



# QUARTERLY REPORT Q1 • 2019

Vol. 14 January-March 2019



# CONTENTS

Mandate & Mission.....4

About us.....5

Q1 Highlights.....6

Managing our Watershed .....8

Our Waters.....9

Our Lands.....10

Ecological Activity .....11

Engaging our Community.....12

Getting Social.....13

---

## Welcome!

This quarterly report offers a progress update to the residents of the Niagara Peninsula watershed, including our funders, and our stakeholders.

As laid out in our Strategic Plan, we are making a concerted effort to be more transparent and hope that these reports are helpful in your understanding of our work, programs, and services.

## NPCA MANDATE

### **As prescribed by the Conservation Authorities Act:**

To establish and undertake programs and services, on a watershed basis, to further the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources; and

### **As prescribed by Provincial Regulations:**

To protect people and property by regulating, and risk-mitigating development through reviewing and commenting on applications, issuing permits, and ensuring policy compliance within the appropriate legislative and regulatory framework.

## MISSION

To implement our Conservation Authorities Act mandate by remaining a responsive, innovative, accountable and financially sustainable organization.

Our success in meeting our mission is dependent upon working in collaboration with our partners in conservation. Ensuring the future viability of the Niagara Peninsula watershed is a shared responsibility.





Ball's Falls Conservation Area

# ABOUT US

## **Our Waters**

The NPCA manages the Niagara Peninsula watershed with the purpose of keeping people and property safe from flooding and erosion.

Our watershed includes several bodies of interconnected waters that flow throughout Niagara, and parts of Hamilton and Haldimand County. NPCA also implements programming aimed at improving water quality.

## **Our Lands**

NPCA manages its 42 Conservation Areas, including Ball's Falls, Binbrook, Long Beach and Chippawa Creek. These lands are held in public trust for recreation, heritage preservation, conservation, and education.

The NPCA also reviews and regulates proposed developments, in and near natural hazards such as floodplains, streams, shorelines, valleys, and wetlands.

## **Our Legacy**

We manage the Niagara Peninsula watershed and our conservation areas for this generation and for all future generations.

## **Our Life**

Water and air are essential to life, as such it is everyone's responsibility to protect it.



