



QUARTERLY REPORT Q3 • 2019

Vol. 16 July-September 2019

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Dear Partner in Conservation,

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

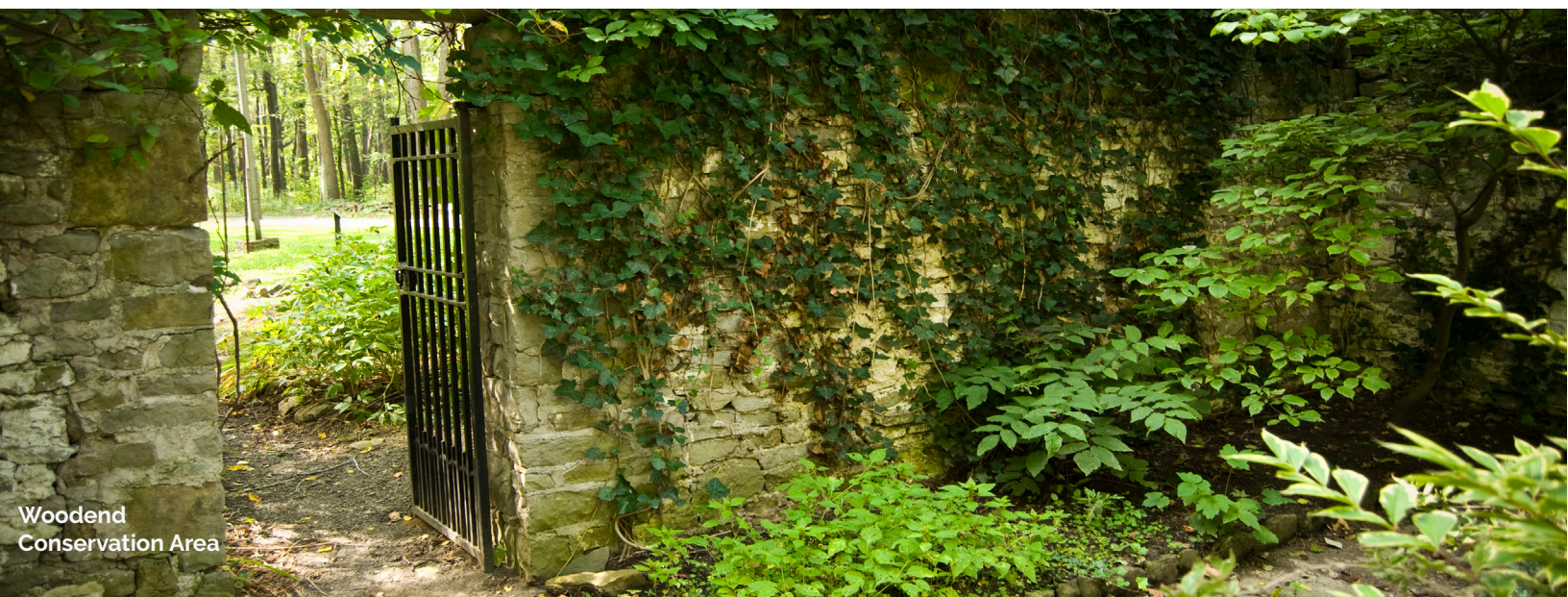
As prescribed by Provincial Regulations:

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.



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 the Region of Niagara, and parts of the City of Hamilton and Haldimand County. NPCA also implements programming aimed at improving water quality.

Our Lands

NPCA manages 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.



Comfort Maple Conservation Area

Q3 HIGHLIGHTS

53 | Wedding Celebrations at Ball's Falls Conservation Area

1 | Comfort Maple Legacy Project

180+ | Approved Vendors for 45th Annual Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival

