



**NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

March 27, 2026

Carolinian Hall

3350 Merrittville Highway, Thorold ON

**ADDENDUM**

**9. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**9.5. Report No. FA-09-26 RE: 2026 Corporate Workplan Priorities**

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**9.6. Report No. FA-02-26 RE: Provincial Announcement – Next Steps to Improve Ontario’s Conservation Authority System**

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**10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**10.1. Minutes of the Public Advisory Committee, dated March 10, 2026**

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**Report To: Board of Directors**

**Subject: 2026 Corporate Workplan Priorities**

**Report No: FA-09-26**

**Date: March 27, 2026**

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**Recommendation:**

**THAT** Report No. FA-09-26 RE: 2026 Corporate Workplan Priorities **BE RECEIVED;**

**AND THAT** the Board **APPROVE** the 2026 Corporate Workplan Priorities.

**Purpose:**

To obtain Board approval for the 2026 Corporate Workplan Priorities.

**Background:**

Section 2.2.6 c) of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Administrative By-law, states that the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer develops, for Board approval, and implements both short and long-term strategic plans in accordance with business goals and objectives. At the October 15, 2021, Full Authority Board Meeting, the Board finalized and approved the *2021-31 Strategic Plan*.

The 10-Year Strategic Plan emphasizes a conservation-first philosophy, collaborative ethics, and innovation rooted in science, setting the foundation for NPCA's response to climate change, growth, and the need for sustainable green infrastructure. Staff follow the Strategic Plan guiding principles and values in their everyday work that uphold NPCA's commitment to protecting and enhancing healthy watersheds and communities and being leaders in conservation.

To guide the annual corporate workplan process, the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer identifies Corporate Workplan Priorities based on 10-year Strategic Plan Priorities and Goals, legislative requirements mandated by the provincial government, and other factors such as strategic partnership opportunities. The Corporate Workplan Priorities are then integrated into Division Workplans.

**Discussion:**

The 2026 Corporate Workplan Priorities, attached as Appendix 1, include on-going critical projects that implement the Strategic Plan, and anticipated work associated with the proposed regional consolidation of the NPCA into the Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority. These workplan priorities have been developed with the Senior Leadership Team, with further input from the Management Team.

It is recognized that due to the anticipated workload associated with the proposed regional consolidation, workplan priorities may need to be adjusted to meet provincial timelines. The CAO/Secretary-Treasurer and Senior Leadership Team will continue to monitor Division Workplans and make necessary adjustments.

**Financial Implications:**

The projects supporting the 2026 Corporate Workplan Priorities have been included in the 2026 Board-approved operating and capital budgets.

**Links to Policy/Strategic Plan**

The 2026 Corporate Workplan Priorities supports the implementation of the 10-year Strategic Plan and mandated legislative requirements.

**Related Reports and Appendices:**

Appendix 1: 2026 NPCA Corporate Workplan Priorities

**Authored by:**

*Original Signed by:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leilani Lee-Yates, BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

**Reviewed by:**

*Original Signed by:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Melanie Davis, M.A.  
Manager, CAO Office & Board

**Submitted by:**

*Original Signed by:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leilani Lee-Yates, BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

## 2026 NPCA Corporate Workplan Priorities

### 1. Strategic Plan Priorities

<b>Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds</b>	
Shoreline Management a Costal Resiliency	<p>Lake Ontario Coastal Resiliency Pilot Project continues as per scope of work and funding agreement</p> <p>Lake Erie Coastal Resiliency Project – develop project objectives and scope of work with partners</p>
Floodplain Mapping Projects	<p>Upper Welland Tributaries Floodplain Mapping to be completed</p> <p>Four Mile Creek Floodplain Mapping to commence</p> <p>Floodplain Mapping Update Prioritization Plan to be completed</p>
Conservation Area Land Management Plans	<p>Morgan’s Point Conservation Area species habitat restoration plan continues as per workplan</p> <p>Beamer Memorial Conservation Area Management Plan continues as per workplan</p> <p>Woodend Conservation Area Management Plan to commence</p> <p>Niagara Shores Park scope of work for studies and land management priorities to be completed</p>
<b>Connecting People to Nature</b>	
Campground Infrastructure Improvements Business Case	Complete by Q3
<b>Partner of Choice</b>	
Government Relation Strategy	Complete in 2026 – Governance Committee workplan
Indigenous Engagement Guidelines	Complete in 2026 – Governance Committee workplan