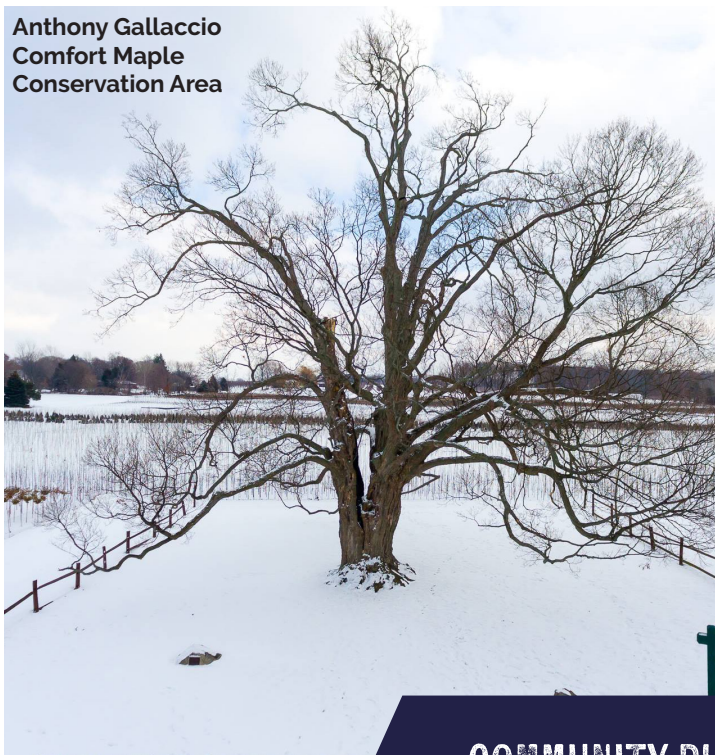
Binbrook Hard Water Derby

# Q1 HIGHLIGHTS

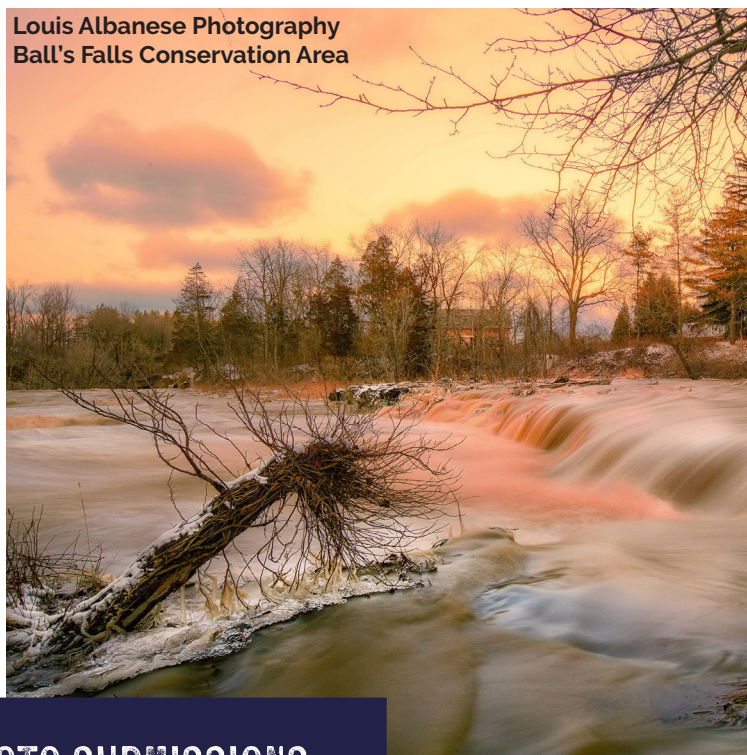
1	New Board of Directors	5	Watershed Condition/Flood Outlook Statements Issued
900+	Volunteers recognized at 2019 Conservation Awards	120	# of Planning and Regulation Permit Applications Reviewed
4	Awards of Merit	2	Applications received for NPCA Well Water Decommissioning Program
500	Volunteer Hours	1	Niagara River Fish Consumption Survey
329	Students Engaged in Outdoor Education & Recreation	97	Hunting Permits Issued
10	Schools Participating in Niagara Envirothon		



Anthony Gallaccio  
Comfort Maple  
Conservation Area



Louis Albanese Photography  
Ball's Falls Conservation Area

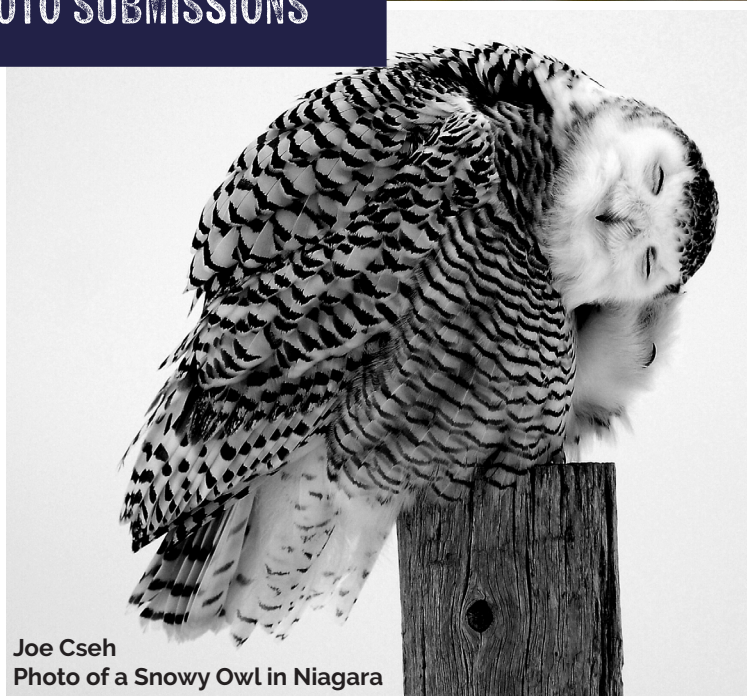


## COMMUNITY PHOTO SUBMISSIONS

PD Day Camp  
Ball's Falls Conservation Area



Joe Cseh  
Photo of a Snowy Owl in Niagara







Mountainview Conservation Area

# MANAGING OUR WATERSHED

## Planning & Development

During the first quarter, the Watershed Department reviewed:

- » 43 Planning/NEC Applications
- » 24 Building Permits
- » 53 NPCA Permits
- » 21 Pre-consultation proposals

Staff also responded to various inquiries from the public and local municipalities, as well as attended weekly consultation meetings with the local municipalities and conducted various site inspections.

## Compliance & Enforcement

- » 13 Complaints received
- » 7 Complaints resolved, 6 remaining
- » 4 Notices of Violation issued

The NPCA Tree and Forest Conservation By-law 2018 Annual Report was completed and provided to Niagara Region to satisfy a condition in the Service Level Agreement between the Region and the NPCA.

## Source Water Protection

Key milestones of the Source Protection program activities included:

- » Completion of draft final Program Progress Reporting submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.
- » Assistance provided to Niagara Region staff and consultants regarding updates to Water Treatment Plant intakes.
- » Submission of workplan proposal to Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks for 2019-2020 funding.
- » A Source Protection Committee on-boarding presentation and tour of the Welland Water Treatment Plant and several Intake Protection Zones was held.





Wainfleet Bog Conservation Area

# OUR WATERS

## Water Quality

Benthic identification of biological samples for 2018 was completed, allowing for ongoing updates to databases.

Other highlights of the department include:

- » Processing of 12 water quality data requests
- » Two projects completed under the Well Water Decommissioning Program

The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks has provided a laboratory allotment for the NPCA to collect winter water samples through the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network.

NPCA staff collected two rounds of samples in February, and data will be used to address a significant gap in the monitoring of watershed conditions in the winter season.

## Flood Control

Through its Flood Forecasting and Warning Program, the NPCA issued five bulletins, warning residents of the potential for flooding as a result of melting snow, rain storms, and Lake Erie storm surge events.

To deliver on this program, NPCA staff routinely monitor the depth of snow on the ground, the water levels in our creeks and Great Lakes, the climatic data at our 30 gauge installations and the weather forecasts issued by Environment Canada.

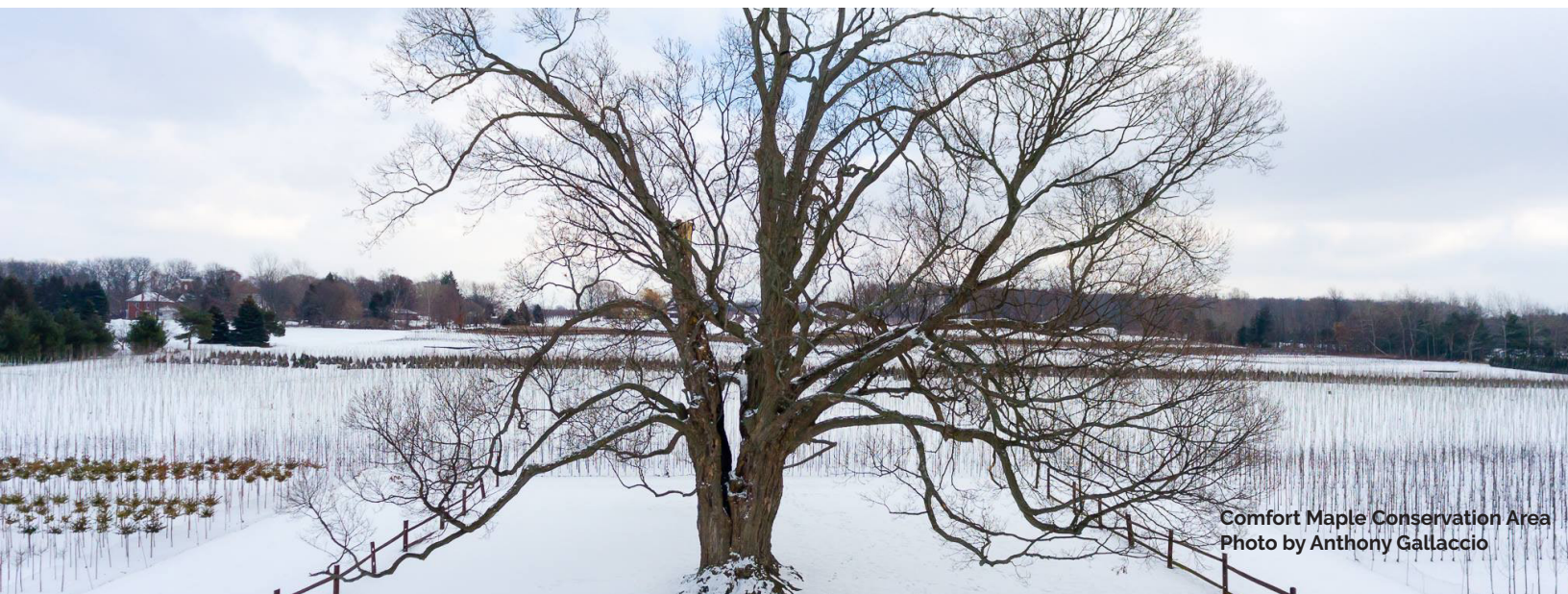
## Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP)

