Efforts
Across the Watershed**



**376 REPORTED
COMPLIANCE
MATTERS PROCESSED**



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE



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

632,041

conservation area visitors

255,548

paid admissions

15,450

students engaged in outdoor education programs & camps

- ^26% increase

1,091 NaturePlus members

borrowed **1,437** times from local libraries

30,000+

attendees at signature events



Prescribing time in nature

Connecting people to nature through health and wellness.

The launch of PaRx reflects a growing recognition that conservation areas support not only biodiversity and recreation, but also healthier, more connected communities.

The national PaRx initiative helps connect people with the health benefits of spending time outdoors. The program allows healthcare professionals to prescribe time in nature as part of a broader approach to physical and mental well-being.

Research continues to show that regular access to nature can help reduce stress, improve mood, support physical activity, and strengthen overall health. Through the program, patients are encouraged to spend time exploring local greenspaces, trails, and conservation areas across the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

25 PARX PRESCRIPTIONS

A natural backdrop for storytelling

Showcasing Niagara's natural landscapes to audiences beyond the watershed.

NPCA conservation areas are increasingly being recognized as unique destinations for film, photography, and commercial production - offering scenic landscapes, natural settings, and historic spaces that are distinctly Niagara.

Ball's Falls Conservation Area welcomed Canadian music icon Shania Twain for the filming of a national commercial campaign for Clearly Canadian. The campaign highlighted the natural beauty of the site, with forested trails, waterfalls, and escarpment landscapes featured prominently throughout the production.

The commercial and accompanying national media coverage helped showcase Niagara's landscapes to audiences across North America.

As interest in destination filming continues to grow, NPCA conservation areas are helping showcase the natural and cultural landscapes of the Niagara Peninsula to broader audiences while supporting tourism, economic activity, and community visibility across the region.



Enhancing experiences across conservation areas

Investing in spaces that help people connect with nature.

At Chippawa Creek Conservation Area, a new MobiMat was installed at the Dils Lake beach through support from NPCA and Jungbunzlauer. The accessible beach pathway helps visitors of all abilities more easily reach and enjoy the waterfront.

At Rockway Conservation Area, construction of a new footbridge was also completed, helping improve trail connectivity and enhance the overall visitor experience throughout the conservation area. The site welcomed more than 12,000 visitors over the year.

NPCA also completed important roof repairs and replacements on several heritage buildings at Ball's Falls Conservation Area, helping preserve the historic character and long-term integrity of one of Niagara's most significant cultural heritage destinations.

Inspiring the next generation of watershed stewards

Hands-on learning about rivers, resilience, and the natural environment.

A new interactive Stream Table was launched the Niagara Children's Water Festival - a scientific learning tool that demonstrates how rivers and streams behave and interact with the surrounding landscape.

The Stream Table was acquired through a partnership between NPCA, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation (NPCF), and Niagara Region, with funding support from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and Niagara Community Foundation.

The Stream Table provided a hands-on activity for Grade 3 and 4 students called Wandering Water. The program helps students explore how rivers form naturally, how watersheds function, and how human development and climate change can affect these systems. Students were then challenged to redesign their watersheds using more resilient, nature-based solutions - encouraging problem-solving, environmental awareness, and a deeper understanding of how healthy natural systems support communities.



Celebrating community and heritage at Ball's Falls

The Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival continued to bring thousands of visitors together to celebrate Niagara's natural and cultural heritage through local food, artisans, music, history, and community connection.

As one of NPCA's signature annual events, the festival continues to strengthen public connection to conservation areas while supporting local tourism, heritage preservation, and environmental stewardship across the watershed.



Inspiring the next generation of Great Lakes stewards

More than 100 high school students from across Niagara gathered at Old Fort Erie for the second annual Niagara Great Lakes Student Conference — a hands-on learning experience focused on Great Lakes issues, environmental stewardship, and careers in conservation.