<b>Supporting Sustainable Growth</b>	
Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP)	A one-year trial membership with STEP  Leverage shared resources with other conservation authorities and build capacity and expertise in erosion and sediment control, urban runoff management and green infrastructure, winter salt management, protecting and restoring natural features
Planning and Permitting Policy Document Housekeeping Update	Complete focused housekeeping updates to clarify policies and procedures in accordance with Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibitive Activities, Exemptions and Permits
Regulation Mapping Updates	Continuous updates to reflect new floodplain mapping, and refinements through plan review and permit approvals  Complete new wetland mapping
CityView Online Permit Application Portal	Launch portal in Q2
Proactive Watershed Planning Program	Four Mile Creek Watershed Study – continues in partnership with Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake as per workplan  Twelve Mile Creek Management Plan – establish Ad-Hoc Committee
<b>Organizational Excellence</b>	
Climate Change Action Plan	Complete in 2026  Implementation ongoing as per Acton Plan
Digital Transformation Plan	Continuing in 2026
Asset Management Plan	Complete end of Q3  10-year Capital Strategy to be complete by end of 2026
Grant Funding and Project Management Support	Grant Funding Strategy to be completed  Project Management support tools to be completed (e.g., protocols, templates, etc.)
Support the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation (NPCF) to raise funds for the Nature for All – For Always campaign	Ongoing coordination  July 24, 2026: Golden Hour Gala Event at Ball’s Falls Conservation Area

## 2. Mandated Legislation Priorities

<b>Conservation Authorities Act Amendments and Regional Consolidation</b>	
Transition Committee	To be led by the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency  Workplan to be determined  Anticipated timeline – May to December
Communications and Engagement Plan	Develop Internal and External Communications and Engagement Plans by Q2  Engagement throughout 2026

**Report To: Board of Directors**

**Subject: Provincial Announcement – Next Steps to Improve Ontario’s Conservation Authority System**

**Report No: FA-02-26**

**Date: March 27, 2026**

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**Recommendation:**

**WHEREAS** on October 31, 2025, the provincial government announced a proposal to establish the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) to lead the implementation of a new regional conservation authority framework;

**AND WHEREAS** on November 6, 2025, Bill 68, *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No.2)* was introduced in the Ontario Legislature, which proposed amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* to establish OPCA, and on November 27, 2025, Bill 68 received Royal Assent;

**AND WHEREAS** on November 7, 2025, the provincial government posted a policy proposal on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO #025-1257) to consolidate Ontario’s 36 conservation authorities into seven regional conservation authorities and provided a 45-day commenting period on proposed boundaries and the criteria applied to inform the proposed boundaries;

**AND WHEREAS** on December 5, 2025, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Board of Directors passed Resolution No. FA-131-2025, that stated the Board does not support the “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration as the proposal lacks sufficient justification, would significantly diminish local governance, and fails to recognize the effectiveness and efficiencies already achieved within existing watershed-based models;

**AND WHEREAS** NPCA’s participating municipalities of Niagara Region, City of Hamilton and Haldimand County, and several watershed lower-tier municipalities passed Council resolutions and submitted comments to the provincial government demonstrating support for the position of the NPCA Board of Directors;

**AND WHEREAS** on March 10, 2025, the provincial government announced their decision on the boundaries for Ontario’s new nine regional conservation authorities, with the “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” boundaries remaining unchanged, and provided further information related to governance and the transition process;

**AND WHEREAS** amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, and implementing Regulations will be required to facilitate the statutory amalgamation of regional conservation authorities;

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved:**

**THAT** Report No. FA-02-26 RE: Provincial Announcement – Next Steps to Improve Ontario’s Conservation Authority System **BE RECEIVED**;

**AND THAT** the NPCA Board of Directors reaffirms their position stated through Resolution No. FA-131-2025;

**AND THAT** should the provincial government proceed with implementing the proposed regional conservation authority framework and “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority”, the NPCA will be committed to working constructively with OPCA, neighbouring conservation authorities, municipalities, sector partners and interested partners to ensure local voices, municipal representations, and unique watershed characteristics continue to guide decisions;

**AND THAT** the Board requests that OPCA engages meaningfully and collaboratively with affected municipalities, conservation authorities, and local First Nations before advancing any consolidation, to ensure that any changes reflect both local needs and the practical realities of implementation;

**AND THAT** this resolution and Report No. FA-09-26 be forwarded to Niagara Region; the lower-tier municipalities within Niagara Region; City of Hamilton; Haldimand County; Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation; Six Nations of the Grand River; Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Committee; Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks; Ontario’s Chief Conservation Executive; local area MPPs; Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); Conservation Ontario; and all conservation authorities in Ontario.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the decision notice in relation to ERO #025-1257 and next steps proposed by the Province of Ontario for the regional consolidation of Ontario’s conservation authorities.