In January, the Canada-Ontario Agreement Co-Leads officially confirmed the RAP Team's recommendation to change the status of the Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations indicator as Not Impaired.

The RAP also:

- » Conducted a scientific literature review needed to lead the technical expert review of Niagara River fish populations indicator.
- » Developed and initiated the implementation of a Niagara River Fish Consumption Survey to gather information about the types of fish people eat and how often they eat fish from the Niagara River.





Comfort Maple Conservation Area  
Photo by Anthony Gallaccio

# OUR LANDS

## **Ball's Falls Conservation Area**

Ball's Falls continues to be one of the leading wedding venues in the Niagara Region. The first quarter focused on the promotion of outdoor ceremonies, which resulted in the increase of bookings for 2019 and 2020.

A leader in outdoor education, the NPCA engaged 329 children in curriculum-based, interactive programming in the first quarter. 47 of these attended March Break Adventure Camp.

New to 2019, the NPCA has developed a travelling educational program titled 'Biodiversity Discovery', to bring the outdoors to clubs, small groups, camps, and school classrooms.

With seven original buildings from the 1800s on site, Ball's Falls is often sought out by film crews looking for historical authenticity.

In January, the Discovery Channel aired Star Trek Discovery's 2nd episode of Season 2, featuring exclusive footage of the Ball's Falls Historical Village, as the newly discovered planet 'New Eden'.

## **Chippawa Creek Conservation Area**

During the first quarter, guests visited the Area for cross-country skiing, hiking, and dog-walking.

Staff have been preparing the campground for the May 17 season opening, with 114 seasonal campers already booked.

## **Binbrook Conservation Area**

The NPCA has worked closely with Treetop Trekking Adventure Park to conclude construction on the new recreational activity, scheduled to open in May.

Binbrook hosted the Annual Binbrook Hard Water Crappie Derby on February 2, welcoming 140 adults and 90 children. The event saw much success with the addition of on-site radio promotion and entertainment by Giant FM, and Kids out Fishing providing workshops to more than 50 young aspiring anglers and new families. This year's top crappie weighed .675 lbs.

## **Long Beach Conservation Area**

Ninety-seven seasonal campers are confirmed for 2019. During the first quarter, staff focused on cleaning up the site for the opening of the season, which included the removal of dead Ash Trees to minimize risk for campers.



# ECOLOGICAL ACTIVITY

## **Beamer Memorial Conservation Area**

Hawkwatch Season continues this year with the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch group (NPH) monitoring raptor populations migrating over the Conservation Area.

## **Binbrook Conservation Area**

The annual Ice Fishing Derby provided an opportunity for staff to gather resource information on the fish population in Lake Niapenco. Furthermore, it allowed for the monitoring of the population, which helps inform necessary park fishing policies and permitted activities.

