

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday October 5, 2021
5:00PM
ONLINE VIDEO CONFERENCE

Anyone interested in joining the meeting as a guest may do so using the link below:

<https://npca.webex.com/npca/j.php?MTID=m27aec8bd1baabb5f965417df9e5feb32>

A G E N D A

CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

The Niagara Peninsula Watershed is located on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples dating back countless generations. We want to show our respect for their contributions and recognize the role of treaty-making in what is now Ontario.

In recognition of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation today on September 30th, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority commemorates the residential school victims, honours the survivors, their families, and their communities. This day is for all Canadians to create bridges with each other for reconciliation. We hope to continue building on our shared responsibility to take care of people, the land, its resources, and all the creatures we share it with.

- 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a) Minutes of the Public Advisory Committee meeting dated June 17, 2021 (For approval)

Page #1

4. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Correspondence dated September 24, 2021 from G. Bivol, NPCA Clerk RE: Report No. FA-56-2021 Vaccination Policy (For receipt)

Page # 6

- b) Correspondence dated September 24, 2021 from G. Bivol, NPCA Clerk RE: Report No. SPC-03-21 Public Engagement #2 Results and Draft Strategic Plan (For input and endorsement)

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5. PRESENTATIONS

- a) PowerPoint Presentation by A. Powell, Manager of Conservation Area Services,
RE: 2021 Ball's Falls Festival Update (For receipt)

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6. DELEGATIONS

7. CONSENT ITEMS

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) Report No. PAC-03-21 RE: NPCA Pollinator Initiatives (For approval)

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- b) NPCA Public Advisory Committee Discussion Paper (For approval and direction)

Page # 45

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

10. NEW BUSINESS

11. ADJOURNMENT



**PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ONLINE VIDEO CONFERENCE
MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, June 17th 2021
5:00 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	B. Johnson, NPCA Board Chair (Acting Committee Chair) C. Ecker-Flagg E. Furney K. Huxley D. Kelly B. Mackenzie, NPCA Board Vice Chair J. Musso J. Schonberger D. Speranzini
MEMBERS ABSENT:	J. Oblak (Committee Chair) J. Ariens M. Kauzlaric H. Korosis N. Seniuk
STAFF PRESENT:	C. Sharma, Chief Administrative Officer / Secretary – Treasurer N. Green, Project Manager, Niagara River Remedial Action Plan K. Royer, Coordinator, Community Outreach S. Miller, Senior Manager, Water Resources G. Verkade, Senior Manager, Integrated Watershed Planning / Information Management
OTHERS PRESENT:	A. Crosby-DiCenso, Executive Coordinator, NPCF G. Wood, Vice-Chair, NPCF S. van Haren, WSP Canada A. Zhuge, WSP Canada

By consensus, in the absence Committee Chair Oblak, NPCA Board Chair Johnson agreed to Chair the PAC meeting on her behalf. Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.. Chair Johnson welcomed the Members and sent regrets on behalf of Committee Chair Oblak.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Recommendation No. PAC-12-2021

Moved by Member Speranzini

Seconded by Member Kelly

THAT the agenda for the June 17, 2021 NPCA Public Advisory Committee meeting **BE ADOPTED** as presented.

CARRIED

2. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

D. Speranzini declared that her opinions are her own and not that of her employer Agriculture and AgriFood Canada.

3. PRESENTATIONS

- a) A. Crosby-DiCenso, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation RE: Annual Report, Donation Challenge and Gallery at Ball's Falls.

Recommendation No. PAC-13-2021

Moved by Member Ecker-Flagg

Seconded by Member Musso

THAT the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation presentation RE: Annual Report, Donation Challenge and Gallery at Ball's Falls **BE RECEIVED.**

CARRIED

4. DELEGATIONS

None

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of the NPCA Public Advisory Committee dated April 29, 2021

Recommendation No. PAC-14-2021

Moved by Member Huxley

Seconded by Member Furney

THAT the minutes of the NPCA Public Advisory Committee meeting dated April 29, 2021 **BE APPROVED.**

CARRIED

6. CORRESPONDENCE

None

7. CONSENT ITEMS

None

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) Floodplain Mapping Projects: Big Forks Creek and Beaver Creek – Presentation by Steve Miller - Steve Miller, NPCA Senior Manager, Water Resources, introduced two upcoming floodplain mapping projects for Wainfleet and West Lincoln that will be completed by WSP Canada. The project team was introduced, including Steve van Haren and Albert Zhuge from WSP. Steve also presented the public engagement media campaign for input and recommendation by the Public Advisory Committee.

Recommendation No. PAC-15-2021

Moved by Member Huxley

Seconded by Member Furney

1. **THAT** the Presentation RE:Floodplain Mapping Public Engagement Media Campaign **BE RECEIVED**.
2. **THAT** the Public Engagement Media Campaign **BE ENDORSED** by the NPCA Public Advisory Committee.

CARRIED

- b) Strategic Planning Progress Update: Survey Results Summary and Input on Public Engagement - Presentation by Natalie Green.

Recommendation No. PAC-16-2021

Moved by Member Musso

Seconded by Member Huxley

THAT the presentation RE: Strategic Planning Progress Update **BE RECEIVED**.

CARRIED

- c) Niagara River *Beach Closings* Beneficial Use Impairment Assessment Report – Verbal Update - Natalie Green.

Recommendation No. PAC-17-2021

Moved by Member Kelly

Seconded by Member Ecker-Flagg

THAT the verbal update from Natalie Green RE: Niagara River *Beach Closings* Beneficial Use Impairment Assessment Report **BE RECEIVED**.

CARRIED

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Report No. PAC-01-21 RE: NPCA Public Advisory Committee Membership Update - It was noted that Derrick Pont had stepped down as the Niagara Regional Métis representative on the PAC. With support from Métis Nation of Ontario and the Niagara Regional Métis Council, Kelsey Huxley has agreed to serve as the Niagara Regional Métis representative for the remainder of Mr. Pont's term. Ms. Huxley was welcomed by the Acting Chair.

Recommendation No. PAC-18-2021

Moved by Member Musso

Seconded by Member Huxley

THAT Report No. PAC-17-2021 RE: Public Advisory Committee Membership Update **BE RECEIVED.**

CARRIED

- b) Report No. PAC-02-21 RE: NPCA Public Advisory Committee Discussion Paper

Recommendation No. PAC-19-2021

Moved by Member Speranzini

Seconded by Member Ecker-Flagg

THAT Report No. PAC-02-21 RE: NPCA Public Advisory Committee Discussion Paper **BE DEFERRED.**

CARRIED

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Verbal Update RE: Growing Canada's Forests Request for Information, Geoff Verkade – Mr. Verkade provided a verbal update to the PAC regarding the NPCA's recent submission to the Request for Information for Growing Canada's Forest federal grant. The NPCA proposed a 10-year commitment to plant native trees across the watershed in collaboration with local municipalities, community groups, and native plant growers / nurseries. It was noted that his program would aim to engage residents in nature-based solutions to climate change by planting 2 million trees over a 10-year period on public and private lands.
- b) Verbal update RE: Conservation Authorities Act – Regulatory Proposal Consultation Guide, Chandra Sharma – Ms. Sharma provided a verbal update on the Regulatory Proposal Consultation for the Conservation Authorities Act. She notified members that the process is open for comment until June 27th and that the recent NPCA Board Report and NPCA comments would be circulated to members after the meeting.

Recommendation No. PAC-20-2021

Moved by Member Speranzini

Seconded by Member Kelly

THAT Verbal Update RE: Growing Canada's Forest Request for Information and Verbal Update RE: Conservation Authorities Act – Regulatory Proposal Consultation Guide **BE RECEIVED.**

CARRIED

11. ADJOURNMENT

Resolution No. PAC-21-2021

Moved by Member Ecker-Flagg

Seconded by Member Musso

THAT this meeting of the NPCA Public Advisory Committee **BE** hereby **ADJOURNED** at 6:47 p.m..

CARRIED

Brenda Johnson
Public Advisory Committee Acting Chair

Chandra Sharma
Chief Administrative Officer / Secretary –
Treasurer

September 24, 2021

NPCA Public Advisory Committee
250 Thorold Road
Welland, ON
L3C 3W2

Dear Chair Oblak and Committee,

Please be advised that the Board of Directors of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority passed the following resolution at its meeting of September 17, 2021:

Resolution No. FA-154-2021
Moved by Member Wright
Seconded by Member Beattie

1. **THAT** Report No. FA-56-21 RE: COVID-19 Vaccination Policy **BE RECEIVED**.
2. **THAT** staff **BE DIRECTED** to develop a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy applicable to NPCA Staff, Volunteers, Students, and members of NPCA Board and Committees who may attend in-person meeting and events on NPCA facilities.
3. **THAT** the Policy **BE REVIEWED** and **APPROVED** by the Governance Committee at their Meeting on September 23, 2021 and **IMPLEMENTED** immediately thereafter.
4. **AND FURTHER THAT** Policies and Procedures for NPCA meeting and event facilities for all indoor events and non-essential activities be developed and implemented prior to September 22, 2021 as per the Provincial deadline.

CARRIED

Accordingly, for your reference, please find the subject Report No. FA-56-21 attached hereto.

Sincerely,

Grant Bivol

Grant Bivol
NPCA Clerk / Board Secretariat

att.