## Background:

On November 7, 2025, the Province posted a policy proposal on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO #025-1257) to consolidate Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities (CAs) into seven Regional Conservation Authorities (RCAs) and provided a 45-day commenting period on proposed boundaries and the criteria applied to inform the proposed boundaries.

Under this proposal, NPCA would fall under the Western Lake Ontario RCA, along with Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA), Conservation Halton (CH), and Credit Valley Conservation (CVC). The boundaries of the Western Lake Ontario RCA extend along the western Lake Ontario shoreline from Niagara through Halton and Peel, encompassing urban and rural watersheds that support the Greater Toronto-Hamilton corridor.

The Western Lake Ontario RCA is primarily based on the western portion of the Northern Lake Ontario and Niagara River Secondary Watershed. The RCA would also include the Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Area, Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region, and Credit Valley Source Protection Area (which is part of Credit Valley – Toronto and Region – Central Lake Ontario Source Protection Region).

On November 27, 2025, Bill 68, *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No.2)* received Royal Assent and the amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* allow for the establishment of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) to implement a new regional conservation authority framework.

On December 5, 2025, NPCA held a Special Meeting of the Full Authority Board to review the ERO comment submission (Report No. FA-59-25) and passed Resolution No. FA-131-2025, that stated the Board does not support the "Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration as the proposal lacks sufficient justification, would significantly diminish local governance, and fails to recognize the effectiveness and efficiencies already achieved within existing watershed-based models.

On March 10, 2026, Hon. Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and Chief Conservation Executive, Mr. Hassaan Basit announced [next steps for the consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities](#), including the decision to proceed with a total of nine (9) RCAs. NPCA remains part of the Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority with HCA, CH, and CVC. [Decision details pertaining to ERO #025-1257](#) were posted for review later that day. Over 14,000 comment submissions were received by the provincial government.

Further, on March 10, 2026, the Chairs of the current 36 CAs received a letter from Minister McCarthy regarding next steps for the planned consolidation of regional conservation authorities.

## Discussion:

The decision of the provincial government to consolidate the current 36 CAs into nine RCAs was based on feedback received through the ERO consultation process as a part of the government's plan to improve Ontario's conservation authority systems, to ensure CAs have the tools required to protect the communities they serve, supporting economic prosperity while balancing environmental protection and development needs.

The final boundaries were adjusted based on the feedback that the proposed boundaries were too large, did not align with watersheds and covered areas of differing environmental needs. Adjustments were made to accommodate areas with distinct geographies and development contexts, better balance differing priorities across rural, urban, and northern areas and improve alignment with watersheds and with source protection regions.

The new nine RCAs are:

- Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority
- Eastern Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority
- Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority
- Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority
- Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority
- Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority
- St. Lawrence River Regional Conservation Authority
- Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority
- Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

Maps of the planned boundaries for the nine RCA's can be viewed on the [OPCA website](#). This spring, the government plans to introduce amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that, if passed, will enable the consolidation of Ontario's CAs through statutory amalgamation.

### Statutory Amalgamation

To address concerns raised around service continuity for communities, the provincial government is proposing statutory amalgamation that intends to avoid disruptions to existing partnerships and agreements with municipalities, Indigenous communities, and other partners. On the transition date to occur in early 2027, or a later date prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the former CAs would be amalgamated creating the RCA, and legal continuation is provided for:

- Ensuring all rights, obligations, assets and liabilities from the CAs would become those of the new RCAs.
- Providing for the continuation of all existing agreements, contracts, permitting or other actions underway.

- Ensuring the current jurisdiction of the individual CAs are combined to become the jurisdiction of the consolidated RCA.
- Specifying that the provisions of the *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act* would apply to the consolidation of CAs.

The assets, liabilities and agreements of the predecessor CAs would become those of the new RCA. The province indicated that residents would continue to work with the same local teams who know their watershed, understand local issues and provide on-the-ground support.