Hosted in partnership with the District School Board of Niagara, Niagara Catholic District School Board, Niagara Parks, and community partners, the event brought together students in Grades 9 to 12 enrolled in science and environmental SHSM programs.

Throughout the day, students participated in interactive activities led by environmental professionals covering topics including water quality monitoring, environmental engineering, erosion control, geology, Indigenous connections to land and water, species at risk, and the ongoing restoration work of the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan.

The conference was supported through funding from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and reflects the continued importance of collaboration, education, and youth engagement in building the next generation of environmental stewards.



PARTNER OF CHOICE



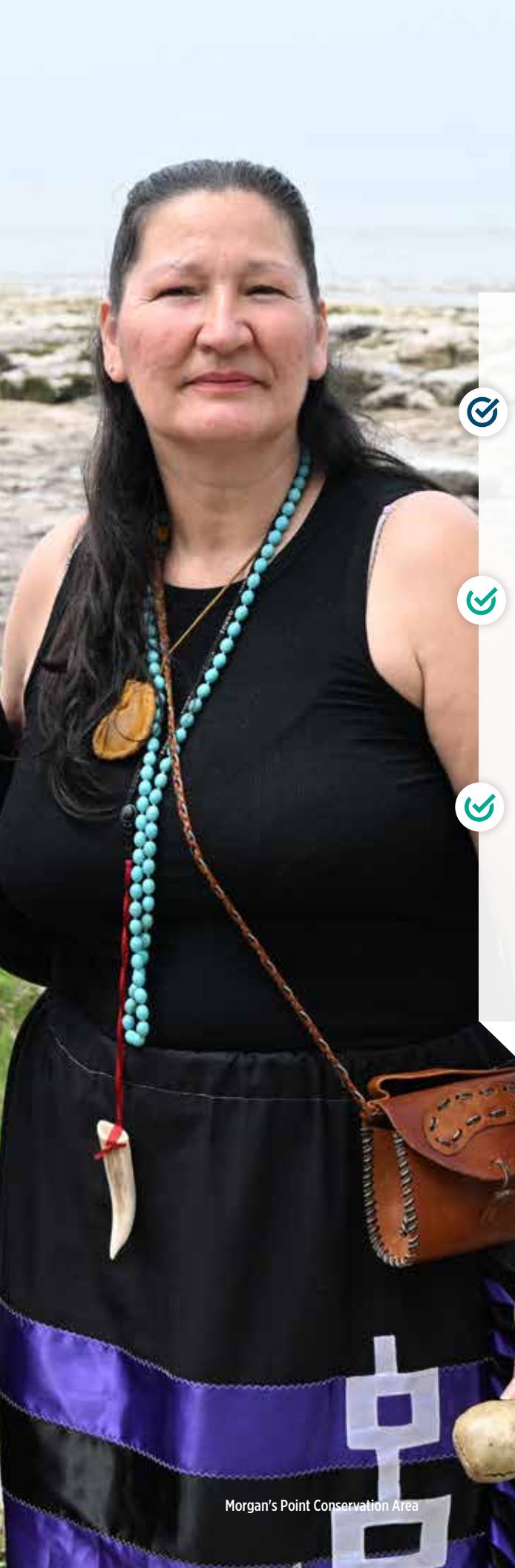
Strengthening our relationships with stakeholders, partners, the watershed community, and Indigenous Peoples.





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

2186
volunteers

317
new volunteers

4,840
volunteer hours

\$85,184.00
value of volunteer commitment



Ball's Falls Conservation Area

Advancing relationships with Indigenous partners

Building meaningful partnerships through shared learning, stewardship, and community connection.

Across the watershed, we continue to work alongside Indigenous communities and partners to strengthen relationships, support collaboration, and create opportunities for shared learning and engagement.

