



NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
July 24, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Carolinian Hall
3350 Merrittville Hwy., Thorold ON

MEMBERS PRESENT: R. Foster, Chair
B. Clark
D. Cridland
B. Grant
J. Metcalfe, Vice Chair
P. O'Neill
M. Seaborn
M. Tadeson
A. Witteveen

REGRETS: S. Beattie

STAFF PRESENT: L. Lee-Yates, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer
A. Christie, Director, Conservation Areas
J. Culp, Manager, Compliance & Enforcement
Z. Dadson, Manager, Grants & Project Coordination
M. Davis, Manager, Office of the CAO & Board
D. Deluce, Director, Planning & Development
L. Gagnon, Director, Corporate Services
N. Green, Director, Watershed Strategies & Climate Change
E. Navarro, Communications and Marketing Specialist
S. Pfeifer, Investor & Donor Relations Officer, NPCF
G. Shaule, Administrative Assistant
S. Zavarella, Manager, Communications & Public Relations
K. Partridge, Program Associate

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Resolution No. FA-68-2026
Moved by: Donna Cridland
Seconded by: John Metcalfe

THAT the agenda for the Full Authority Board meeting held on July 24, 2026 **BE APPROVED.**

CARRIED

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Resolution No. FA-69-2026

Moved by: Mark Tadeson

Seconded by: Brad Clark

THAT the Minutes of the Full Authority Meeting dated June 26, 2026 and the Closed Session Minutes of the Full Authority Meeting dated June 26, 2026 **BE APPROVED.**

CARRIED

4. CHAIR'S UPDATE

- Chair Foster highlighted a recent site tour in Fort Erie with Member of Parliament Chris Bittle, NPCA staff and municipal representatives, showcasing conservation projects and federal investment through the 2 Billion Trees program.
- Chair Foster recognized the heritage designation of St. Johns Centre Conservation Area in partnership with the City of Thorold and Heritage Thorold.
- Chair Foster provided an update on the Lake Ontario Coastal Resilience Pilot Project and upcoming community engagement activities along the shoreline.
- Chair Foster recognized the 80th anniversary of the Conservation Authorities Act and noted an upcoming social media campaign celebrating the history and future of conservation authorities in Ontario.
- Chair Foster yielded the floor to CAO/Secretary-Treasurer Lee-Yates, who provided an update on the appointment of Jacqueline Johnson as Project Executive for the Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority transition and anticipated next steps for the Transition Committee.
- CAO Lee-Yates also highlighted funding received through Conservation Ontario's Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program – Marginal Lands Initiative to support ecosystem restoration projects on agricultural lands.
- Chair Foster yielded the floor to Member Cridland to provide a Foundation update. Member Cridland noted the Foundation's recent approval of funding to support NPCA projects and highlighted the inaugural Golden Hour Gala taking place that evening at Ball's Falls Conservation Area. Member Cridland recognized the strong community, partner and sponsor support received for the event.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Resolution No. FA-70-2026

Moved by: Michelle Seaborn

Seconded by: Donna Cridland

THAT the following Correspondence **BE RECEIVED**:

5.1. Correspondence dated June 26, 2026 from the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks RE: Minister's direction under section 1.14 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* with respect to budget and apportionment matters

5.2. Correspondence dated July 10, 2026 from Credit Valley Conservation RE: Regional Consolidation

5.3. Correspondence dated July 15, 2026 from Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency RE: Appointment of Project Executives for Regional Transition Committees

5.4. Correspondence dated July 15, 2026 from the City of Thorold RE: Resolution Respecting Support for Modernizing Ontario's Invasive Plants Rules to Protect Taxpayers and Municipal Lands

6. PRESENTATIONS

6.1. Transition to Regional Conservation Authorities Update

CAO/Secretary-Treasurer, Leilani Lee-Yates, provided an update on the transition to regional conservation authorities, including anticipated next steps and timelines for the Transition Committee and the Minister's Direction regarding the 2027 budget process. An update was also provided on preliminary municipal consultations, the authorization process for restricted decisions, and anticipated information from the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency.