Report To: Board of Directors

Subject: COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Report No: FA-56-21

Date: September 17, 2021

Recommendation:

1. **THAT** Report No. FA-56-21 RE: COVID-19 Vaccination Policy **BE RECEIVED**.
2. **THAT** staff **BE DIRECTED** to develop a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy applicable to NPCA Staff, Volunteers, Students, and members of NPCA Board and Committees who may attend in-person meeting and events on NPCA facilities.
3. **THAT** the Policy **BE REVIEWED** and **APPROVED** by the Governance Committee at their Meeting on September 23, 2021 and **IMPLEMENTED** immediately thereafter.
4. **AND FURTHER THAT** Policies and Procedures for NPCA meeting and event facilities for all indoor events and non-essential activities be developed and implemented prior to September 22, 2021 as per the Provincial deadline.

Purpose:

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) is committed to ensuring a safe environment for staff and the public. This report commits further efforts to aid in protecting the health and safety of staff and stakeholders from COVID-19.

Background:

The COVID-19 pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020. Effects of the pandemic directly on the NPCA have included relocation of staff (where possible) to remote work locations, modification and/or cancellation of programs and services offered to the watershed residents, and enhanced safety procedures at all conservation areas.

Public Health Ontario has indicated that immunization is widely recognized as one of the most effective interventions for reducing the impact of infectious diseases and the WHO states that the rollout of vaccines will play a crucial part in protecting workers and populations overall. There is a growing concern of the Delta variant, which has increased transmissibility and severity than previous COVID-19 strains and COVID-19 public health data indicates that hospitalization of those with COVID-19 is far greater in individuals that have not received the COVID-19 vaccine.

Recent updates made under the "[*Reopening Ontario \(A flexible response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020*](#)", has provided that organizations should comply with any advice, recommendations and instructions issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Currently, upon recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, direction has been made for:

- Mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies in various identified high-risk settings as of September 7, 2021.
- Mandatory COVID-19 vaccine requirements for patrons of some non-essential businesses, including indoor meeting and event spaces effective September 22, 2021.
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health for the City of Hamilton has strongly recommended that local employers address the need for a COVID-19 workplace vaccination policy.
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Regional Municipality of Niagara has not provided guidance on workplace vaccination policies at this time.

Locally, the Regional Municipality of Niagara [as per Agenda Correspondence Item 4. a) - NPCA Board Agenda of September 17, 2021] and the City of Hamilton, (which encompass the majority of the NPCA watershed), both passed resolutions requiring a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for staff.

Discussion:

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), employers are required to take all reasonable precautions to protect the Health and Safety of their workers. The NPCA has implemented various protocols and procedures to protect staff and visitors from COVID-19 as mandated by the province, in line with public health recommendations and as recommended by the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee through risk identification and assessment exercises.

To further enhance our commitment to protecting the health and safety of our staff and various stakeholders, NPCA staff recommends the inclusion of a COVID-19 vaccination policy. The vaccination policy should be developed in compliance with all legal requirements, including but not limited to, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and *The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Policy direction will require NPCA staff (along with other identified groups including conference bookings) to provide verification of COVID-19 vaccination through proof of full vaccination against COVID-19. Those unable or unwilling to provide proof of vaccination will be subject to additional infection and prevention control measures, as recommended by public health, to aid in protecting the Health and Safety of workers and other stakeholders.

Upon development of a COVID-19 vaccination policy, consultation will be had with relevant stakeholders including the NPCA Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and the local Union Leadership. The policy will apply to all staff, regardless of work location and/or role, and all staff will be educated on the policy and procedure.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications associated with this report, however staff will continue to determine any financial implications of an approved policy.

Links to Policy/Strategic Plan:

Maintaining the Health and Safety of staff and contributing to a safe environment for our Watershed residents demonstrates the NPCA's commitment to health and well-being of our staff and stakeholders, alongside our commitment to the health and well-being of our watershed.

Related Reports and Appendices:

1. Correspondence dated September 1, 2021 to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority from Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, Regional Municipality of Niagara RE: Memorandum CAO 17-2021 COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Update - Agenda Item 4. a) - NPCA Board Agenda of September 17, 2021
2. Link to [City of Hamilton](#) COVID vaccination policy
3. Link to media release regarding [Ontario to require proof of vaccination in select settings](#)

Authored by:

Original Signed by:

Misti Ferrusi, BA, CHRL
Manager, Human Resources

Submitted by:

Original Signed by:

Chandra Sharma, MCIP RPP
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

September 24, 2021

NPCA Public Advisory Committee
250 Thorold Road
Welland, ON
L3C 3W2

Dear Chair Oblak and Committee,

Please be advised that the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Strategic Planning Committee passed the following recommendation at its meeting of September 17, 2021:

Recommendation No. SPC-17-2021
Moved by Member Woodhouse
Seconded by Member Rapley

1. **THAT** Report No. SPC-03-21 Public Engagement #2 Results and Draft Strategic Plan **BE RECEIVED**.
2. **AND THAT** staff **BE DIRECTED** to finalize the layout and graphic design of the draft Strategic Plan.
3. **AND FURTHER THAT** the Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2031 **BE BROUGHT** forward for approval by the Full Authority at their next meeting.

CARRIED

Accordingly, for your reference, please find the subject Report No. SPC-03-21 attached hereto.

Sincerely,

Grant Bivol

Grant Bivol
NPCA Clerk / Board Secretariat

att.

Report To: Strategic Planning Committee

Subject: Public Engagement #2 Results and Draft Strategic Plan

Report No: SPC-03-21

Date: September 17, 2021

Recommendations:

1. **THAT** Report No. SPC-03-21 Public Engagement #2 Results and Draft Strategic Plan **BE RECEIVED**.
2. **AND THAT** staff **BE DIRECTED** to finalize the layout and graphic design of the draft Strategic Plan.
3. **AND FURTHER THAT** the Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2031 **BE BROUGHT** forward for approval by the Full Authority at their next meeting.

Purpose:

To provide an update on recent public engagement activities and to obtain approval on the draft Strategic Plan before it is presented to the Full Authority.

Background:

The development of new NPCA Strategic Plan was identified as a Board priority for 2020. An *Ad Hoc* Strategic Planning Committee was formed in July 2020 to support the staff-led process of creating a new 10-year Strategic Plan to guide future organizational priorities with feasible, measurable performance targets to evaluate NPCA's collective outcomes and impact. All deliverables noted in the Committee's Terms of Reference have been completed, including a draft Strategic Plan.

From January to August 2021, the NPCA consulted broadly with its Board of Directors, Public Advisory Committee, staff, Indigenous groups, partners, members of the public, and other local stakeholders to guide the NPCA's strategic direction for the next 10 years. Public outreach efforts were successful and showed overall support of the NPCA's Strategic Plan. In the spring 2021, a public survey was administered to obtain feedback on draft strategic priorities proposed by staff toward a shared vision. The input received was essential in shaping and facilitating the development of our 10-year Strategic Plan.

On August 19, 2021, the NPCA hosted a virtual public information session to engage the public and stakeholders in providing their feedback on key components of the draft Strategic Plan through a moderated Q&A session and via the NPCA's Get Involved online engagement platform (until Sept. 3, 2021). The NPCA also accommodated non-virtual methods of engagement (e.g., paper survey, hardcopy meeting materials mailed, and phone calls) upon request.

Discussion:

Public Engagement – Virtual Public Information Session

The Virtual Public Information Session continued to build on extensive outreach and engagement efforts with both internal and external stakeholders from March – July 2021. The session was to provide interested participants with a first look at key components of the NPCA's new 10-year Strategic Plan, developed through the recent involvement of the community and stakeholders. The August 19th session was attended by 71 unique viewers (with 141 people registered). Ample opportunity was given to ask (and answer) questions during the session. Overall, the questions were related to the NPCA's operations rather than the Strategic Plan with topics including water quality monitoring, improving relations with agricultural community, protection of wetlands and buffers, funding sources, development pressures, municipal involvement, and opportunities for youth involvement. Most questions were answered live during the session and two were brought back to staff for follow-up by email. An evaluation of the session was completed by 30% of attendees and feedback on the session was positive, receiving an average rating of 3.8 of 5.

After the session, the NPCA welcomed additional feedback, questions, and comments from the community until Sept. 3, 2021 through the NPCA's Get Involved online engagement space. A recording of the session and supporting documents were posted to the webpage for those unable to attend. The recording was viewed 67 times during that period and there were 6 questions/comments submitted after the public information session with only 2 relating to the Strategic Plan (one was also asked/addressed in the live session). The other questions were related to NPCA operations (dogs allowed at parks, storm water responsibilities, Great Lakes water levels, and an enforcement issue). In addition, the NPCA offered non-virtual methods of engagement to accommodate those without internet access or with a preference for traditional methods. One person requested a paper copy of the session materials.

An Outreach and Engagement Report to compile and synthesize the results of all engagement efforts toward the development of a new Strategic Plan is being prepared to be shared publicly at the Full Authority's October 2021 meeting.

Draft Strategic Plan

The draft Strategic Plan (Appendix 1) was developed from January to August 2021 with extensive input from NPCA staff, the Board of Directors, Public Advisory Committee, partners, the watershed community, and other stakeholders at key stages of development.