Our Indigenous-led programs and events played an important role in this work, including participation in initiatives such as Song to the Waters, Reawakening, and the Morgan's Point 100-Year commemoration. These programs created opportunities to reflect on history, share knowledge, and deepen connections to land and water through culture, storytelling, and community gathering.

Staff were also honoured to participate in the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Caring Together event in September 2025, which celebrated community, connection, and the 10th anniversary of the Nation's Department of Consultation and Accommodation.

During the event, staff shared information about conservation programs and the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan alongside colleagues from Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Conservation Halton.

As part of the event, white pine seedlings, native seed balls, and educational materials were distributed as a small gesture of gratitude and relationship-building with the community.

These experiences continue to strengthen relationships, encourage dialogue, and support a more inclusive and collaborative approach to conservation across the watershed.



Niagara Shores - 4 Mile Creek

Protecting and restoring Niagara Shores Park through partnership

A collaborative approach to caring for an important Lake Ontario shoreline property.

The partnership with Parks Canada and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake advanced to support the long-term stewardship of Niagara Shores Park - a 14-hectare forested natural area along the Lake Ontario shoreline in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The collaboration will support ecological research, land care, and long-term planning for the property while ensuring the park remains protected in public ownership for future generations. The site plays an important role in shoreline resilience, habitat connectivity, biodiversity, and public access to natural greenspace within the watershed.

NPCA worked alongside project partners and the community to help guide future stewardship planning for the site, reflecting a shared commitment to protecting one of Niagara's ecologically significant shoreline landscapes through science, collaboration, and long-term conservation planning.

Public Advisory Committee

Academic/Science/Research: Julia Baird

Agriculture: Lennie Aarts, Mary Jane Combe

Business/Industry: Andrew Panko

Development/Building: Steven Rivers

Environmental: William Rapley

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 Chatheecha



Bringing history to life through volunteerism

Dedicated volunteers continue to play an important role in preserving and animating the historic Glen Elgin village at Ball's Falls Conservation Area. Volunteers Joanna Paul and Ian Wright transformed a former storage shed into an educational exhibit inspired by the site's historic apiary. Through months of careful restoration work and research, the space was reimagined as an interpretive feature highlighting the role of beekeeping within the village's history. During the Thanksgiving Festival, the pair even stepped into the role of historical apiculturists - period clothing included - helping visitors experience another piece of Niagara's cultural heritage firsthand.

Volunteer contributions continue to strengthen stewardship, conservation education, habitat restoration, cultural heritage programming, and community connection across the watershed. Together, these efforts reflect the collective impact of thousands of volunteer hours contributed throughout the year.





Building a coordinated response to invasive species

A watershed-wide approach to invasive species management continued through new partnerships, research initiatives, and collaborative planning. This included launching the development of a regional Invasive Species Strategy alongside municipalities, conservation organizations, academic institutions, and community partners. NPCA also signed an agreement with the Invasive Species Centre to lead a new Niagara Phragmites Management Area and established the Niagara PMA Collaborative to support coordinated action against invasive Phragmites.

Additional work included a new GeoAI mapping partnership with Brock University, watershed-wide collaboration on Hemlock Woolly Adelgid monitoring and treatment, and coordinated management efforts for Japanese Stiltgrass at two conservation areas.

Supporting species at risk through stewardship

Community volunteers helping create safe habitat for Eastern Bluebirds across the watershed.

Eastern Bluebirds are considered a species at risk in Ontario and rely on specialized habitat for nesting and breeding. Across several conservation areas, staff and volunteers continue to support these birds through the installation, monitoring, and maintenance of bluebird nesting boxes.

Volunteers including Doug Ransom, Heber Crewe, Bob Dobrinski, Doug Wilson, and members of the Glanbrook Conservation Committee helped build, repair, and install nesting boxes. Volunteers Norrie Franko and Ron Friesen each contributed more than 100 hours caring for dozens of bluebird boxes across two conservation areas.