The Environmental Monitoring Plan has been finalized for Treetop Trekking. This monitoring work will be conducted by the NPCA staff Ecologist annually. A report will be submitted to the City of Hamilton in year 1, 3 and 5 of the activity's operation.

## **Cave Springs Conservation Area**

Bat monitoring continues at this site with acoustic monitors being set out again in late April. Data collected May through November will help assess migration patterns with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and further refine the species, their seasonal site use and critical habitat areas for protection.

## **Wainfleet Bog Conservation Area**

No fire concerns have been reported or observed to date this year. Site conditions are regularly reviewed by NPCA staff for soil moisture and temperature.

Water well data is part of the on-going monitoring at the site for site restoration. Data loggers operating in ten of the water wells are being replaced in May.

## **Woodend Conservation Area**

Forest understorey has been impacted with the loss of saplings, shrub, and herbaceous layers at the site. Staff has developed a restoration plan to restore the area including planting with fencing enclosures in the fall 2019.

Contact with the District School Board of Niagara is being made to ensure future co-ordination of their programs will be conducted outside of this area.

## **Other Conservation Area Ecological Activity:**

- » 97 NPCA Hunting Permits issued
- » With the melted ground snow cover, NPCA staff has completed the gypsy moth population monitoring at our Conservation Areas.



Pathstone Mental Health Natural Playground & Healing Garden (Virtual)

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS & ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

The NPCA continued to support numerous events and initiatives in partnership with organizations such as **Niagara Chapter Trout Unlimited** and **Pathstone Mental Health**, and **2021 Canada Summer Games** among others. We continue to proactively seek partners within our communities, to work together to improve our watershed.

The NPCA will be assisting Pathstone Mental Health with its upcoming Natural Playground & Healing Garden project that will be the first of its kind in Niagara. The project includes the construction of an interactive outdoor space to allow for "Full sensory experience/enhancement therapy" where children, caregivers, therapists and families can work together towards recovery.

## NPCA CONSERVATION AWARDS

The annual NPCA Conservation Awards were held on February 27 at Club Castropignano in Port Robinson. The evening featured four unique stories, told by various NPCA volunteers and community partners, whose effort and dedication is incredibly important to the future of our watershed.

## In this quarter, we also engaged with:

- » 10th Welland Scouting
- » District School Board of Niagara: Walker Living Campus
- » Glanbrook Conservation Committee
- » General Motors
- » Grimsby Scouts
- » Niagara Catholic District School Board
- » Niagara Children's Centre
- » Niagara Children's Water Festival
- » Niagara College
- » Niagara Parks Commission
- » Niagara Region: International Civic Space pollinator garden planning
- » Ohnia:kara Aspiring Global Geopark
- » Port Colborne and District Conservation Club
- » St. Catharines Public Library: Community Presentations








Cave Springs Conservation Area

## GETTING SOCIAL

The NPCA's social media continues to be a great resource for community outreach, education, and the delivery of high-quality customer service. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages have been increasingly used to share more positive and proactive messages with NPCA's partners in conservation.

Using October 2017 as a benchmark for comparison, when a stronger social media push became apparent, all social media channels, followers, likes, and shares, have increased steadily.

	<b>Facebook</b> <b>Likes: 6,287</b> (increase of 1,275)	<b>Ball's Falls Facebook</b> <b>Likes: 2,341</b> (increase of 540)	<b>Binbrook Facebook</b> <b>Likes: 3,374</b> (increase of 2,344)
	<b>Facebook</b> <b>Followers: 6,605</b> (increase of 1,777)	<b>Ball's Falls Facebook</b> <b>Followers: 2,300</b> (increase of 533)	<b>Binbrook Facebook</b> <b>Followers: 3,513</b> (increase of 2,474)
	<b>Twitter Followers: 3,407</b> (increase of 307)		<b>Instagram Followers: 589</b> (increase of 341)

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA AT @NPCA\_ONTARIO





Louth Conservation Area



#DISCOVER**NPCA**



250 Thorold Road, 3rd Floor  
Welland, ON L3C 3W2  
Phone: 905-788-3135