The new 10-year Strategic Plan reaffirms the NPCA's commitment to the mandate/purpose of Conservation Authorities in Ontario. Through 6 overarching strategic priorities, the plan provides strategic direction for the NPCA and is vital for charting the course of conservation in our watershed toward achieving vibrant and healthy nature for all.

For the first time, the NPCA's Strategic Plan has a strong focus on outcomes and performance measures. Notably, this new Strategic Plan reflects the importance of collaboration between people, communities, and organizations on a collective response to a changing landscape through specific priorities and goals. It builds on the principles of conservation leadership, customer service, collaboration, and accountability to nature.

With this major milestone completed, the next step is to begin implementing the Strategic Plan by developing an operational plan that sets out specific actions to enable the NPCA to meet its goals, in collaboration with our communities and partners from 2021-2031. Progress on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be monitored and shared publicly through the NPCA's Annual Report.

The NPCA continues to navigate and respond to the recent legislative changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* through the development of this Strategic Plan. Regulations related to the *Conservation Authorities Act* changes have not yet been released. Staff remain mindful of the updated regulations and the need to prioritize our actions as we align this transition creatively with the revitalization of our organization.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications.

Links to Policy/Strategic Plan

Completion of the draft Strategic Plan will guide the future of the organization and fulfill the NPCA's responsibilities as part of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (2020).

Related Reports and Appendices:

Appendix 1: NPCA Draft Strategic Plan: 2021-2031

Authored by:

Original Signed by:

Natalie Green, M.Sc., PMP
Project Manager

Reviewed & Submitted by:

Original Signed by:

Chandra Sharma
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer



Appendix 1 to Report No. SPC-03-21

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2031

Land Acknowledgement

The Niagara Peninsula watershed is situated within the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabeg, and Attiwonderonk, 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. Through this Strategic Plan, we re-confirm our commitment to shared stewardship of natural resources and deep appreciation of Indigenous culture and history in the watershed.

About Us

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) is a community-based natural resource management agency that works to protect, enhance, and sustain healthy watersheds. With over 60 years of experience, the NPCA offers watershed programs and services that focus on flood and hazard management, source water protection, species protection, ecosystem restoration, community stewardship, and land management. The NPCA is one of 36 Conservation Authorities in the Province of Ontario and manages 41 Conservation Areas within the Niagara Peninsula watershed held in public trust for recreation, heritage preservation, conservation, and education.

Purpose

The purpose of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority is to further the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources in the Niagara Peninsula watersheds, as per the *Conservation Authorities Act* (2020).

Introduction

In 2020, the NPCA Board of Directors approved launching a staff-led process to create a new Strategic Plan that would guide the NPCA for the next 10 years while reflecting its mandate as per the *Conservation Authorities Act* and fulfill its important role within the community. The NPCA Strategic Plan (2021-2031) is a critical milestone in our organization's transformation. The Plan reaffirms our commitment to the mandate of conservation authorities and charts the course for the next generation of work to address the evolving issues of climate change, growth, and need for green infrastructure.

This Plan is directed by guiding principles based on a conservation-first and ecosystem philosophy, collaboration ethics, and an importance of innovation rooted in science. The Plan further solidifies our commitment to environmental protection and community connections building on the principles of conservation leadership, customer service, and accountability to nature. Through 6 overarching strategic priorities, 21 SMART goals and measurable actions, the Plan charts the course for future actions and collective outcomes. For the first time, our Strategic Plan has a strong focus on outcomes and performance measures. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) established for each our strategic priorities will enable us to make well-informed decisions for the future and measure our actions against established targets.

The NPCA recognizes that it is important that our organization remain flexible and adaptable to change over the next 10 years. We continue to navigate and respond to the recent legislative changes to the

Conservation Authorities Act through the development of this Strategic Plan. We remain mindful of the updated regulations and the need to prioritize our actions as we align this transition carefully with the revitalization of our organization. Furthermore, we understand that the Niagara Peninsula watersheds will experience growth, intensification of extreme weather impacts, and a tremendous need for greenspace. These pressures will demand that our priorities continue to evolve to adjust to these challenges.

Collectively, the strategic priorities affirm our actions toward a vision of the Niagara Peninsula watershed with robust nature, thriving agriculture, and resilient urban areas vital to the health and well-being of our residents. Through this Plan we will be able to improve ecosystems and natural cover, continue to protect drinking water sources, showcase on-the-ground climate adaptation and mitigation for resilient communities and shorelines that can withstand the impacts of climate extremes, support creating connected active transportation routes linked to greenspace destinations (conservation areas), engage our communities about the culture and heritage importance of the watershed, and contribute to the thriving and vibrant economy of Niagara as a Gateway to Canada.

The NPCA thanks every person who contributed their perspective to our organization's first 10-year Strategic Plan. From January to August 2021, the NPCA consulted broadly with its Board of Directors, Public Advisory Committee, staff, Indigenous groups, partners, members of the public, and other local stakeholders. Overall, our outreach and engagement efforts were a success with over 5,700 visitors to our website, more than 500 surveys on draft strategic priorities, and participation of 71 people in our Virtual Public Information Session in August 2021. The input received was essential in shaping our 10-year Strategic Plan. A separate Outreach and Engagement Report compiles and synthesizes the results of all engagement activities.

We look forward to working together with our communities and partners as we operationalize and implement this new Strategic Plan to 2031 toward a shared vision of *Nature for All!*

The Niagara Peninsula Watershed: A Natural Treasure

A watershed is the land that drains into a particular watercourse such as a stream, river, lake. Gravity and the topography of the land (the high and low areas) moves water, rain, and snowmelt from one area to another across the landscape.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's watershed area encompasses 2,424 km² including the entire regional municipality of Niagara, portions of the City of Hamilton (21%) and Haldimand County (25%). This area has been the home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial—a place for sharing, trading, hunting, gathering, stewardship and friendship. Currently, the watershed supports a population of approximately 520,000 people.

The Niagara Peninsula watershed is a natural treasure of distinct cultural, geological, hydrological, and biological aspects not found elsewhere in North America. It is part of the Carolinian life zone, the most biodiverse and threatened ecoregion in Canada. The Niagara Peninsula watershed boasts approximately 30% natural cover that provides critical habitat such as forested woodlots, slough forests, alvars, and coastal wetlands that support a rich biodiversity including rare plants and animals.

The watershed is uniquely situated between two Great Lakes with the Niagara River as a boundary shared with the United States of America. The watershed area includes several well-known unique natural features such as the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, the Niagara Falls, Wainfleet Bog, Ball's Falls, Willoughby Marsh, and other significant landforms such as the Fonthill Kame ice contact-delta complex. The unique microclimate created by the Niagara Escarpment and rich soils supports one of Ontario's most productive agriculture system including vineyards, tender fruit orchards, livestock, and a variety of specialty crops (greenhouses for flowers, vegetables, sod farms, and mushroom farms).

These important watershed features provide life-sustaining benefits for all and many opportunities to discover nature and culture.

[Placeholder for watershed map]

Vision

Nature for all.

The conservation of nature is critical for people, plants, and wildlife. We envision a healthy and vibrant environment with shared greenspace and clean water that sustains life for future generations.

Mission

To create a common ground for conservation-inspired action and accountability to nature.

Guiding Principles

Watersheds transcend municipal boundaries. We are committed to working with the watershed community to support and create climate resilient and connected natural systems.

Natural green infrastructure is critical to life. Our day-to day work conserves and restores integral ecological, socio-economic, public safety, and health services for our communities.

Diverse experiences and ideas lead to better and stronger collective impact and outcomes. We seek to exemplify inclusion and equity through meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Innovation requires learning from each other and from the past. We are progressive, resilient, adaptable and strive for continuous improvement to remain a trusted and valued partner.

Core Values

Integrity

We are responsible, honest, trustworthy, and fair in our decisions and actions.

Respect

We are inclusive and value the diverse range of perspectives and interconnectivity of the watershed community. We foster an environment where we recognize and appreciate each other as well as the communities we serve.

Customer Service

We conduct our business with professionalism, transparency, and equity to achieve high standards of quality and service delivery.

Conservation Leadership

We are conservation leaders in the watershed and aim to inspire and empower others through exemplary actions and outcomes.

Strategic Direction

The strategic priorities will guide the NPCA's actions over the next 10 years to meet its vision, mission, and mandate. The following six strategic priorities were developed through extensive engagement activities with internal and external stakeholders to guide the NPCA's work over the coming years:

- Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds
- Supporting Sustainable Growth
- Connecting People to Nature
- Partner of Choice
- Organizational Excellence
- Financial Sustainability

Each strategic priority includes specific goals and example actions for the NPCA to undertake together with its partners and communities to achieve a thriving environment that sustains life for future generations.

Measuring Performance and Collective Impact

For each of the Strategic Priorities, the NPCA established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track performance against the goals set out in the Strategic Plan and guide our organization's decision-making and implementation process into the future. In addition, the NPCA developed a list of specific metrics to help measure the success of our organization's day-to-day activities and support achievement of the KPIs. The specific KPIs and metrics are noted within each of their relevant Strategic Priorities. Progress and achievement toward each of the KPIs will be tracked and shared publicly through the NPCA's Annual Report each year.

Implementation

The next major step in the NPCA's strategic planning process is to implement the Strategic Plan by developing an operational plan that sets out specific actions to enable the NPCA to meet its goals, in collaboration with our communities and partners from 2021 to 2031.