This ongoing stewardship led to an exciting milestone with the first successful fledging of Eastern Bluebirds from nesting boxes at E.C. Brown Conservation Area - an encouraging sign for the future of the species within the watershed.



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE



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



Years of Service

Celebrating the service milestones of our committed team.

20 Years
Steve Gillis
Bob Hayslip

15 Years
Amy Parks
Moriah Tempest

10 Years
Alicia Powell
Misti Ferrusi

5 Years
Carly Fazekas
Emily Rush
Taran Lennard
Nick Bradley

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

93%

full-time staff retention

62

youth employment opportunities

47%

internal promotion rate

66%

returning seasonal staff

8

internal promotions

22%

increase in employee satisfaction

3,000+

training hours

Behind every project and partnership is a team working to ensure NPCA operates effectively, responsibly, and with a clear focus on long-term impact. Continued investments in systems, processes, and people strengthened how the organization delivers its work - supporting better decision-making, improving efficiency, and ensuring resources are used responsibly.

Planning for a lower-carbon future

Taking action to reduce emissions and strengthen long-term resilience.

The completion of our Decarbonization Roadmap is an important step in understanding and reducing the organization's operational greenhouse gas emissions. The study assessed emissions across major facilities and fleet operations and established a 2023 baseline of 270 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. The findings will help inform the development of NPCA's upcoming Corporate Climate Change Action Plan and future recommendations to the Board regarding organizational emissions reduction targets.

The roadmap identified practical opportunities to reduce emissions over time, including transitioning vehicles and equipment to electric alternatives, improving energy efficiency within facilities, switching to LED lighting, and reducing reliance on propane heating. This work forms a foundational component of NPCA's upcoming Climate Change Action Plan and reflects the organization's broader commitment to addressing climate change through accountability, collaboration, and long-term action.

Using AI to support invasive species management

Exploring new technologies to improve environmental monitoring.

In partnership with Brock University and the Invasive Species Centre, we began exploring the use of artificial intelligence to identify invasive Phragmites from aerial imagery. The collaboration achieved identification accuracy rates of up to 80%, helping demonstrate the potential for AI-supported mapping to improve invasive species monitoring and management across the watershed.

Investing in people and professional growth

Building knowledge, leadership, and long-term careers in conservation.

NPCA continued investing in staff development through technical training, leadership programs, mentorship opportunities, and sector collaboration.

Staff participated in professional development across environmental monitoring, operations, planning, GIS, education, compliance, and conservation management. Several employees also took part in leadership initiatives through Conservation Ontario and partner organizations, including the Young Conservation Professionals Leadership Program and NextGen leadership development.

These opportunities continue to support employee growth, strengthen organizational capacity, and help build the next generation of conservation leadership.

Information Technology and GIS Highlights:

- Replaced aging network infrastructure, firewalls, and Wi-Fi systems at Ball's Falls, Gainsborough, Long Beach, and Binbrook Conservation Areas to improve reliability and cybersecurity.
- Implemented 1Password across the organization to strengthen password security and improve internal information management.
- Expanded the Watershed Explorer platform with new Watershed Ecology and Watershed Compliance applications to improve staff access to geospatial information and reduce duplication across departments.

**25,000 OPEN DATA
PORTAL VISITS,
HUNDREDS OF
DATA REQUESTS**



In memory of Brian Lee

Remembering a colleague, mentor, and friend.

NPCA mourns the loss of Brian Lee, our longtime GIS Administrator and a deeply valued member of the organization.

During his seven years with NPCA, Brian played a significant role in advancing the organization's GIS capabilities and strengthening how data and mapping tools support conservation work across the watershed. He was known for his technical expertise, problem-solving ability, and constant willingness to help others learn and grow.

But beyond his professional contributions, Brian will be remembered most for the person he was - thoughtful, funny, generous with his time, and deeply respected by colleagues across the organization. Whether mentoring staff, troubleshooting a problem, or bringing humour into the workplace, Brian had a lasting impact on the people around him.