Resolution No. FA-71-2026

Moved by: Albert Witteveen

Seconded by: Patrick O'Neill

THAT the Transition to Regional Conservation Authorities Update presentation **BE RECEIVED**.

CARRIED

7. DELEGATIONS

There were none.

8. CONSENT ITEMS

Resolution No. FA-72-2026

Moved by: John Metcalfe

Seconded by: Mark Tadeson

THAT the following items **BE RECEIVED**:

8.1 Report No. FA-17-26 RE: Compliance and Enforcement 2020-2025 Program Statistics

8.2 Report No. FC-08-2026 RE: Financial Report – June 2026

Lise Gagnon, Director, Corporate Services, provided an overview of the financial results for the six-month period ending June 30, 2026. She advised that the net operating variance was 1.84 per cent and that capital and special-project spending was approximately 62 per cent complete.

CARRIED

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

9.1. Report No. FA-20-26 RE: Wetland Conservation Agreement with Ducks Unlimited Canada

CAO/Secretary-Treasurer Leilani Lee-Yates explained that the partner-funded restoration agreement requires long-term monitoring, typically over a 10- to 20-year period. While these agreements ordinarily fall within the CAO's delegated authority, the Minister's Direction limits service agreements to two years unless authorization is obtained from the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA). Staff therefore sought Board support to submit the agreement for provincial authorization.

A friendly amendment was made to the motion to recognize confirmed partner funding and potential risks to long-standing partnerships and stalled restoration work.

Resolution No. FA-73-2026

Moved by: Donna Cridland

Seconded by: Brad Clark

WHEREAS NPCA acquired agricultural lands adjacent to Binbrook Conservation in 2025 with the intention of completing habitat restoration and enhancement work;

WHEREAS long-term monitoring and stewardship are critical components of ensuring the success of restoration work;

WHEREAS conservation authorities are temporarily prohibited from providing a service where the duration of the provision of service exceeds two years in length, unless authorization is obtained from the Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA);

WHEREAS a resolution of the authority supporting the proposed decision must be submitted to OPCA for consideration of such requests;

WHEREAS external funding from Ontario Power Generation and Ducks Unlimited Canada has been confirmed to cover the full cost of the wetland restoration project, totaling approximately \$100,000;

WHEREAS NPCA has identified potential risks to long-standing partnerships and stalled restoration work without authorization to proceed with the proposed wetland conservation work;

THAT Report No. FA-20-26 RE: Wetland Conservation Agreement with Ducks Unlimited Canada **BE RECEIVED**;

AND THAT staff be **DIRECTED** to seek authorization from OPCA as per the Minister's Direction regarding temporary restrictions provided on May 1, 2026;

AND THAT staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to enter into an agreement with Ducks Unlimited Canada to formalize collaboration and long-term stewardship of the wetland restoration project at Binbrook Conservation Area;

AND FURTHER THAT staff **EXECUTE** necessary documents upon authorization, if received.

CARRIED

9.2 Report No. FA-19-26 RE: Long-term Meadow Habitat Stewardship Agreement with Metrolinx

Natalie Green, Director, Watershed Strategies & Climate Change, provided an overview of the proposed restoration of approximately eight hectares of meadow and shrub-thicket habitat on lands adjacent to Binbrook Conservation Area. The work would provide habitat compensation for Metrolinx's Grimsby GO Station project. Metrolinx would fund the restoration work, which requires a 10-year stewardship agreement.

The Board discussed the purpose of habitat compensation arrangements and the role of conservation authorities in implementing restoration projects. Staff confirmed that these partnerships are common for large infrastructure projects. A friendly amendment was made to recognize confirmed partner funding and the potential risks to long-standing partnerships and stalled restoration work if authorization is not received.