The operational plans will be updated annually to reflect organizational and environmental changes, ensure we continue to meet the *Conservation Authorities Act* and its regulations, and to make sure the NPCA remains responsive to the constantly evolving needs of the watershed and the communities we serve.

Given this Strategic Plan spans 10 years and we recognize that there may be change in that time, we plan to review the Strategic Plan after 5 years of implementation to ensure it remains relevant and achievable.

Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds

Improving nature for the betterment of all life across the watershed. Natural heritage features like forests, wetlands, and ravine systems provide critical life-sustaining services to people and wildlife. They can help mitigate the effects of climate change, reduce the risk of flooding to people and properties, and provide important habitat for wildlife.

Goal 1: Support evidence-based decision making for climate resilient watersheds and shorelines.

Example actions:

- Implement robust data collection, analysis, monitoring, and modeling program.
- Establish a timeline for prioritizing gaps identified through gap analysis.
- Support municipal partners with watershed data collection and analysis to understand cumulative impacts.
- Expand and enhance monitoring and associated tools to fill information gaps and research needs.
- Lead water quality (i.e., surface and groundwater) and quantity monitoring throughout the NPCA jurisdiction.
- Develop predictive tools for data management.
- Develop a solid understanding of climate impacts on NPCA watersheds to facilitate awareness and on-the-ground action in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Regularly share scientific data and information through watershed report cards, annual reports, publications, and other digital tools to communicate results to a variety of audiences.
- Update NPCA mapping to keep it relevant and current.
- Implement the Source Protection Program as mandated by the Conservation Authorities Act and Clean Water Act.

KPI: Robust data collection program established by 2026 and data gaps filled by 2031.

Metrics:

and types data gaps identified (gap analysis)
% priority data collection gaps filled
% watershed GIS data up-to-date
surface water samples
groundwater samples
monitoring stations in watershed jurisdiction (surface & groundwater)
Analytics from Open Data Hub (downloads, visits)

Goal 2: Protect people and properties from natural hazards and climate impacts.

Example actions:

- Develop a Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy as mandated by the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- Implement permitting and regulations under section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- Develop a solid understanding of climate risks on natural hazards.
- Update Shoreline Management Plans with a climate resilience lens.
- Complete and maintain updated floodplain mapping within the watershed.
- Update and maintain up-to-date regulation mapping.
- Provide resources for stakeholders to understand risk and vulnerabilities to flood susceptible infrastructure and collaborate to implement risk mitigation strategies.
- Deliver accurate, real-time information for flood forecasting, messaging, and warning using state-of-the-art technology and communication tools.

KPI: Climate Risk and Vulnerability Strategy developed by 2023.

Metrics:

Water resource management actions identified
Impact of climate change on natural hazards known.
% of strategy mitigation and adaption actions implemented
relevant policies reviewed/updated
% floodplain mapped
flood forecasts/warnings delivered
flood messages delivered
permits reviewed
permits approved vs. not approved

Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds

Goal 3: Restore and enhance natural habitat, water resources, and forest cover.

Example actions:

- Develop programs aimed at urban and rural landowners (e.g., urban stewardship program, agricultural best management practices).
- Understand the carbon potential of NPCA natural systems to examine feasibility of voluntary carbon offsetting.
- Integrate watershed planning information (i.e., GIS, water quality, biological data) to proactively target restoration efforts.
- Expand restoration program services.
- Lead special projects that improve water quality and ecosystem health (e.g., Niagara River Remedial Action Plan)

KPI: Increased area (ha) of protected and restored habitat by 2032.

Metrics:

restoration projects
trees planted
% forest cover
Area (ha) habitat created/added
km of grassed waterways
km riparian buffers
% of watershed with natural cover
Net amount natural cover across watershed
Water quality metrics

Goal 4: Manage NPCA lands to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover.

Example actions:

- Develop Management Plans for each NPCA property as mandated by the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- Complete and implement the NPCA Land Acquisition Strategy.
- Implement regulations under section 29 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- Develop plans to manage invasive species and enhance biodiversity at NPCA properties (e.g., Forest Management Plan)

KPI: Management Plans completed for 100% of NPCA properties by 2031.

Metrics:

% lands acquired for protection/restoration
Ha land acquired
% Management Plans completed
Management Plans completed
% management actions completed
Forest Management Plan completed
or % actions of Forest Management Plan implemented

Supporting Sustainable Growth

Helping to create resilient communities through our role in land use planning and leading the use of sustainable technologies. With our support, communities can adequately prepare for a changing climate and related environmental challenges accomplished through the implementation of relevant policies, principles, and sustainable best practices.

Goal 1: Maintain a high standard of client services, tools and procedures for planning review and permits.

Example actions:

- Continuous improvement in the implementation of NPCA Client Services Standard for Plan and Permit Review protocol to support streamlining, efficiency, and transparency.
- Refine decision-support tools for efficient application management and review.
- Improve customer service feedback mechanisms to support performance evaluation and reporting.
- Communicate the role and responsibilities of NPCA in plan review and permitting.

KPI: Year over year improvement in client service metrics.

Metrics:

% files where performance metrics achieved or exceeded
% planning & permit reviews meeting deadlines
Amount of time for planning and permit reviews/approvals
Customer experience
of collaborative permit reviews with other agencies

Goal 2: Lead an Integrated Watershed Management approach to support planning and policy for the protection and enhancement of watersheds.

Example actions:

- Implement a proactive sub-watershed work program to complement and inform the quaternary and sub-watershed planning for growth areas within Niagara Region
- Update NPCA policies and develop a planning and procedural manual
- Develop proactive research agenda to determine cumulative watershed impacts and applied solutions from extreme weather and land use changes
- Support municipalities and development sector to implement smart growth principles (e.g., preserve open space, farmland, natural areas, reduce urban sprawl).
- Update and maintain regulations mapping through open data system for best standard of client services.

KPI: 100% sub-watershed plans for future growth areas updated by 2031.

Metrics:

% sub-watershed plans completed
% regulations mapping information up
maps updated
Relevant policies updated
and types of outreach tactics to inform stakeholders
Municipal & stakeholder engagement
Data gaps identified and filled
% land usage over time (e.g., open space, urban, farmland)

Supporting Sustainable Growth

Goal 3: Lead implementation of sustainable technologies and green infrastructure best practices for climate resilience and sustainability.		KPI: Green infrastructure and sustainable technologies program established at NPCA by 2026.
<u>Example actions:</u>		<u>Metrics:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a green infrastructure program at NPCA to engage municipalities, the development community, and other private landowners in implementing best practices and actions.• Identify opportunities for brownfields to enhance green infrastructure or innovative planning for in-fill development.• Advance the implementation of green infrastructure best practices in future development proposals and through NPCA's demonstration projects to minimize impacts to the watershed.• Develop education materials/program to inform the public about sustainable best practices.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"># and types of green infrastructure practices implemented% improvement of water quality metrics (e.g., bacteria, nutrient, sediment) pre- and post-installationProgram uptake by development sector, private landowners, municipalities

Connecting People to Nature

Improving access to and connections with nature for the health and well-being of all people. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has shown the world the importance of greenspace. Creating opportunities to connect with nature and educating people about its benefits will lead to increased stewardship and conservation across the watershed.

Goal 1: Create equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people.

Example actions:

- Identify and remove socio-economic barriers to accessing NPCA properties and programs.
- Highlight and promote recreation (i.e., cycling, hiking, walking, birdwatching, etc.) opportunities at NPCA properties.
- Proactively seek opportunities to enhance trail connections with active transportation routes.
- Acquire urban (or near-urban) lands to increase equitable public access to nature.
- Improve services and visitor experiences at NPCA properties (e.g., buildings, trail maps, wayfinding, and accessibility, where possible).
- Land dedication through planning process.

KPI: Increased public greenspace within urban or near-urban areas by 2031.

Metrics:

visitors at NPCA properties
% optimal capacity reached at flagship properties
% greenspace in urban or near urban areas
Length (km) trail connections to other non-NPCA trails and greenspace
Conservation Area passes used (checked out) from libraries or used by other community partners/agencies
programs targeted for marginalized groups
new NPCA assets (trails, platforms, etc.) feasible for accessibility
outreach materials provided in different languages

Goal 2: Lead nature education, environmental stewardship, and volunteerism.

Example actions:

- Develop and implement an Outreach, Stewardship, and Education Strategy for nature education and engagement opportunities.
- Strengthen and continue to deliver education programs for various socio-economic and multi-lingual groups.
- Enhance volunteer opportunities for all age groups.
- Expand opportunities for citizen-science monitoring.

KPI: Outreach, Stewardship and Education Strategy in 2024.

KPI: 100% actions from Outreach, Stewardship and Education Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

& types of education programs
requests for community engagement
of volunteers
volunteer hours for NPCA-led project/events
Impact of volunteer hours (treed planted, litter collected, etc)
Demographics of volunteer base
partnership agreements with school board, colleges and universities
students participating in education programs
participants in summer or march break camps
youth trained as camp leaders
% participation in education programs from various groups
Customer feedback

Connecting People to Nature

Goal 3: Improve cultural connections and heritage appreciation.

Example actions:

- Maintain and honour heritage buildings at NPCA properties including St. John's, Cave Springs, Ball's Falls, and Rockway Conservation Areas
- Examine opportunities to expand cultural connections and heritage programming at all Conservation Areas.
- Work with municipalities on heritage listing and designation of NPCA buildings and properties.