His legacy continues to be reflected in the systems he helped build, the knowledge he shared, and the many relationships he formed throughout his time at NPCA.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



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

\$6.1 million in self-generated revenue, representing 31.11% of total revenue - 39% increase from 2024

Secured **\$4.2** million in grant funding

\$6.3 million in capital projects and land acquisitions

23 procurement initiatives

5 collaborative purchasing agreements

Variance against consolidated budget only **1.14%**

Reliance on municipal levy continues to decrease from **64.5%** in 2020 to 51.9% in 2025



Financial Sustainability

NPCA remains committed to responsible fiscal management and organizational sustainability. In 2025, we exceeded expectations, achieving a variance of only 1.14 per cent against our consolidated budgets, 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 51.9 per cent in 2025. We secured \$4.2 million in grant funding and generated \$6.1 million in self-generated revenue, bringing our self-generated revenues to 31 per cent, up from 25 per cent in 2020. For every \$1 of municipal funding, NPCA raised \$2.07 in additional revenues, demonstrating our success in optimizing resources and minimizing taxpayer burden. Our commitment to diversifying funding sources continues, 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 \$6.3 million in capital projects including land acquisitions, completing 23 procurement initiatives and leveraging 5 collaborative purchasing agreements in 2025. Through innovative approaches, NPCA continues to strengthen its financial health, reduce taxpayer reliance, and support sustainable growth for the future.