1,200+ | Students Engaged in Outdoor Education & Recreation

1,250 | Volunteers with the NPCA

1 | Welland River Floodplain Mapping Project in Progress

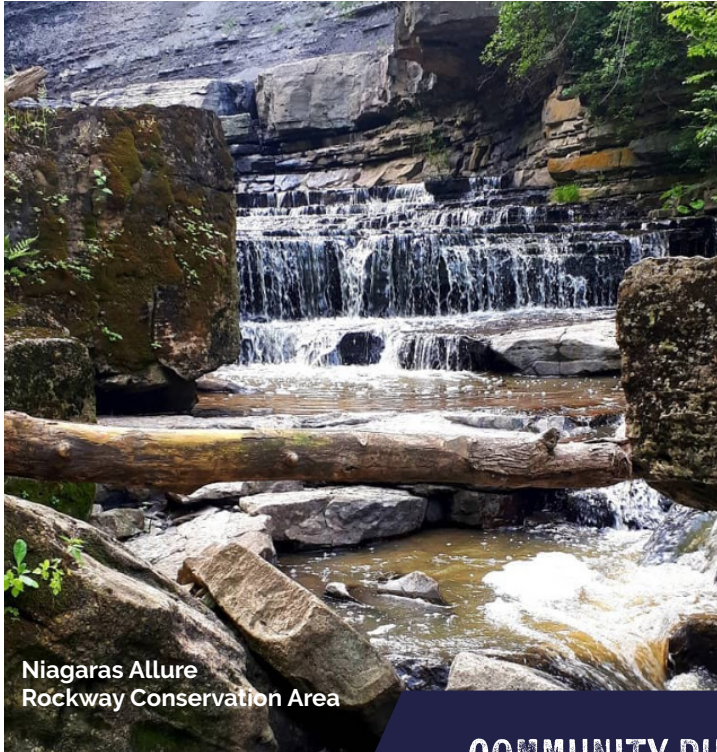
13 | Completed Restoration Grant Projects

207 | # of Planning and Regulation Permit Applications Reviewed

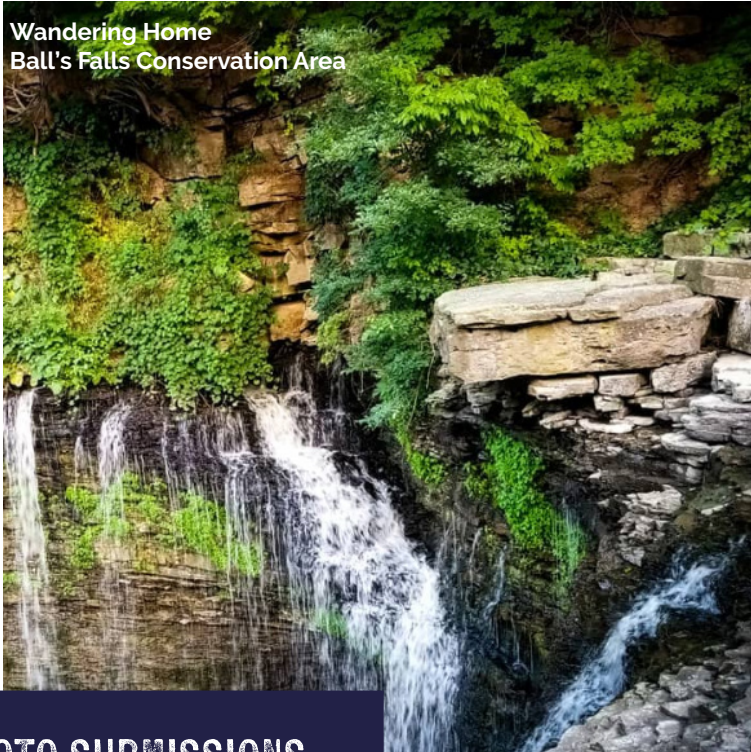
7 | Applications Received for NPCA Well Water Decommissioning Program

