

Vol. 2: Jan-Mar 2016

QUARTERLY REPORT Q1 2016

NPCA MISSION, VISION & VALUE STATEMENTS

“The objects of an authority are to establish and undertake, in the area over which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals.”

R.S.O. 1990, c.C.27 s.20

Responsibilities of NPCA include;

- Floodplain Management (1970's)
- Hazard Land Management including the management of local areas susceptible to flood and erosion risks (1983)
- Great Lake Shoreline management (1988)
- Ontario Regulation 155/06 NPCA: Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses (2006)

MISSION

To manage our watershed's natural resources by balancing environmental, community, and economic needs.

VISION

Balancing conservation and sustainable development for future generations by engaging landowners, stakeholders and communities through collaboration.

VALUES

To the landowners, stakeholders and communities affected by our actions, we value:

1. A sustainable balance between environmental conservation, economic growth and agricultural prosperity.
2. Clear and respectful communication.
3. Integrity, fairness and sensitivity to all impacted by our actions decisions.
4. Creativity and innovation in service delivery to clients.
5. Transparency, accountability and quality in our services.
6. Pragmatic solution oriented approaches to decision making.
7. A respectful work environment and professional development.



Content

About us	4
Research & Science	5
Community	6
Our Land	8
Our Environment	9
The Numbers	10



Welcome to our Quarterly Report. Each year we will endeavour to produce quarterly reports for our funders, stakeholders and communities we are proud to serve. 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.



Carmen D'Angelo, BSc, MPA
Chief Administrative Officer



Bruce Timms, P.Eng
Chair, Board of Directors

ABOUT US

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) was established on April 30, 1959, under the Conservation Authorities Act, and serves approximately half a million people in the Niagara Peninsula Watershed, encompassing the entire Niagara Region and portions of the City of Hamilton and Haldimand County. The NPCA strives to manage the impact of human activities, urban growth and rural activities on its watershed.

The Niagara Peninsula is one of the most complex watersheds in the Province. It includes lands drained by the Niagara River, Twenty Mile Creek, the Welland River, the Welland Canal, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. NPCA programs focus on the conservation and preservation of the unique environment, and initiatives that help keep people and their property safe from flooding and erosion while keeping our drinking water clean and safe.

The NPCA's ongoing commitment to land stewardship is reflected in the management of over 2,870 hectares of unique natural areas. These lands are held in public trust, allowing the people of Niagara, Hamilton, and Haldimand County to enjoy its distinctive natural heritage at 39 Conservation Areas, each offering diverse recreational and educational opportunities and a place for both children and adults to experience nature's beauty.



RESEARCH & SCIENCE

The mild winter has allowed staff to begin collecting **water quality** samples at approximately 35 monitoring stations to assess watershed conditions in the winter season. Staff continue to update databases, complete benthic identification of biological samples from 2015 and analyze water chemistry data.

A 'Peer Review' was conducted for the **Cave Springs Ecological Study** and is now complete. The document was sent to relevant field professionals in Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (OMNRF) and internal staff for review and recommendations and ensure maintenance of the highest standards and quality. While no comments were received, The document has been updated and finalized.

The **salamander inventory** continues at Cave Springs in 2016 and 2017, by our staff Ecologist. This is part of a three-year study to assess all salamander species at the site and has a greater likelihood of determining presence of any rarer species.

Inventories will start in March with suitable weather conditions. The **bat species routes** have now been established in Niagara. NPCA staff Ecologist will be surveying these three routes (i.e. in Niagara Falls, Lincoln, and Pelham). Information on bat species and their critical habitat areas are limited in Niagara. This work is also assisting the OMNRF and the NPCA, adding to the provincial database and overall program for Protection of Species at Risk (i.e. endangered, threatened or special concern). It also assists in the identification of migration routes and critical habitat areas.

Staff participated in the provincial working group that was formed to improve the public notification process when **naturally occurring chemical or biological contaminants** are identified in the groundwater. The working group will address Recommendation 5b of the Auditor General's 2014 report on the provincial source water protection program.