Resolution No. FA-74-2026

Moved by: Albert Witteveen

Seconded by: Mark Tadeson

WHEREAS long-term monitoring and stewardship are critical components of ensuring the success of restoration work;

WHEREAS conservation authorities are temporarily prohibited from providing a service where the duration of the provision of service exceeds two years in length, unless authorization is obtained from the Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA);

WHEREAS a resolution of the authority supporting the proposed decision must be submitted to OPCA for consideration of such requests;

WHEREAS Metrolinx has committed to covering all costs associated with the meadow and shrub thicket restoration project in initial project scoping discussions;

WHEREAS NPCA has identified potential risks to long-standing partnerships and stalled restoration work without authorization to proceed with the proposed habitat restoration work;

THAT Report No. FA-19-26 RE: Long-Term Meadow Habitat Stewardship Agreement with Metrolinx **BE RECEIVED**;

AND THAT staff be **DIRECTED** to seek authorization from OPCA as per the Minister's Direction regarding temporary restrictions provided on May 1, 2026;

AND THAT staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to enter into an agreement with Metrolinx to formalize collaboration and long-term stewardship of the meadow habitat restoration project at Binbrook Conservation Area;

AND FURTHER THAT staff **EXECUTE** necessary documents upon authorization, if received.

CARRIED

9.3 Report No. FC-07-26 RE: 2027 Budget Assumptions and Process

Lise Gagnon, Director of Corporate Services, provided an overview of the staff report, which establishes the framework for developing the 2027 operating and capital budgets. The Minister's Direction regarding the 2027 budget process was also reviewed.

Resolution No. FA-75-2026

Moved by: John Metcalfe

Seconded by: Brad Clark

THAT Report No. FC-07-26 RE: 2027 Budget Assumptions and Process **BE RECEIVED**;

AND THAT the budget assumptions for the 2027 Operating and Capital Budgets as identified in the report **BE APPROVED** for use in the development of the 2027 budgets;

AND THAT staff **BE DIRECTED** to continue discussions relative to known funding gaps and service level agreements with municipal partners;

AND THAT a list of current known unfunded priorities **BE PREPARED** for the Board's consideration in conjunction with 2027 budgets;

AND THAT the Preliminary 2027 Budget **BE REVIEWED** by the Finance Committee and brought to the Board of Directors at the October 23, 2026 meeting for review and approval;

AND THAT staff **BE DIRECTED** to coordinate with municipal partners to ensure the 2027 budget process aligns with the Minister's direction under section 1.14 of the Conservation Authorities Act with respect to budget and apportionment matters;

AND FURTHER THAT the funding municipalities **BE ADVISED** thirty days in advance of the Levy vote in accordance with the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 402/22.

CARRIED

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

10.1. Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting, dated June 26, 2026

Resolution No. FA-76-2026

Moved by: Donna Cridland

Seconded by: Michelle Seaborn

THAT the Governance Committee Minutes dated June 26, 2026 **BE APPROVED**.

CARRIED

11. MOTIONS

There were none.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were none.

13. NEW BUSINESS

13.1. Staff were directed to report back to the Board regarding the decisions received from OPCA with respect to the two agreements addressed in items 9.1 and 9.2.

13.2 Staff provided clarification regarding NPCA's role and responsibilities with respect to flood response.

13.3 Staff provided clarification regarding the difference between regulated and unregulated watercourses and the limits of NPCA's jurisdiction over unregulated drainage features.

13.4 Staff provided clarification on NPCA's complaint-driven response to reported alterations or redirections of regulated watercourses. Member Clark advised that he would provide information to staff regarding a specific property for further investigation.

13.5 Chair Foster advised that he would initiate discussions with Niagara Region regarding Board composition and opportunities to maintain continuity in Niagara representation through the transition to the Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority.

14. CLOSED SESSION

There were none.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Foster adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m.