2 | Properties with Controlled Waterfowl Hunting Program

97 | Hunting Permits Issued



Niagaras Allure
Rockway Conservation Area

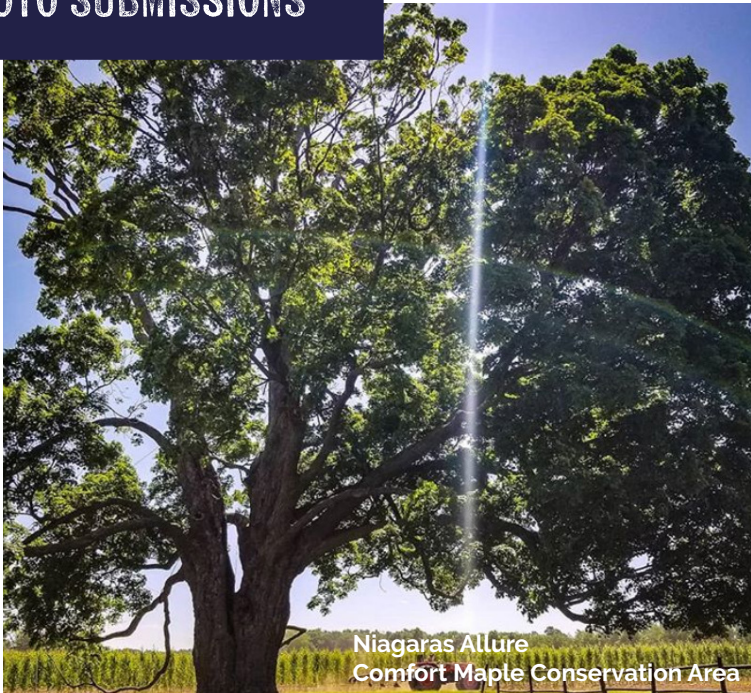


Wandering Home
Ball's Falls Conservation Area

COMMUNITY PHOTO SUBMISSIONS



Mariners Park
Port Colborne



Niagaras Allure
Comfort Maple Conservation Area



Welland River

MANAGING OUR WATERSHED

Planning & Development

During the third quarter of 2019, the NPCA reviewed:

- » 64 Planning Act/NEC Applications
- » 57 Building Permit Applications
- » 29 Property Information Requests
- » 58 Pre-consultation Proposals
- » 86 Work Permits under Section 28

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

- » 33 Complaints received
- » 3 Complaints resolved
- » 4 Notices of Violation issued

Tree and Forest Conservation By-law

NPCA's Forester reviewed 21 files: 20 were directly related to the by-law (five of which were a Good Forestry Practice permit application and final inspections), one involved completing a Managed Forest Plan for an NPCA property and one was a property information request.

Water Resources Engineering

The NPCA is presently organizing the Welland River Floodplain Mapping Information Sessions to be held at four locations during the month of October.

As a partner of the Haldimand County Lake Erie Shoreline Hazard Mapping and Risk Assessment, NPCA staff participated in the second Public Education Centre held mid-September at the Selkirk Community Centre.

Source Water Protection

Highlights of the Source Protection program activities:

- » Transfer Payment Agreement Funding from the MECP for the 2019-2020 program was received.
- » The Source Protection Committee met in July to discuss proposed updates to the Source Protection Plan and Assessment Report.
- » The NPCA met with Niagara Region to discuss proposed modifications to the DeCew Reservoir and how this has the potential to require the Source Protection Plan and the associated Assessment Report to be updated.
- » The Source Protection Committee is still waiting on MECP to name the Chair of the Committee.



E.C. Brown Conservation Area

RESTORING OUR WATERSHED

Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Highlights from Q3 include the following:

- » Continued implementation of the 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. Summary of interim results are in preparation.
- » Continued fostering of Indigenous engagement for the Niagara River RAP through a fish consumption project in collaboration with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) and two other nearby Areas of Concern leaders (i.e., Hamilton Harbor and Toronto waterfront) The project manager participated in two MCFN events to share information about the project with MCFN community members.
- » Niagara River RAP staff lead the development of a bi-national poster board with staff from Niagara Parks and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to highlight habitat restoration efforts on both sides of the Niagara River.

Integrated Watershed Management

The NPCA hosted Niagara Region Planning staff in July to discuss and demonstrate the existing operational value of its watershed-based programs and services towards integrated watershed planning.

The focus of the meetings centered around the need for ecological objectives for the landscape, and that the current achievements towards such, be considered of value to the formation of the new environmental policies.

Restoration Grant Program

To date in 2019, 13 out of the 26 currently approved projects have been completed.

Nine tree planting projects seeing 37650 trees planted for a total of 19 ha (47.10 acres) reforested, and four wetland restoration projects completed totaling 1 ha of wetland created.

The NPCA is proud to have established a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for working collaboratively with Ducks Unlimited.