KPI: Cultural Heritage Strategy by 2025

KPI: 100% actions of Cultural Heritage Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

visitors to NPCA properties
attendees at special events (e.g., Ball's Falls Festival)
participating vendors at events
trails with cultural interpretation
participants in guided heritage tours
of heritage events offered
heritage programs offered

Goal 4: Promote the watershed as a destination of choice for adventure, culture, and ecological tourism.

Example actions:

- Develop a Marketing and Ecotourism Strategy to support safe and sustainable visits to NPCA properties.
- Optimize visitor experience at NPCA properties.
- Determine optimal level of visitation at NPCA properties.
- Enhance and promote ecotourism opportunities at NPCA properties
- Provide sustainable tourism opportunities across the watershed by working with partners (e.g., DMOs, municipalities, Indigenous groups, etc.).

KPI: Marketing and Ecotourism Strategy by 2025

Metrics:

tourism partners
Partnerships with municipal economic development
Partnerships with DMOs
Increased program engagement
visitors to NPCA properties
% optimal capacity reached at flagship properties
% visitors from different areas
Land acquisition to accommodate increase in visitors

Partner of Choice

Strengthening our relationships with stakeholders, partners, the watershed community, and Indigenous peoples toward shared stewardship, knowledge exchange, and collective impact. Together, more can be accomplished to achieve mutual goals and improve the overall health of the watershed that sustains us. We strive to become a strong partner of choice within the community to provide expertise to the watershed, build the capacity to deliver on mutual outcomes, and share knowledge.

Goal 1: Strengthen government relations toward collective outcomes and impact.

Example actions:

- Develop a Government Relations Strategy
- Execute Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Service-Level Agreements (SLAs) with Niagara's Lower Tier Municipalities.
- Establish NPCA as an environmental service provider to municipals partners with co-management and delivery of programs and projects of mutual interest
- Partner with government agencies to advance mutual goals.

KPI: Agreements with all 3 upper tier municipalities in 2022 and 100% of lower tier municipalities by 2026.

Metrics:

executed agreements (MOUs) with government agencies
municipalities engaged in projects
Letters of support from partners
requests from partners
projects completed
data requests from government agencies
Stakeholder satisfaction survey results
Impact of the outcomes of collaboration

Goal 2: Foster relationships with the community, ENGOS, businesses, agriculture, industry, and academic institutions for collective outcomes and impact.

Example actions:

- Develop a Stakeholder & Community Engagement Strategy.
- Collaborate with local educational institutions (e.g., school boards, college, university) on mutual research interests that enhance knowledge sharing.
- Provide technical expertise to support our partners and their work through agreements.
- Collaborate with ENGOS, businesses, agriculture, and industry on projects/initiatives that enhance stewardship and advance mutual goals.
- Support Conservation Ontario to achieve collective mandate of Conservation Authorities.

KPI: Stakeholder & Community Engagement Strategy by 2025

KPI: 100% actions of Stakeholder & Community Engagement Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

Stakeholder feedback
& types partnerships (formal/informal)
partnerships or collaborative projects with external groups
MOUs with post-secondary institutions
external committees with NPCA representation
requests to join new partnership tables
data requests from external groups
Value of co-investment of partnerships (cash, in-kind and volunteer hours)
Value of partnership vs costs analysis

Partner of Choice

Goal 3: Improve engagement with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples that supports shared stewardship.

Example actions:

- Develop engagement guidelines with Indigenous peoples for shared stewardship.
- Provide mentorship and employment opportunities that supports the cross-cultural exchange of knowledge.
- Implement actions that support Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- Proactively engage with Indigenous peoples and seek diverse perspectives on land management.
- Ensure there is First Nation and Métis representation on the Public Advisory Committee (PAC).
- Expand Indigenous cultural programming at NPCA properties.
- Ensure recognition and acknowledgement of Indigenous heritage on future signage at NPCA properties.
- Provide Indigenous awareness training for NPCA staff.

KPI: Indigenous Engagement Guidelines in 2022.

KPI: 100% of staff provided with Indigenous awareness training.

Metrics:

First Nation representative position on PAC
Métis representative position on PAC
or % engagement guidelines implemented
% staff trained
collaborative projects
engagement opportunities
employment and mentorship opportunities provided
actions that support Truth & Reconciliation identified
% actions for Truth & Reconciliation completed

Organizational Excellence

Striving for excellence through high standards of service delivery and accountability to the environment and its people. Delivering on exemplary outcomes and high standards of service delivery requires high caliber talent, improvements to internal processes, appropriate tools and technology, and innovation to keep up with a changing landscape.

Goal 1: Attract, retain, and invest in high caliber, diverse talent to deliver on exemplary outcomes.

Example actions:

- Develop a Talent Management Strategy.
- Ensure adequate staff capacity and resources required to deliver on exemplary outcomes.
- Provide relevant training and advancement opportunities to support staff learning and professional growth.
- Encourage a culture of innovation to find new ways of doing NPCA work.
- Modernize human resource policies to encourage a healthy work environment.
- Provide work experiences that support the future conservation workforce.
- Implement health & safety and corporate wellness programs for staff well-being.

KPI: Talent Management Strategy developed in 2022.

KPI: 100% actions from Talent Management Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

staff (full time, seasonal/casual)
staffing gaps identified and filled
% staff retention
& types training opportunities offered (full time, seasonal/casual)
staff participated in professional development
\$ invested in staff training or professional development
jobs or opportunities for youth
applicants per job opportunity
Employee feedback
Performance reporting feedback

Goal 2: Improve internal operations and processes.

Example actions:

- Develop a Digital Transformation Strategy.
- Enhance tools and procedures for program and project management, planning, reporting.
- Modernize and invest in digital technology to enhance internal processes (e.g., administrative record management, customer relationship management system).
- Deploy tools for efficient internal and external information sharing (e.g., online open data hub).
- Provide staff training on new technologies as they are deployed.
- Implement a record management program and policy

KPI: Digital Transformation Strategy in 2023.

KPI: 100% actions from Digital Transformation Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

& types existing and new digital tools
\$ technology investments
new technologies adopted
% usage of each type of digital tool
Staff training of new policies and technology
Analytics from Open Data Hub (downloads, visits)
% staff time on providing data to external users

Organizational Excellence

Goal 3: Provide high standards of customer service.

Example actions:

- Develop Customer Service Guidelines and improve customer service feedback mechanisms.
- Implement a client management system that facilitates overall governance and relevant information sharing.
- Provide equitable access to information (e.g., AODA standards).
- Utilize varied communication tools & tactics to facilitate engagement.
- Provide staff with customer service training.

KPI: Customer Service Guidelines developed in 2022.

KPI: 100% staff provided with customer service training.

Metrics:

Customer service response time
Customer feedback
% staff provided with customer service training
Analytics from website and social media
& types of public engagement opportunities

Goal 4: Demonstrate leadership in addressing climate change and sustainable practices through NPCA lands and operations.

Example actions:

- Develop a Corporate Climate Change Strategy to implement actions that reduce the NPCA's climate impacts and carbon footprint.
- Employ low-impact development techniques at key NPCA properties as demonstration sites.
- Develop a program to support other local organizations to become "green leaders".
- Complete a feasibility study to build a carbon-neutral NPCA headquarters.

KPI: Corporate Climate Change Strategy by 2026

KPI: % actions from Corporate Climate Change Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

and types of LID demonstration projects completed at NPCA properties
or % waste diversion actions completed at NPCA
\$ saved in waste reduction
organizations engaged to become green leaders
% progress on feasibility study completed

Financial Sustainability

Ensuring a financially stable and sustainable organization and continued service-delivery through innovative business models, diverse funding sources, and best practices.

Goal 1: Ensure responsible, sustainable, and stable fiscal practices.

Example actions:

- Develop a business plan based on *Conservation Authority Act* direction on programs and services.
- Consistently review and update fee schedules to retain current increases.
- Demonstrate value of NPCA programs and services to stakeholders and municipal partners.
- Deploy a full cost recovery model for fee-for-service programs and services.

KPI: Maintenance of variance against budget no greater than 20%

Metrics:

Variance analytics
% revenue by funding source
Year over year funding increase
Success rate of grants (% submitted vs awarded)
Total value of grants awarded

Goal 2: Optimize self-generating revenue using innovative approaches.

Example actions:

- Broaden opportunities for potential revenue streams at passive conservation areas (e.g., donation boxes).
- Explore fee-for-service opportunities through partnership agreements for various expert services.
- Explore varied funding sources and innovative partnerships to diversify funding.
- Leverage the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation to help raise funds towards conservation programs and projects.

KPI: Increased self-generated revenue.

Metrics:

% revenue by funding source
programs that self-generate revenue or surplus
Fee-for-service opportunities
Fee review information
Salaries data

Goal 3: Improve asset management and close the state of good repair gap.

Example actions:

- Establish an asset management plan with a proactive asset management program.
- Complete and deploy a natural asset management accounting initiative and support municipalities, as appropriate.
- Implement best practice standards for closing the state of good repair gap.
- Invest in NPCA assets (e.g., trails, buildings, etc.) and ensure they are assessed over their lifecycle.

KPI: Maintenance of good Facility Condition Index.