**\$3.1 MILLION
PROCURED
IN CAPITAL
PROJECTS,
BOOSTING
LOCAL
ECONOMY**

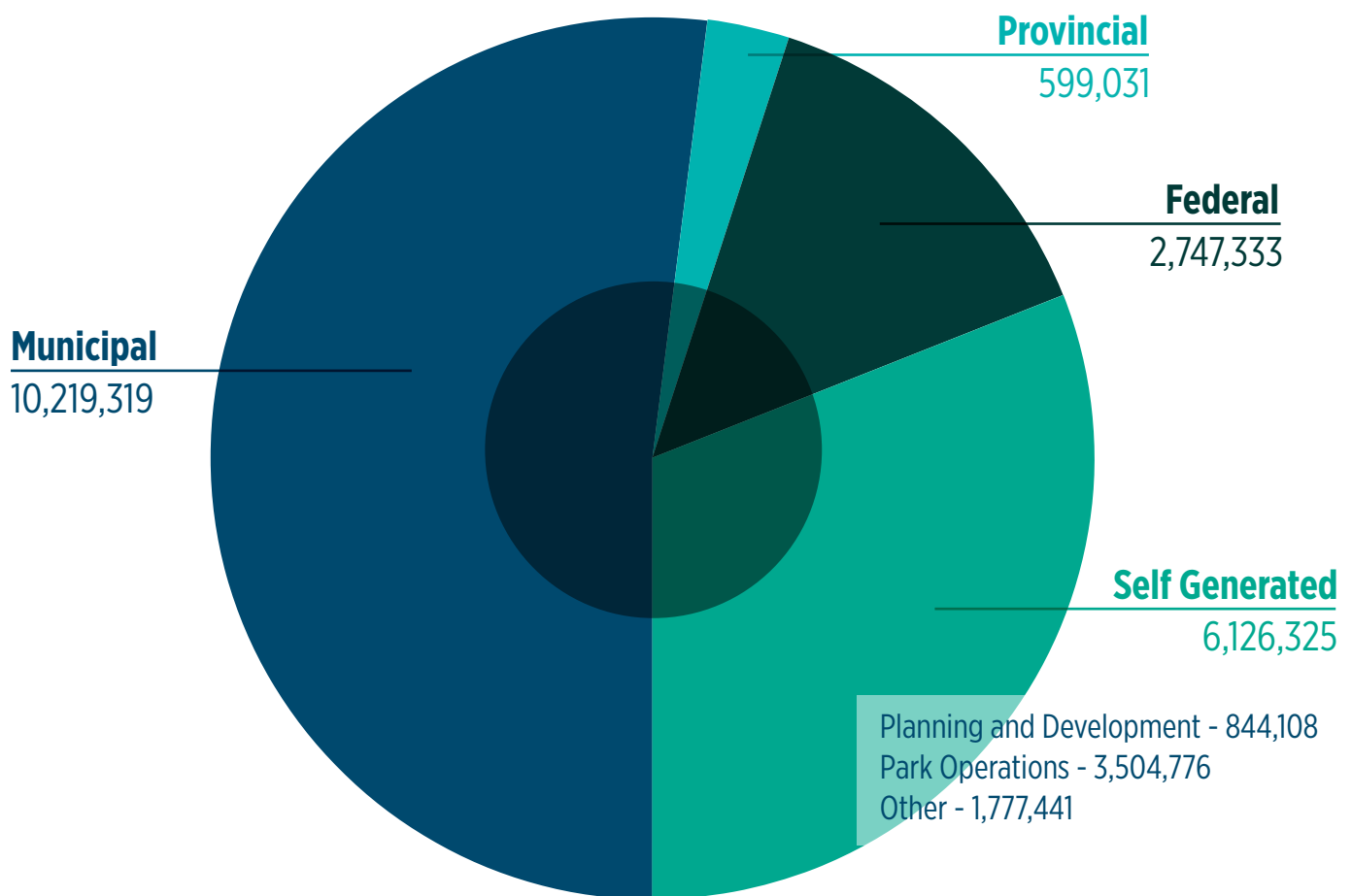
NPCA Financials

Revenues:

NPCA's consolidated revenue sources are classified into 2 streams – government (municipal, provincial, federal) and self-generated. Consolidated revenues for 2025 of \$19,692,008 supported operating, capital and land acquisitions. Municipal support represents 51.9% of our total funding envelope, down from 64.5% in 2020. NPCA generated revenues include fee-for-service activity, park operations (user fees and admissions) and collectively contributed 31.1% (\$6.1M) to gross revenues.

Expenses:

In keeping with historical trends, labour costs represent the largest share of operating expenses 60.8%. Total operating expenditures: \$15,431,347.



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.

Supporting conservation through community investment

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation (NPCF) helps advance conservation, restoration, education, and community initiatives across Niagara, Hamilton, and Haldimand through fundraising, partnerships, donor support, and community engagement.

In 2025, NPCF continued supporting projects that strengthened climate resilience, expanded environmental education opportunities, improved accessibility within conservation areas, and supported long-term stewardship across the watershed.

Improving accessibility in nature

In partnership with Jungbunzlauer, NPCF helped fund the installation of a new accessible Mobi-Mat pathway at Dils Lake within Chippawa Creek Conservation Area, improving waterfront access for visitors of all abilities.

Celebrating 10 years of the Comfort Maple initiative

Since launching in 2015, the Comfort Maple initiative has raised more than \$60,000 in support of conservation projects across the watershed through handcrafted items made from reclaimed wood from one of Canada's oldest and most iconic trees.

Together, community investment is helping protect and restore the natural spaces that support healthy, resilient communities across the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

Highlights

6
Conservation Education Bursaries
awarded

\$65,000
secured through Niagara Community
Foundation to support future Trees for
All plantings

10
years of the Comfort Maple conservation
initiative

1000's
of native trees supported through NPCF
partnerships and restoration initiatives

A photograph of two hikers walking away from the camera on a forest trail. The hiker in the foreground is wearing a blue backpack and a light blue long-sleeved shirt. The hiker behind them is wearing a brown hat and a light-colored shirt. The background is a lush green forest with many trees and foliage. A large, stylized green leaf graphic is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

**CONSIDER SUPPORTING
CONSERVATION AND DONATE
TODAY ... npcf.ca/donate**



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Member of Conservation Ontario