Two Mile Creek Conservation Area

OUR WATERS

Water Quality

Staff continue to routinely monitor all 80 water quality monitoring stations. This monitoring will be performed monthly until December at all stations and samples will be analyzed for general chemistry, nutrients, metals and bacteria.

Other highlights include:

- » Participation in the investigation of E. coli contamination of Queens Royal Beach with the Town of NOTL and MECP for the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan.
- » Completion of annual monitoring and technical memo of Perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) at Binbrook Conservation Area.
- » Staff continue to visit monitoring wells for manual downloads and to perform Quality Assurance and Quality Control checks on groundwater level data as part of their routine data maintenance protocol.
- » To date, staff have processed 34 data requests from other governmental agencies, consultants, and academic institutions.

- » Staff completed spring monitoring of groundwater for the Ball's Falls Centre for Conservation septic system. This is part of the MECP's Certificate of Approval to operate the Centre's septic system
- » The NPCA has received seven (7) applications and completed 4 projects under the Well Water Decommissioning Program.

Flood Control

Throughout the third quarter of 2019, the NPCA had issued numerous Flood Watch bulletins warning residents of a potential for flooding from high water levels on the shorelines of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

While localized flooding and erosion was experienced, no major flooding or erosion damage due to wave action was reported during these events.

Staff continued to monitor daily water levels at 15 stream gauge stations, climatic data at our 15 climate stations, and undertake routine maintenance, calibration, and inspections at all 30 installations, as part of the NPCA's routine Flood Forecasting and Warning duties.



Chippawa Creek Conservation Area
Photo: Angela VanGoolen

OUR LANDS

Ball's Falls Conservation Area

This fall marks the second year of the NPCA's Fall Outdoor Overnight Adventure Program for grades 5–8 with the DSBN. The Program was held in September, and the final session will take place in October. In total, approximately 200 students will have attended by the end of the fall session dates.

The Forest Playscape project at Ball's Falls is near completion. This innovative project was generously funded by the Niagara Regional Chair's Outdoor Education Fund and will offer outdoor activities that are inclusive to children and students of all ages, while providing an additional feature at the site.

In August, the NPCA co-hosted the Niagara BioBlitz with the Canadian Wildlife Federation. A number of conservation clubs and special guest speakers, along with NPCA staff, provided educational demonstrations, activities, presentations and guided hikes. The event was supported with a good turnout for a first-time event of this kind at Ball's Falls.

Chippawa Creek Conservation Area

On Saturday July 13, Chippawa Creek held the 6th annual Douglas E. Elliot Memorial Bass Derby. The derby took place from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. with 115 adult and children participants.

Staff weighed 40 bass throughout the day, with the largest fish weighing just over 3lbs. The event was a success with a good turn out and great weather.

Long Beach Conservation Area

The Ontario Bolerama had their 19th gathering of this light-weight molded fiberglass camping trailer style, with this year's theme being "Wheel Appeal".

Since their first meet in Earlton Ontario in 2001, the group gathers annually to enjoy a nice community camping experience. This year will be the ninth gathering at Long Beach Conservation Area.

This is an informal group from all around Canada and the United States that enjoys camping in these trailers. The term Bolerama is a generic term to reference this class of trailer.

Binbrook Conservation Area

More than 200 members of the public attended the Annual Perseids Meteor Shower event hosted by the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers at Binbrook. Members of the group were on hand to provide an up-close look at the meteorological event while offering education on night sky activity. Overnight camping was offered to guests.

The NPCA partnered with an external event company to host the first annual 'Movie on the Water' night at the site. The event featured the film Jaws, played on an outdoor movie screen while guests watched the movie on the beach and on inflatables on the lake. The event was very successful, and staff will look to hosting a similar event in 2020.



Bald Eagle
A species that can be seen around Binbrook Conservation Area

ECOLOGICAL ACTIVITY

Beamer Memorial Conservation Area

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch group (NPH) was able to evaluate bird populations, and with long term data, helped identify where species management may be needed.