Metrics:

Comprehensive asset inventory
Maintenance costs
Replacement costs
Annual facility condition assessment results (state of good repair)
Amount of money invested in the state of good repair.
& condition of vulnerable infrastructure (i.e., dams)
% or # best practices standards implemented

Glossary of Terms

Access/Accessibility	the ability for a person to utilize a resource, program, or service.
Active transportation	getting from one place to another using a recreational mode of transportation (e.g., cycling, walking)
Asset(s)	the organization's property including trails, buildings, and equipment.
Climate resilient	ability to withstand the changes and impacts due to changing climatic conditions.
Greenspace	natural area that provides benefits to the ecosystem, community, human health (mental/physical) and well-being. Examples: conservation areas, provincial or municipal parks, woodlots, rivers, beaches.
Green infrastructure	natural vegetation (e.g., forests, farmland, wetlands, waterways, etc.) and green technologies (e.g., engineered stormwater ponds, bioswales, green roofs) that provide environmental, economic, health, and social benefits.
Natural hazards	physical environmental processes (i.e., flooding, erosion) or natural features (i.e., dynamic beaches, karst, unstable slopes) that can cause unsafe land use conditions and injury or loss of life.
State of Good Repair	the condition of the organization's property, buildings, equipment so that it can operate at a full level of performance.
Sustainability	the process of living within the limits of available physical, natural, economic, and social resources in ways that do not impact future needs.
Watershed	the land that drains into a particular watercourse such as a stream, river, lake.

2021 Ball's Falls Festival Update

NPCA Public Advisory Committee Meeting
September 30, 2021



Prepared by: Alicia Powell, PhD
Manager, Conservation Area Services

Overview

- 2021 Festival Committee
- Virtual Festival
- Advance Reservation for In-Person
- Modified In-Person Festival
- Communications
- Consideration for NPCA Management

2021 Festival Committee

Operations & Site Logistics

- Adam Christie
- Rob Kuret
- Moriah Tempest
- Central Workshop staff

Vendors & Administration

- Catherine Ursini

Communications & Outreach

- Erika Navarro
- Kerry Royer

Heritage & Culture

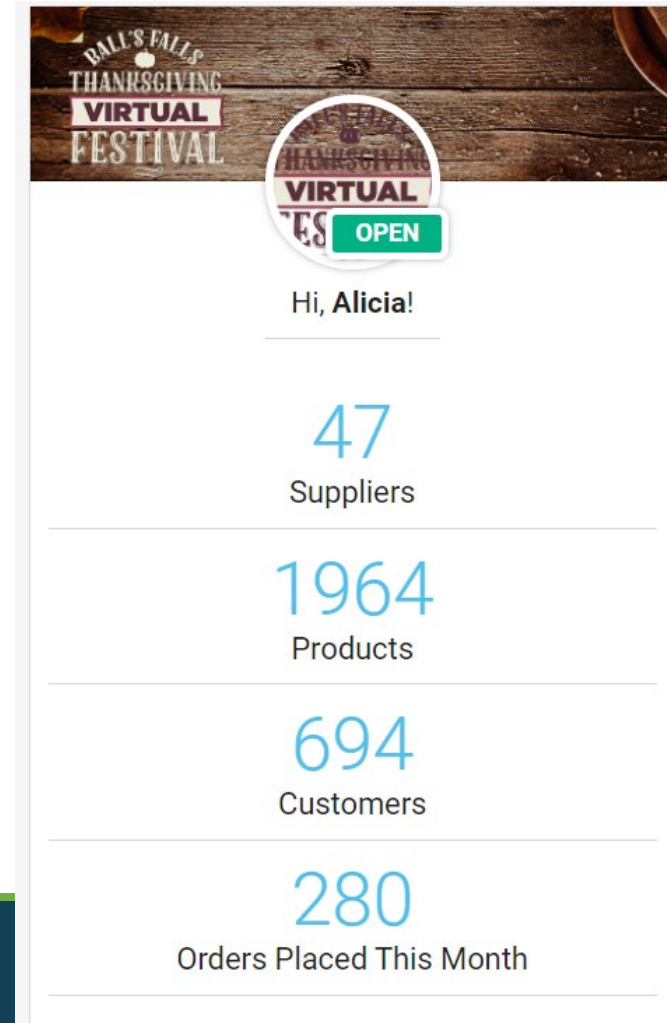
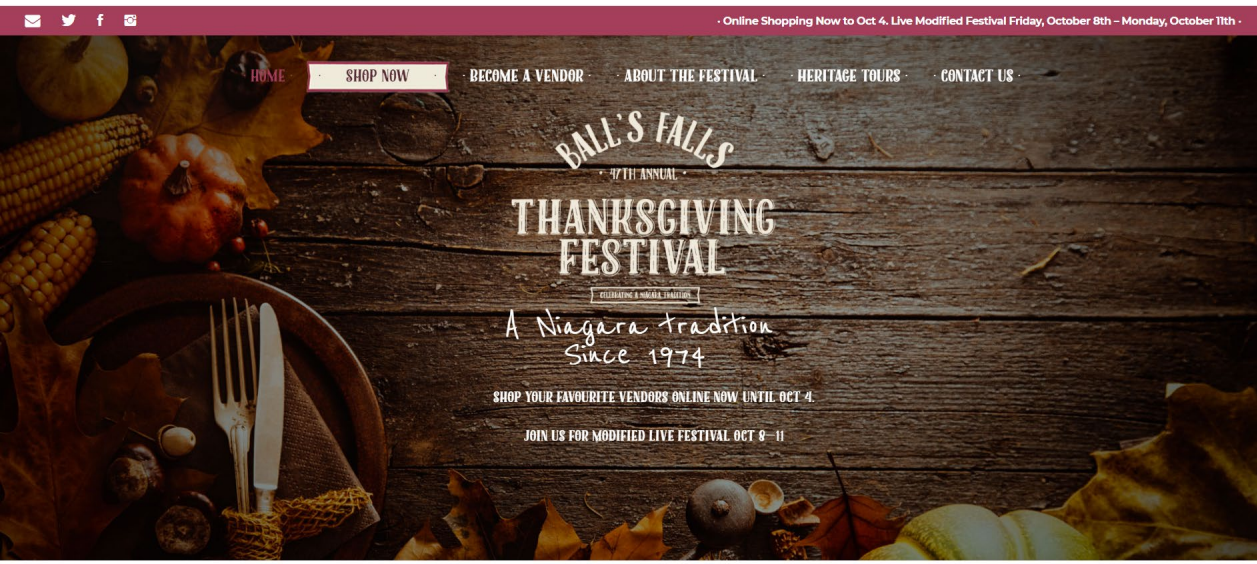
- Jenna Moorhead

Coordination

- Alicia Powell

Virtual Festival

- Virtual Festival Now Open (Sept 1 – Oct 4)
 - Virtual Vendor Marketplace (Local Line Storefront)
- Virtual Vendors: 54 (11 are online only)
 - More being added daily



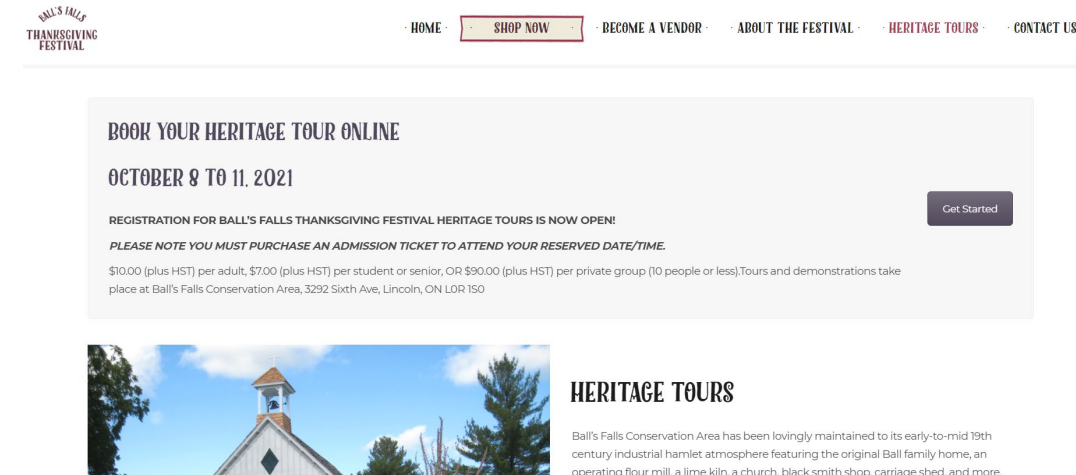
Advance Registration

- Advance ticket reservation required for in-person festival
 - ~1,500 persons per day (1/3 of 2019 capacity)
 - Saturday admission sold out
- Hosted through Local Line store
- Terms and conditions listed at POS
- Daily admission rate applied
- Upon arrival as one group to Festival:
 - Proof of purchase, ID
 - Wristband for entry
 - Anticipating walk-ins (200-500 people)



Modified In-Person Festival

- In-person Vendors: 50 / 50 slots filled
 - More added daily
- Farmers' Market
- Community Partners
 - HHS, RAP, Geopark, etc.
- Heritage Village Programming
 - Advance reservation guided tours (building interiors)
 - Historical demos: blacksmithing, carving, spinning, grist mill
 - Antique Power
 - Photo displays, vignettes, selfie stations