COMMUNITY

NPCA staff organized and implemented four public **town hall meetings** in support of the **Welland River Floodplain Mapping** update study. Direct communication was sent to every household within 500 metres of the Welland River. This proved to be very successful in attracting people to each session. NPCA estimates that over 500 people attended the information sessions. Feedback has been captured and will be used to guide the technical process. A second and third round of public consultation will occur in April, and in the Fall of 2016.

The **Conservation Achievement Awards** took place on Wednesday, Feb. 24 at the Ball's Falls Centre for Conservation. The Glen Elgin room was full of volunteers, restoration project landowners and community partners that worked with the NPCA in 2015. The NPCA had a list of over 270 people to receive a Conservation Achievement Award and nearly 175 were in attendance. On the same evening, the NPCA also presented four Awards of Merit. The Award of Merit winners for 2015 were:

1. Andy Fevez (Individual)
2. Leo Trigatti (Individual)
3. Niagara Handweavers and Spinners Guild (Community group)
4. Gauld Nurseries (Business)

The NPCA recognized **Marion Holman**, who volunteered with the NPCA for over 30 years and passed away in April 2015. Marion volunteered at the Thanksgiving Festival for the last time in 2014, when she was 91 years old. Marion's family accepted the shadow box presented by the NPCA, which included a photo of Marion, a cloth doll and a small quilt she had made. The shadow box will be hung in the Cabin where Marion did quilting demonstrations for many years as part of the Ball's Falls Heritage programming.

NPCA staff sit on the Region of Niagara's **Building a Disaster Resilient Niagara Steering Committee**. This year's workshop took place on Jan. 29, 2015, at the Fallsview Casino in Niagara Falls. The estimated audience of 200 people was comprised of representatives from both upper and lower tier municipalities, local police, fire, EMS and utility staff as well as staff from federal and provincial agencies stationed in Niagara. The goal of this workshop is to identify partners and processes which can be used to help mitigate the severity of a disaster should one occur in this region.



COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

The **Community Liaison Advisory Committee** meeting took place on Thursday, March 10th at 5:30 PM at Ball's Falls Centre for Conservation. The agenda included updates on the NPCA's Policy Review, the Welland River Floodplain Mapping, and the Cave Springs Management Plan.

Approximately 10 volunteers were recruited to assist in the delivery of the March Break camp at Ball's Falls. **Volunteer recruitment** for the Niagara Children's Water Festival and the Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival ramped up in March. Staff will be targeting specific groups, including Scouts, Cadets, and other community groups. The EcoDefenders have also been contacted to assist with recycling and waste diversion at this year's Thanksgiving Festival.

The first indoor session for the **Niagara Envirothon** took place on March 9th at Ball's Falls Centre for Conservation. There were 13 teams from 10 different schools in our watershed that have signed up. Staff has recruited professionals to volunteer their time to assist in the delivery of this valuable program. An outdoor workshop will take place in April, followed by the competition in May. The winning team from the competition will represent Niagara at the Ontario Envirothon.

The NPCA Foundation's **Mike Knapp Ford Wild Game Dinner**, is being held April 22nd, and is shaping up nicely. Numerous hunters have come forward to donate meat. A menu has been prepared in consultation with a local chef, including wild game pizza. Several sponsors have come on board and tickets, just \$25 each, are now available. All net proceeds will go towards new hunting/viewing blinds and Wood Duck boxes at both Binbrook and Mud Lake Conservation Areas, as well as fish habitat improvement projects at St. Johns Conservation Area.

At the January NPCA Board Meeting, a motion was passed authorizing staff to enter into negotiations with Wee Stream to establish a contract for the 2016 Board meeting schedule. NPCA Board of Director **meetings are now streamed live** and are available on our website for viewing at a later date.

Staff members in the **Water Quality Monitoring** team provided two presentations for Environmental Sustainability Research Centre at **Brock University** graduate program. The presentations included "Macroinvertebrate Collection Methods" and "Tracking Watershed Health in Niagara". Both presentations were well received.