Results indicate a spring migration total of 12,828 raptors over the Conservation Area. Black vultures are seen as a "regular rarity" as this species' range moves further north in recent years. Sharpshinned hawks, Northern Goshawk, and Cooper's hawk numbers show a decline, with Sharp-shinned and Northern Goshawk, Northern Harrier and American Kestrel, and Red-tailed hawk showing declines elsewhere in North America as well.

Forest habitat, including large tract, contiguous forests and contiguous grasslands, are habitats likely limiting these species. The NPCA continues to include these vegetative communities in its existing properties and features for future land acquisitions.

St. Johns Conservation Area

Public concerns were noted over increased algae in the pond, in addition to park visitors removing tadpoles and turtles from the pond.

The result of such activities can include: uneaten food in the pond which increases nutrients for algae

to grow, the loss of tadpoles, frogs and turtles that would consume algae, and the loss of vegetation in and around the pond.

To assist in ensuring a balanced ecosystem, site signage and staff inform area users not to feed or take wildlife from the pond. This is highly promoted on the website and social media.

Woodend Conservation Area

On October 3, a planting was completed by staff and volunteers to repair the impacted forest understorey using tree saplings, shrub, and herbaceous materials.

Fence enclosures were also installed around the planted areas to protect the new plantings and enable site regeneration.

Smith Ness Conservation Area

The site agreement prairie is monitored to ensure conformance for five years. To date, the site monitoring of the agreement prairie indicates conformance containing: 50-80% grass, and three grass species of which one is greater than 50 cm.

Other Conservation Area Ecological Activity:

- » 97 NPCA Hunting Permits issued
- » The 2019 Waterfowl Hunting Program began on September 28 at Binbrook and Mud Lake



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS & ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

During this busy quarter, staff met with various partners including the **Niagara Catholic District School Board, Niagara Region, Ohnia: kara Aspiring Global Geopark, Pathstone Mental Health, Ontario Power Generation, Carolinian Canada** and many local libraries to discuss exciting partnership opportunities in the months and years ahead.

2021 Canada Summer Games

The NPCA has been invited to be one of a few sustainability partners involved in the curation of the 2021 Canada Summer Games Souvenir Book, which will be a take away item for the thousands of athletes, coaches, volunteers and game attendees. The book will feature the natural and cultural history of the Niagara Peninsula.

Pathstone Mental Health

NPCA staff provided in-kind support to the Pathstone Mental Health Natural Playground and Healing Garden through a "Back to Nature series" of public talks/programs from June to September, geared towards children 6 to 12 years of age.

Comfort Maple Legacy Project

The NPCA has been working with the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture to research and collect the maternal DNA of the tree. Initial work was completed in the spring but was not released publicly. The second phase of the project will take place in the first week of October alongside a media event.

Volunteers

From July-September new volunteers were recruited to support NPCA educational programs and the Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival.

The NPCA currently has a roster of more than 1,250 volunteers. They range in age from 5 to 93 years old and include individuals, groups, and corporations.

In this quarter, we also engaged with:

- » Canadian Wildlife Federation
- » Giant FM- Garbage Cleanup
- » Lincoln Public Library
- » Pollinator Partners
- » Welland Scouts
- » West Lincoln Public Library
- » City of Niagara Falls: Mother Earth Project

Mindfulness

Experience lush landscapes






GETTING SOCIAL

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

The 'Step Into Nature' and 'Healthy Hikes' campaign continued through the third quarter, exploring themes of Eco Health, Mindfulness in Nature, and Outdoor Experiential Education. In partnership with Conservation Ontario and Conservation Authorities across the province, these campaigns aim to encourage residents and tourists alike to get outside and experience nature and educate on the many benefits of exploring the outdoors.

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.

	Corporate Facebook Likes: 6,597 (increase of 1,585) Facebook Followers: 6,953 (increase of 2,127)	Ball's Falls Facebook Likes: 2,455 (increase of 654) Ball's Falls Facebook Followers: 2,605 (increase of 838)	Binbrook Facebook Likes: 4,070 (increase of 3,040) Binbrook Facebook Followers: 4,263 (increase of 3,224)
	Twitter Followers: 3,462 (increase of 362)		Instagram Followers: 770 (increase of 522)

FIND US ON SOCIAL: @NPCA_ONTARIO

#DISCOVER**NPCA**



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