Modified In-Person Festival

- Children's Entertainment
 - Calvin's Magic, Animals tbd, activity stations
- Entertainment
 - Country 89/Giant FM partnership
 - Small stage offering live, acoustic performances by local artists
 - Children's shows by local entertainers
- Concessions
 - Food and beverage refreshment area
 - Consultation with Town of Lincoln By-law, Fire and Niagara Region public health

Modified In-Person Festival

- Health and Safety

- Outdoor events and festivals permitted
- Limited capacity: vendors, staff/volunteers, visitors
 - Distanced booths, ground markings, required PHU signage
- Limited indoor components:
 - Washroom facilities, CFC for advance purchase pickup, Big Barn for prepared food vendors
 - Heritage tours within buildings: require proof of vaccination for indoor tours
- Vaccination status of visitors not required at this time as per legislation
- PPE (masks, gloves, eye protection) provided to staff and volunteers
- Risk management and COVID safety plan reviewed with ToL by-law

Communications

Hyper-Local, Watershed-based approach

- Media Release (Sept 9)
- Facebook Event Listing
- PostMedia Digital Campaign
- Targeted social media
- Direct customer weekly mailing list
- Posters and signage
- Digital signage
- Minimal radio across watershed
- Vendor posts, NPCA blog posts

OCT 8 47th Annual Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival
Public · Event · by Ball's Falls Conservation Area



Oct 8 at 7:00 AM UNK – Oct 11 at 2:00 PM UNK

Ball's Falls Conservation Area
3292 Sixth Avenue, Lincoln, ON, Canada L0R 1S0

Tickets
thanksgivingfestival.ca/shop-now

About

Details

The Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival is back, as a fantastic modified experience! Guests will enjoy a classic family favourite, and a... More

Going	Interested	Shares
214	1K	58

Hosted by



Ball's Falls Conservation Area



Information will be added and
updated regularly at
www.thanksgivingfestival.ca

We are also seeking NPCA Staff for support shifts over
Festival weekend! Tasks include:

- Info booth (1 person /day)
- Online Purchase pick-ups (in CFC) (1 person /day)
- Drink ticket booth (2 ppl with Smart Serve /day)
- Golf cart shuttle (1 person /day)
- Road minder (2 people /day)
- Parking (4 people /day)
- Volunteer support (1 person /day)



Considerations

- Decolonizing approach to NPCA programs and events
- Renaming and addressing Festival identity in consultation with Indigenous leaders and community, PAC, and other stakeholders



Report To: NPCA Public Advisory Committee

Subject: NPCA Pollinator Initiatives

Report No: PAC-03-21

Date: September 30, 2021

Recommendation:

1. **THAT** Report No. PAC-03-21 RE: NPCA Pollinator Initiatives **BE RECEIVED**.
2. **AND FURTHER THAT** members of the Public Advisory Committee **PROMOTE** planting of pollinator habitat through their networks and **COLLABORATE** with NPCA to advance the planning of Native Pollinator species.

Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to inform the NPCA Public Advisory Committee (PAC) of a recent NPCA Board motion regarding the provision of native pollinator species and seek support to advance collaboration on pollinator initiatives.

Background:

On July 16, 2021 Resolution No. FA-147-2021 was moved by Member Woodhouse and Seconded by Member Brady regarding the provision of native pollinator species:

WHEREAS globally, pollinator species, including bees and monarch butterflies are declining at a concerning rate due to anthropogenic activity such as habitat loss and degradation as well as pollution and climate change;

WHEREAS the dramatic global decline in the pollinator species population could seriously affect the pollination of human food crops around the world;

WHEREAS Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has developed Best Management Practices (BMP's), resources, and guidelines to ensure agricultural practices across the country protect pollinators, and, is collaborating with the Provincial Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs to advance these resources and BMP's;

AND WHEREAS the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) is committed to maintaining and enhancing pollinator habitat through its enhanced restoration and

stewardship programs, community partnerships, as well as advising land development proponents through planning and development processes;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. **THAT** the NPCA **REQUESTS** the support and collaboration of conservation authorities and (through the CAs) their partner municipalities across the Province of Ontario to include the provision of native pollinator habitat with specialized native plant species through future development and redevelopment projects.
2. **THAT** by copy of this motion, NPCA partner municipalities **BE REQUESTED** to advance the use of pollinator plant species to promote pollinator habitat through projects on their own lands as well through planning and development processes.
3. **THAT** a copy of this resolution **BE CIRCULATED** to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for their consideration.
4. **AND FURTHER THAT** both the governments of Ontario and Canada **BE REQUESTED** to adopt a plan of action for properties within their control to protect pollinators and plant native pollinator species, and entrench this priority with the appropriate legislation with circulation of NPCA jurisdiction federal and provincial political representatives.

Discussion:

With respect to the pollinator initiatives, the NPCA has been working to support local pollinators for decades through the following programs. Members of the PAC are encouraged to leverage these initiatives as appropriate to advance Pollinator species:

- Restoration Grant Program – uses only native plants from our seed zone for projects
 - Planted 42, 900 native trees and shrubs (2020) and 3200 wildflowers (2020) that support pollinators and other beneficial insects and wildlife
 - Projects are on public and private land
- Mickey DiFruscio and Family Legacy Pollinator Program
 - Since 2017, NPCA has planted 2-3 native pollinator gardens per year with the goal of at least one per municipality in the NPCA watershed
 - To date 8 gardens have been installed, over 11,000 native plants
- NPCA Land Management and Ecological Monitoring of NPCA lands
 - Monitor and protect native species on NPCA properties
 - Use only appropriate native species for any planting/habitat enhancement projects
- Planning and Permits
 - Advising proponents through planning, permit and development processes of the importance of native species

- Promoting the use of native plants to help local pollinators through social media, NPCA website, outreach events and handouts, etc.
 - Many resources available for download on NPCA website
 - Handouts at community events
- Native Plant Gardening workshops, presentations and videos
 - Presentations to local nature clubs, libraries, etc. on the benefits of choosing native plants and how to incorporate into backyard gardens.
- Guide to Native Plants in Niagara
 - Book of native plants for the NPCA watershed, with guidelines on how to use them, growing requirements and how to support habitat on private lands
- Native Plant Supplier List
 - List of approved local suppliers of native plants to inform residents and partners of where to purchase native plants
- Landowner Stewardship Guide
 - Developed to help local landowners make good choices about the stewardship of their land, including native species, invasive species, biodiversity, water quality, etc.
- Working with municipal partners and local stewardship and community groups to plant native species on public lands and seek opportunities to conserve and enhance habitat
 - Offering technical advice and expertise for pollinator gardens, tree plantings, community projects
 - Enhanced Restoration Services project underway to determine needs of municipal partners

Financial Implications:

None

Authored by:

Original Signed by:

Kerry Royer, Coordinator – Community Outreach

Reviewed by:

Original Signed by:

Rebecca Hull, Strategic Business Planning and
Public Relations

Submitted by:

Original Signed by:

Chandra Sharma, MCIP RPP
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Public Advisory Committee

Discussion Paper

Identification of Key Issues and Opportunities within the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Area

June 17, 2021

Introduction

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Public Advisory Committee (PAC) is comprised of twelve (12) voting members representing a broad cross-section of interests across NPCA jurisdictional area and two non-voting Board members. Members represent the following sectors;

- First Nations
- Métis
- Urban/rural planning
- Agricultural North
- Agricultural South
- Development
- Chamber of Commerce/Tourism
- Property owners/Public-at-large
- Public-at-large
- Public-at-large
- User/volunteer
- Environment
- NPCA Board Chair
- NPCA Board Vice Chair

Members are recommended by a selection sub-committee based on their experience and expertise and appointed to the PAC by the NPCA Board of Directors.

On February 25th, 2021 the Public Advisory Committee met to discuss, in part, issues and opportunities specific to their sector in relation to natural systems and the NPCA. The following questions were put forward to frame the discussion;

1. From the perspective of your interest in environmental conservation and sustainable land use in Niagara what two issues do you feel are the most important?
2. How do these issues relate to NPCA and how would you like to see the organization address them?
3. Other important issues?
4. Further comments?

Members were also asked to provide a written response to these questions after the meeting. This paper captures key points made both in the discussion and in the written responses. Twelve (12) members, including the Board Chair and Vice Chair, participated in the discussion and six (6) written submissions were received following the meeting.

The following is a summary of comments and observations from PAC members. Further detail is available on request. It should be noted that four (4) of the PAC members were attending their very first meeting when this discussion took place, while other members have been members of the PAC for a full term or more.

Issue Identification by Sector

First Nations

The member representative stressed the importance of the land and using it sustainably.

1. **Natural systems protection** - We must ensure that we are preserving the natural flora and fauna. As important is ensuring the ones that aren't supposed to be here, the invasive species, aren't here.
2. **Education** – Education around historical aspects of the land in Niagara is important and should be approached in positive ways.

Métis

The member representative was very interested in protecting our water and watershed. They are concerned about what is being put on the land, with the understanding that water and land are connected, so what is put onto our lands may eventually find its way into the water, including sources of drinking water.

1. **Drainage** - the province is allowing for increases to the length of culverts for road crossings. It is important to not create “entombments” of the waterways by increasing the area of waterway in culverts. It should also be remembered that what many see as a drain is the main source of water for other animals.
2. **Nutrients** - what is allowed to be put on the land, especially close to waterways. The provincial government is allowing an increase to the amount of farm manure which may be put into the digesters and the waste from this will be put on the land. This will be an increase to what they currently put on the land, often close to waterways, and there is a high risk that increased

nutrients and other contaminants will enter our waterways during spring runoff and rainfall events. The safe transport of these nutrients is also a concern as new regulations are making it easier to transport material from one farm to another.