OUR LAND

Conservation Area staff lead a Site Meeting with prospective bidders on Friday, Feb. 26 for the build of a new **Splash Pad at Binbrook Conservation Area**. There was a positive turnout of around 12 attendees representing six companies. The RFQ was placed on Biddingo and Merx.ca. It was also advertised on the NPCA website and in the Hamilton Spectator.

Staff has also met with Steve Murphy of the Niagara Region to scope out ways of making **Binbrook Conservation Area more accessible**. This will include designated parking, accessible picnic tables, a new trail route to the beach, and access across the beach to the water.

At **Chippawa Creek Conservation Area** staff have completed the plumbing and electrical systems for shower upgrades. They have also prepared the old showers for new tile and have installed a new high-efficiency propane hot water tank. The campers will enjoy these long needed upgrades.

At **Long Beach Conservation Area**, staff is also completing upgrades to Comfort Station #2 and #3 which includes the tiling of shower stalls and some new fixtures. Staff has also been busy working with a subcontractor to take down the remaining, ash trees throughout the park. The remaining part of March and all

of April were spent completing necessary electrical upgrades to some campsites as well as overall drainage projects.

Park Staff have been busy with a number of **Capital Projects**. These projects include the complete reconstruction of a 40 meter boardwalk that is a part of the Dils Lake walking trail, pruning and cleanup of the large Black Walnut trees in the 15 amp camping area, the purchase and installation of new toilets and shower sensors, and acquiring quotes for ceramic tile for the shower stalls in the older Comfort Station.

The Central Workshop team prepared **Beamer Memorial Conservation Area** for the Annual **Hawkwatch**. The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch group does daily monitoring and data collection on all species of birds at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area throughout the month of March and April. On Good Friday, the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch group hosted their annual open house from 10 am to 3 pm. The event was well attended by the community. NPCA Operations Staff was on hand to help facilitate the event.



OUR ENVIRONMENT

The Watershed Restoration Program is responsible for improving water quality and biodiversity within the NPCA Watershed. The Restoration Program advances these areas through the implementation of comprehensive **watershed plans**. Staff is currently scheduling meetings with implementation committees and key stakeholder groups to plan collaboration opportunities for 2016.

NPCA staff and **Ducks Unlimited** are completing the implementation of the five 2015/16 partnership **wetland projects**. These projects have resulted in the creation of an additional 6 acres of wetland habitat and an additional 121 acres of naturalized area around the wetlands, including flowering trees, shrubs and wildflowers to support declining bee and butterfly populations.

The OMNRF is applying for funding from the **National Wetland Conservation Fund** to construct a riparian wetland along the Welland River near Chippawa Creek Conservation Area. This application requires them to obtain matching funds. OMNRF has committed \$25,000 to date for the design, and will also be contributing in-kind staff time. To fulfill the remaining funding requirements, they are looking for other partners, including Land Care Niagara and the NPCA.

The ultimate objective of this restoration (wetland) project is to **improve the physical diversity in the river**. This will be accomplished initially by adding physical structure in the form of woody debris and ultimately by creating areas conducive to the permanent establishment of a more diverse species collection of flora and fauna. By installing natural woody structures in areas where sedimentation would frequently occur, it can create relatively calm water and help move sedimentation downstream.

The objectives of the project fit well within the stewardship and restoration goals of the NPCA, as we actively pursue partnership opportunities to increase ecological initiatives in Niagara. The NPCA's close working relationship with the MNRF has resulted in the implementation of numerous wetland restoration projects to date. The NPCA Board of Directors **approved funding** a portion of this project at the February Board Meeting.

THE NUMBERS

by the quarter

\$12,711,912 2016 Gross Approved
Budget

Total Expenditure to
Date **\$1,941,500**

48

Planning Act
Applications

32

Building Permit
Applications

7

NEC Development
Applications

72 Hunting Permits
Issued

49 Site Visits by Watershed
Ecological Technicians

15 Property Information
Requests



published by the NPCA communications office



250 Thorold Road, 3rd Floor

Welland, ON L3C 3W2

Phone: 905-788-3135