### Transition to Consolidated Conservation Authorities

The transition process will be led by OPCA, providing the tools and resources to coordinate the transition over the next year with the target date of early 2027. The province also announced \$20 million in initial funding to support OPCA in leading the transition and implementation, with an additional \$3 million this year and every following year to be administered by OPCA to support RCAs with program improvements and service delivery.

The Ministry plans to propose amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* to facilitate the transition process that would:

- Suspend existing provisions in the *Conservation Authorities Act* allowing for the establishment, enlargement, amalgamation, and dissolution of CAs during the transition period.
- Enable the Minister to issue immediate temporary restrictions on certain activities by CAs, to facilitate the planned consolidation. The intent is to restrict activities related to extraordinary financial, asset, or employment decisions to mitigate risk and ensure a stable transition to the new regional structure. These directions would expire upon consolidation, at the latest.
- Require OPCA to:
  - Establish Transition Committees for each RCA to include the CAO/General Manager and one municipally elected board member from each of the current CAs, and any other members as appointed by OPCA.
  - Appoint Project Executives who will chair the Transition Committees, and upon regional consolidation would serve as inaugural CAO of the RCA for up to 24 months. Following this period, the Board members of the RCA will assume responsibility for long-term CAO decisions.
- Mandate Transition Committees to develop a transition plan to prepare for the consolidation subject to OPCA's review. Project Executives will be able to request information from CAs as needed to support the development of the transition plan.
- Require Board members of RCAs to be selected by the participating municipalities prior to the date of consolidation.

- Require new RCAs to implement the transition plan, with the opportunity to make revisions subject to OPCA's approval, and report on progress of implementation to OPCA.

### Governance of Consolidated Conservation Authorities

The RCAs would continue to be municipally governed organizations. The provincial government's plan would make participating municipalities those that are at the upper and single-tier levels, which is already the case for the NPCA. The number of members appointed to each RCA would be streamlined with around 15-20 members, with population-based representation. Each participating municipality would be guaranteed a member, and limitations would be placed on the number of members appointed by any one municipality to ensure fairness and balance.

Participating municipalities for the proposed Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority would include the City of Hamilton, Dufferin County, Haldimand County, Halton Region, Niagara Region, Peel Region, and Wellington County.

The Ministry plans to propose further amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that would:

- Enable the Minister to issue directions regarding the budget and apportionment process for 2027 CA budgets that occurs during 2026.
- Update the CA governance structure for RCAs with participating municipalities being the upper-tier and single-tier municipalities within a CA's area of jurisdiction.
- Set out that the method for determining the number of Board members that each participating municipality appoints to the RCA would be prescribed in regulation based on each participating municipality's proportion of the population in the RCA's jurisdiction; each participating municipality would be guaranteed at least one member. The maximum number of members appointed by all participating municipalities of a CA (maximum board size), and the maximum number of members that any one municipality could appoint are to be established through regulations if legislative amendments are passed, to ensure fairness and balance.
- Update other governance provisions including removing the requirement that 70 per cent of appointments of members to the CA by a participating municipality be elected officials and that the positions of chair and vice chair be filled on a rotating basis between participating municipalities.
- Add that certain knowledge and experience must be considered by municipalities when appointing members to the CA who do not sit on municipal council.

- Update that chairs and vice-chairs may be appointed for two-year terms, and up to a maximum of eight total years served.

### Establishing Local Watershed Councils

In response to feedback that emphasized the need for RCAs to continue to rely on the deep local expertise, knowledge and relationships built, the province plans to mandate that each RCA would be required to establish at least one watershed council to ensure local interests are considered and that watershed planning continues to be guided by local knowledge and input. These advisory councils would enable diverse participation from lower-tier municipalities, Indigenous communities and other interested parties that aim to ensure local voices and on-the-ground insights are considered in regional decision-making.

The Ministry plans to propose amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that would require one or more watershed councils for each RCA and create regulation-making authority to the Minister to outline the number, composition, functions, powers, duties, activities and procedures of watershed councils.

### NPCA's Commitment to Continuous Process Improvement and Modernization

While the NPCA supports the proposed provincial investments in technology, standardization and modernization, concerns remain regarding the uncertainties and potential risks associated with regional consolidation including risk to local representation and decision-making, potential loss of local expertise including staff subject matter expertise, and the continued ability to deliver high quality programs and services specific to unique watersheds and communities including natural hazard management.

