

Vol. 6: Jan-Mar 2017

QUARTERLY REPORT Q1 2017

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.



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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.



Peter Graham
Peter Graham, MBA, PEng
Acting Chief Administrative Officer



Sandy Annunziata
Sandy Annunziata
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.

WATER

In 2017, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) has provided a laboratory allotment for the NPCA to collect winter water samples through the **Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN)**. NPCA staff collected these samples in February and data will be used to address a significant gap in our monitoring of watershed conditions in the winter season.

In March, staff initiated routine monitoring at all existing NPCA 75 water quality monitoring stations. This monitoring will be performed monthly until November at all stations and samples will be analyzed for general chemistry, nutrients, metals and bacteria. The NPCA has added five new monitoring stations to the network and these stations will be monitoring the water quality of Prudhommes Drain (Lincoln), Richardson Creek (St. Catharines), Welland Canal (Port Colborne), Mill Race Creek and the Feeder Canal Drain (both Wainfleet).

Due to the ice melt and precipitation experienced over the past three months, the water level in the Reservoir has fluctuated between the holding level of 650.5 feet to the top of the crest of the Morning Glory spillway at 652.5

feet. Staff continue to monitor reservoir water levels on a daily basis and make adjustments as warranted. In the first quarter of 2017, the NPCA has issued 5 **Water Safety Bulletins** as a result of four heavy rainfall events. No widespread flooding had occurred, although localized flooding was experienced in some areas.

In mid 2016, the NPCA was successful in obtaining a grant from the Ministry of Natural Resource and Forestry's 'Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure' (WECI) program to cover 50% of the cost to undertake an updated Safety Review of the Binbrook Dam. The last comprehensive Safety Review of the **Binbrook Dam** was completed in 2003. Best management practices recommend that a Safety Review for a large dam like Binbrook be carried out every 10 – 15 years. Through a competitive selection process, the NPCA has retained WSP Canada Inc. to carry out the study at a total cost of \$65,145. WSP Canada is a large, reputable engineering firm who specialize in this area of practice. The Safety Review was completed in March 2017. WSP concluded that the Binbrook Dam is in excellent condition and continues to be well maintained



COMMUNITY

The **Niagara Envirothon** is an environmental skill testing program for highschool students that allows them to learn outside of the classroom and interact directly with various professionals in the environmental field. The program takes place over three days in March, April, and May. The first session is indoors and took place on Wednesday, March 9th at Ball's Falls Centre for Conservation. A total of 15 teams from 10 different schools in Niagara participated. The program sees professionals from Ag Canada, Heartland Forest, NPCA, local naturalist groups, Brock University and local farmers organizations. This year's current issue topic is "Sustainable Farming." On April 19th the students will return to Ball's Falls to do the hands-on workshop so they can interact directly with the professionals in an outdoor setting. Students will learn how to label a soil profile, identify soil type, measure the diameter of a tree, identify tree species, learn water quality sampling techniques and protocols, learn about wetland types, learn how to identify wildlife by various techniques, learn about invasive species and sustainable farming.

The NPCA has been out in our watershed, working with community groups and interacting with our community. In March, the NPCA attended the **Niagara Outdoor Show** in Fort Erie to interact with the community and

highlight some of our programs. The NPCA also attended Notre Dame Catholic High School's **Earth Week Fair** in an attempt to recruit volunteers and highlighted our educational programs. NPCA staff worked with students from **Hamilton District Christian High School** on a planning project that the students were doing as part of their Careers class. This gave the NPCA the opportunity to talk to young adults about planning permits, processes and considerations.

The **Yellow Fish Road™**(YFR) program is a national program coordinated by Trout Unlimited, and the NPCA has been the regional coordinator for this program since 2006. Recently, this program has been identified by the Source Protection Plan as part of the outreach and communication strategy for the "intake protection zones" in Port Colborne and Niagara Falls. The NPCA will be taking on a public relations intern from Niagara College for the month of April to create a communications plan for the delivery of this program on the Source Protection Plan guidelines. The PR student will create a social media strategy, enhance the current YFR presentation and contact schools and community groups in Port Colborne and Niagara Falls to deliver the program.

COMMUNITY

Between January and March, staff recruited **volunteers** to assist in the delivery of the **March Break Camp** program and to assist with two ecological monitoring programs, Marsh Monitoring in various Conservation Areas and Bluebird box monitoring at Ball's Falls Conservation Area. NPCA staff also met with new volunteers to discuss opportunities and events coming up in 2017. Volunteers from the **Glanbrook Conservation Committee** built and installed 12 new wood duck boxes at Binbrook using funds raised from Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation's 2016 Wild Game Dinner. They also built 2 wood duck boxes that will be installed at Mud Lake Conservation Area at a later date.