Urban/Rural Planning

The member representative noted that climate change is something that is going to impact all of us. We will need to prepare/mitigate, to maintain water supplies, and the health of our ecosystems. The Niagara region is poised for substantial growth so there is a need to balance environmental responsibility and reasonable pricing levels.

1. **Provide Balance** - There is a desire to strike a balance between environmental protection and sustainable development. The NPCA could become a leader in sustainable development while at the same time facilitating land development projects that comply and implement appropriate environmental initiatives. Sometimes proposed innovative low impact development (LID) solutions are declined by the municipalities for perceived maintenance and upkeep issues. A very proactive educational program would help make LID options more accepted/recognized.
2. **Realistic environmental standards** - These need to be implemented. A blanket prohibition of development closer than 30 m to a provincially significant wetland (PSW) is a prime example. There are a myriad of environmental policies and permits to deal with for development projects.
 - a. Proposing environmental or LID standards or guidelines is a great initiative - in order to implement these municipal staff and developers need to “buy in” and see direct benefits
 - b. Tree preservation initiatives are also important. Adopting a watershed wide replacement policy and having land available to facilitate replacement when it is not possible to save every tree should be a consideration/option
 - c. Having replacement habitat readily available outside the urban boundary—paid for by developers who are forced to find replacement habitat protects the threatened or endangered species while also allowing the development to proceed.

“The diversity on PAC is great and we should be able to address these issues.”

Development

The member representing this sector is relatively new to the PAC but was able to provide the following points for consideration:

1. The development sector is interested in the direction of the NPCA’s Strategic Plan, local growth, watershed buffers, and providing affordable housing.
2. Updated mapping is important to the development sector and NPCA could help with mapping, which would help both industries work better together.

Chamber of Commerce/Tourism

The member representative for this sector does not have any issues at this time and is satisfied with the direction of the PAC in the last year or so.

Agriculture North

There are concerns within this sector on costs associated with their businesses.

1. Labour costs and applications for culverts/drainage/irrigation – permits challenge
2. Issuing NPCA Permits

A quicker turnaround time on reviewing in-water works and plans would be beneficial. The timing of granting permits sometimes does not coordinate with production cycles making it difficult to perform the work once the permit is issued.

Agriculture South

The two issues identified by the member representative of this sector are water related.

1. Wetlands - MNR is the entity that designates wetlands but it is the NPCA who regulates the wetlands that are identified. Farmers and other landowners should have a reasonable expectation that activities allowed by the Provincial Policy Statement would be respected. "In the event that there are regulatory issues involving wetlands, farmers and other landowners should have a reasonable expectation that the conduct of Regulations Officers will be professional and polite. They should attempt to work with farmers and other landowners to resolve any issues as much as possible."
2. Watercourses - Many farmers have made private ditches which are then designated as water courses. This has been an ongoing issue in the agricultural community and creates lots of opportunities for conflict.

Public at Large –Property Owners

The member representative for this sector said that "eighty-seven percent of land mass in Ontario is public land so why the interest in the less than thirteen percent which is private property?"

1. **Drainage** – "The municipalities gave the conservation authorities the responsibility to oversee drainage issues, which are causing problems with most of the new development in Niagara, especially to property owners whose properties are situated downhill from the development. The conservation authorities should take the responsibility to keep culverts clear of grass and debris, so that water is swept away, not causing water to flood people's properties."
2. **Property Rights** – "As I look at the above question the first thing comes to mind is that all of these great initiatives will result in loss of my right to my private property. I am not opposed to anyone that wishes to embark on any of these initiatives, but it must not be on private property, unless permission has been given, by the property owner."

"The NPCA could present visions and ideas that would support the above initiatives, but this stewardship must be voluntary, as has been legislated in the Conservation Land Act."

Public at Large (1)

The representative for this sector identified the following challenges:

1. **Stewardship and knowledge transfer** are important. How do you reach the most people, how do you affect behaviour change in organizations, how you communicate, and encourage contributing back by volunteering?
2. **Transparency** and notification of NPCA policies/programs to the public should be increased.

User/ volunteers

This sector representative is new to the Committee and provided the following comments;

“Efforts of the NPCA are appreciated in identifying which services and activities are permitted or available at the various conservation areas within the Niagara region. It is important that the NPCA continues these communication initiatives, particularly since there are ever changing responses to the pandemic. “

Public at Large (2)

The member, another new member to the committee, offered the following comments:

1. There is a need for **sustainable land development** within the region - location, density and design. I would like to see NPCA support local municipalities in continuing to move towards responsible development and restoration of ecosystems.
2. **Watershed management and ecosystem health** are important. Conservation Authorities support land stewardship even when mandates change. There are opportunities to partner for restoration, public awareness and educational programs, land management (through support and partnership with municipalities). CAs have an opportunity to support larger geographic areas because they are not bound by municipal boundaries.

Environment

The member representative for this sector contacted a number of leaders in the community and collected their thoughts on these questions. This is a brief summary of their extensive responses, further details are available.

1. **Natural systems preservation** – This is the most important environmental concern in the watershed and results in decreasing biodiversity, loss of the unique Carolinian natural systems. This is partially the result of planning and development processes which do not adequately address the values of natural systems and functions protection. The quality of Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) is universally cited as not being objective or science based and there is no public trust in the current EIS process.
2. **Land protection and remediation** – As well as participating in systems protection, specific lands will be best protected through acquisition and/or remediation. Many natural sites owned by NPCA are in need of remediation, especially given the high usage during the pandemic and it is

important that these issues be addressed so as to ensure diversity and specific features are not lost.

Beyond the legislation, the NPCA must be a strong voice for the wise use of our lands and resources, and ensure that natural systems, both aquatic and terrestrial, are adequately protected. This includes incorporating local protection mechanisms where needed and not relying exclusively on provincial legislation.

DRAFT

Closing discussion

Identified Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities by Sector

Sector	Top Issues
First Nations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserving natural flora and fauna 2. Educating public on history of Niagara
Métis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protecting natural values of waterways - drainage 2. Proper handling of nutrients
Urban/rural planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate sustainable planning methods 2. Realistic environmental standards
Agricultural North	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Labour costs/applications for culverts/drainage/irrigation 2. Timely Issuing NPCA permits
Agricultural South	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wetland policy and enforcement 2. Watercourse designation
Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic plan, affordable housing 2. Mapping
Chamber of Commerce/Tourism	None
Property owners/Public-at-large	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Property rights 2. drainage management
Public-at-large	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stewardship and knowledge transfer 2. Transparency
User/volunteer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communications with public
Public-at-large	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable development 2. Watershed management/ecosystem health
Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural systems preservation 2. Land protection and remediation

Many similarities may be found across the discussion, as well as sector specific concerns and opportunities.

Sector specific

- The planning process minimizes environmental values
- The identification of issues with Environmental Impact Statements to ensure thoroughness, objectivity, and science based analysis and recommendations
- Slow NPCA permitting process and the challenges of ‘jumping through hoops’
- Need for natural heritage protection with focus on unique Carolinian zone features
- Difficulties in incorporating new sustainability measures such as LID
- Water quality management throughout the watershed to protect quality and aquatic habitat
- Private lands rights
- Level playing field – i.e. everyone is required to follow the same rules and ensure a transparent process – government, agriculture, development, residents

Similarities

- How do we maintain, protect, and enhance the natural features of the watershed while encouraging efficiencies in how issues and conflicting goals are addressed?
- How do we deal with projected growth in a way that does include retention of the important of natural functions such as wetlands and open spaces for water control and urban/rural forests for cooling and air quality?
- The need to address drainage issues (water quantity) with the focus ensuring all reaches within a subwatershed have needs met
- Ensuring adequate access to natural spaces (beyond conservation areas) for all residents as an important measure of quality of life

There have been many recent changes in the Niagara peninsula landscape and there are more to come. How do we provide the necessary amenities in an affordable, sustainable way which will keep what is important to residents of the watershed community?

The most important theme that emanated from our discussion was our love of the Niagara peninsula watershed, recognition of the uniqueness of the landscape (mosaic of natural features, agricultural lands and residential areas) and our commitment to make it a place that we can all be proud of regardless of our personal approaches and thoughts as to how this may be achieved.

Next steps

This was a good initial step in issue identification but it is apparent that further discussion is needed to flesh out details of this preliminary discussion.

The next step is in identifying associated areas of concern and stakeholders and from there begin the process of identifying how issues might best be addressed. Some matters may be addressed by NPCA, others may require participation of the broader community, and some show the need for broader

communication about the role of the NPCA and what we can and can't control, but can work collaboratively with partners and other levels of government to address.

This information provides NPCA and its partners with the opportunity to ensure that relevant issues are addressed in the development of Strategic Plan and it is hoped that the Plan will reflect this input.

The Public Advisory Committee provides both the NPCA board and staff with valuable insight into issues and concerns of residents which falls under its jurisdiction. Further, the PAC is comprised of individuals with valuable expertise and experience in their sector. As such, the Board is encouraged to consult with the PAC on a regular basis, at a minimum annually, on issue and opportunity identification, with the intent of working towards shared solutions.