Should the provincial government move forward with implementing the proposed regional conservation authority framework and Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority, the NPCA will be committed to working constructively with OPCA, neighbouring conservation authorities, municipalities, sector partners and interested partners to ensure local voices, municipal representations, and unique watershed characteristics continue to guide decisions.

NPCA will also ensure that as part of the proposed Transition Committee, our successes and strengths in process improvements and modernization are underscored as best management practices.. Over the last several years, the NPCA has undertaken tremendous work to improve governance, operations, policies, and processes to strengthen the delivery of programs and services. NPCA has implemented all 20 recommendations within the 2018 Auditor General report and is focused on continuous improvements through updating planning and permitting policies, updating corporate policies, developing new guiding strategies, enhancing procedures, and implementing other modernization initiatives, including investments in software and data management.

Since 2014, the NPCA has invested over \$3 million on GIS data; regulation mapping updates (including floodplain mapping); planning policy and procedural updates; dam safety reviews; IT support improvements; and corporate enterprise resource software to support planning and permitting, human resources, budgeting, asset inventory management, and capital planning. This long-term investment has included:

- **CityView** – First launched in 2016, it is the main filing system for all development application activity in the Planning and Development Division. By 2021, CityView has been storing/processing an average of 1,404 file types per year. In addition to providing a consistent workflow for application reviews, CityView query functionality tracks a wide range of metrics for application review times and staff efficiency. During 2026, the NPCA will be implementing several improvements to CityView including additional data fields for metrics tracking, an online Permit application intake portal, and a new module for our Compliance and Enforcement Department. As a significant capital investment for the NPCA, CityView is a powerful system to help provide timely permit approvals and planning application reviews.
- **CityWide and FMW** – NPCA’s enterprise system used for asset management, corporate operating and capital budgeting, and financial reporting, providing a centralized platform to track Authority-owned assets, support annual budget development and financial planning. The system improves data accuracy, consistency, and accountability by standardizing asset and financial information across the organization. Investment includes software licensing and vendor support, with staff time concentrated around the annual budget cycle and ongoing effort for system administration and data maintenance.
- **ArcGIS** – NPCA’s enterprise geographic information system, supporting mapping, spatial analysis, and decision-making related to watershed management, planning, and operations. The platform enables both internal analysis and public-facing maps and applications that improve transparency and access to conservation authority information. Investment includes software licensing, infrastructure, and specialized staff resources to maintain data, systems, and public-facing services.
- **Laserfiche** – NPCA’s enterprise records management system, used to store, manage, and retrieve official corporate records in a secure and compliant manner. It supports improved information governance, efficient retrieval, and reduced reliance on shared drives and paper records. Investment includes licensing and ongoing support, with staff time required for system administration, records structure maintenance, and user onboarding.

NPCA has set an example for how CAs can implement best management practices and we remain committed to continuously improving the delivery of our programs and services for the health and well-being of our local watersheds and communities.

### **Financial Implications:**

Any consolidation of the NPCA with other CAs would require closer examination to determine financial implications with respect to items such as operating and capital budgets, asset management, salaries and benefits for both union and non-union roles, changes to fee schedules, and cost apportionment to the OPCA.

Although not mentioned as part of the proposed regional consolidation of CAs, many CAs, including the NPCA, have a Foundation. Any consolidation of NPCA with other CAs will need to examine financial and governance implications for the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation.

### **Links to Policy/Strategic Plan:**

Goal 4.1 – Strengthen government relations toward collective outcomes and impact

### **Related Reports and Appendices:**

Report No. FA-59-25 RE: Draft Comments Pertaining to ERO #025-1257 Regarding Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities

Report No. FA-56-25 RE: Proposed Amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* to establish the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, and Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities

### **Authored by:**

*Original Signed by:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leilani Lee-Yates, BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

### **Reviewed by:**

*Original Signed by:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Decluce, MCIP, RPP  
Director, Planning and Development

**Submitted by:**

*Original Signed by:*

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Leilani Lee-Yates, BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

**PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, March 10, 2026  
5:00 PM**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Cribbs, Chair  
Julia Baird  
Philip Beale  
Lageera Chatheechan  
Mary Jane Combe  
Andrew Panko  
Steven Rivers (arrived at 5:13p.m.)  
David Wylie  
Lennie Aarts  
Stephanie Flagg (arrived at 5:12p.m.)  
Robert Foster, ex-officio  
George McKibbon  
Cindilee Ecker-Flagg

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Andrew Panko  
Lageera Chatheechan  
Naheed Qureshi

**STAFF PRESENT:** Leilani Lee-Yates, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer  
Melanie Davis, Manager, Office of the CAO & Board  
Natalie Green, Director, Watershed Strategies & Climate  
Change  
Jessi Nelson, Niagara River RAP Coordinator

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**The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m.**

**1. OPENING WELCOME**

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Recommendation No. PAC-01-26

Moved by: Philip Beale

Seconded by: George McKibbon

**THAT the** agenda for the Public Advisory Committee meeting held on March 10, 2026 **BE AMENDED** to receive an update from the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer regarding the provincial announcement related to next steps for the consolidation of conservation authorities, immediately following approval of the agenda.

**CARRIED**

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### **3. UPDATE FROM THE CAO/SECRETARY-TREASURER**

CAO/Secretary-Treasurer, Leilani Lee-Yates, informed the Public Advisory Committee of details outlined by Hon. Todd McCarthy, Minister, Environment, Conservation and Parks, and Chief Conservation Executive, Hassaan Basit, on the next steps to transition to a regional conservation authority framework.

This overview included the establishment of Transition Committees and their proposed membership, plans to introduce amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* to enable consolidation through statutory amalgamation, changes to governance provisions, and establishment of local watershed councils.

NPCA Chair, Robert Foster, noted that the Board is following along with significant interest and appreciates the valuable contributions from the Public Advisory Committee as further details are released.

Recommendation No. PAC-02-2026

Moved by: Philip Beale

Seconded by: William Rapley

**THAT** the update from the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer on the provincial announcement regarding next steps for the consolidation of conservation authorities **BE RECEIVED**.

**CARRIED**

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None.

### **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### **5.1. Public Advisory Committee meeting dated November 25, 2025.**

Recommendation No. PAC-03-26

Moved by: Julia Baird

Seconded by: Cindilee Ecker-Flagg

**THAT** the Minutes of the Public Advisory Committee meeting dated November 25, 2025 **BE APPROVED**.

**CARRIED**

### **6. CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

### **7. PRESENTATIONS**

#### **7.1. Niagara River Remedial Action Plan Ecosystem Impairment Removed**

Niagara River RAP Coordinator, Jessi Nelson, provided a presentation regarding the initiative noted above. Discussion ensued regarding progress on ecosystem impairment indicators and determining factors.

Recommendation No. PAC-04-26

Moved by: Philip Beale

Seconded by: William Rapley

**THAT** the presentation regarding the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan Ecosystem Impairment Removed **BE RECEIVED.**

**CARRIED**

## **8. DELEGATIONS**

None.

## **9. CONSENT ITEMS**

None.

## **10. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

None.

## **11. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

## **12. NEW BUSINESS**

### **12.1. NPCA Corporate Priorities – Committee Areas of Interest**

- Manager, Office of the CAO & Board, Melanie Davis, shared corporate priorities for 2026 with the Committee to gauge interest on topics for engagement at future meetings.
- Member McKibbin noted importance of focusing on issues and initiatives unique to the Niagara Peninsula watershed that would remain problem areas after amalgamation.
- Chair Cribbs reiterated that significant time and attention will be required for forthcoming changes and suggested the Committee would be agreeable to additional meetings if they were of value to staff.
- Member Baird expressed interest in hearing about projects from the lens of potential amalgamation.

### **12.2. Members' Updates**

- Member Rapley noted muddy water conditions along the Niagara River, discussion regarding low water levels, high winds, and ice cover resulting in spill over land took place. He further noted that river otters have been sited in the Lyons Creek area.

- Vice Chair Beale attended a community event with Niagara GeoPark and is focused on preparing for opening the Pioneer Village, welcoming the Committee to the Village for a tour if it is of interest.
- Member Aarts shared that the steering committee for Big Forks Drain in the Township of Wainfleet is near establishment.
- Member Combe noted that bud survival for grape growers is at approximately 50% due to multiple days of significantly cold temperatures, reaching lows of -25°.
- Member Baird noted that funding for a project to develop a standard survey to explore behavioural and attitudinal changes from getting out into nature has been received, and that Brock University is hosting a World Water Day event from 11-3pm on March 23, 2026.

### **13. ADJOURNMENT**

Recommendation No. PAC-05-26

Moved by: Mary Jane Combe

Seconded by: Julia Baird

**THAT** the Public Advisory Committee meeting **ADJOURN** at 6:43 p.m.

**CARRIED**