- 13 volunteers helped with NPCA programs
- 226 volunteer hours recorded
- 30 new volunteer applications between January and March

The 26th Annual **Conservation Awards** took place on Wednesday, February 22nd, 2017 at Club Castropignano in Thorold, ON. The event recognizes the work of residents in Niagara working to improve our watershed through volunteerism, partnership

projects and participation in the NPCA's Restoration grant program. In 2016, the NPCA was helped by over 750 volunteers, contributing over 6300 hours to our events, programs, and camps. These numbers are the result of strong partnerships with over 40 community groups and organizations throughout our watershed. The Restoration program saw nearly 70,000 trees planted and over 37,000 wildflowers planted in 2016. The volunteers and project partners came together at the Conservation Awards, and we saw a record number of attendees, over 280 at this event. The Conservation Awards included presentations by NPCA staff, board members and the master of ceremonies, Acting CAO, Peter Graham. Attendees were given a token gift of appreciation, a custom toque with the Conservation Awards logo and a lapel pin. Recipients who were not able to attend this event will be sent their gift in the mail.



OUR LAND

NPCA staff have been working in partnership with the Twenty Valley Tourism Association to develop a new spring event at Ball's Falls. **Roots on the Twenty** will feature live entertainment, a variety of local craft beverages and VQA wines, live educational exhibits and local culture. This event is expected to attract 5,000 to 6,000 guests over a two-day period.

Binbrook will host a **"Party in the Park"** celebration in honour of Canada's sesquicentennial. Event features will include a "beach day" themed party which will incorporate Canadiana themes with live music by the "Practically Hip". Expected attendance is 2,500. The night will be capped off with an outdoor movie presentation of "Sing".

Thanksgiving Festival applications have recently closed. 220 vendor applications have been received and will be vetted by the events selection committee in the next quarter.

The **Niagara Children's Water Festival** will run during the beginning of May. 216 classes representing nearly 5,000 children will participate in the 2017 event. The support from nearly 500 volunteers will be required to run the interactive activity stations.

Ongoing construction continues for the **Splash Pad at Binbrook Conservation Area**. Pouring of splash pad is expected to be complete by the end of April. The construction of the mechanical building is underway. It is anticipated to be functional by late May. Area staff has co-ordinated and installed the extension of the water distribution system and electrical supply to meet the NPCA commitment regarding the project.



OUR LAND

Binbrook Fish Study has been awarded to an outside firm and will be conducted spring through fall 2017. It will further characterize the fishery communities and ratios of the Binbrook CA Reservoir, including specific reference to the public's concern of crappie (White and Black) populations and its' trends, and assist in modifying site fishing policies and habitat needs. The Study is to be completed by December 2017 with the information to be used in the continued development of sustainable measurements for habitat restoration and fishing policy measures for NPCA staff to implement to continue in ensuring a healthy, sustainable population of fish.

Salamander Monitoring at Cave Springs by NPCA Ecological department staff, continues for the third consecutive year, to assess the presence/absence of the less detectable species of salamanders. This monitoring is further to the site Management Plan work. The end of 2017 will complete the assessment of the recent salamander species for the site. This information on habitat and species needs will continue to be incorporated in the site activities and operations.

Monitoring of the bat species by NPCA Ecological department staff continues to refine further critical areas of habitat operation measures. Acoustic monitors have been re-installed with species and areas of use to further refined. This information will continue to be incorporated into the site operations and activities.

The drafted **Caves Springs Conservation Area Management Plan** and documents were submitted to the Niagara Escarpment Commission in March.

Resource inventories by NPCA Ecologist department commences at the Wainfleet Wetlands, Long Beach, Morgan's Point, Wainfleet Acquisition Site and Jordan Harbour Conservation Areas. These inventories are for one year (with the exception of salamanders to be monitored for five consecutive years) to assess presence and absence of species at the sites, assess habitat needs and incorporate this information and needs in the decision/ and site planning and operation for the site.

THE NUMBERS

YEAR TO DATE

\$11,917,007 2017 Gross Approved
Budget

Total Expenditure as of
March 2017 **\$1,759,149**

125

Planning Act
Applications (YTD)

69

Building Permit
Reviews (YTD)

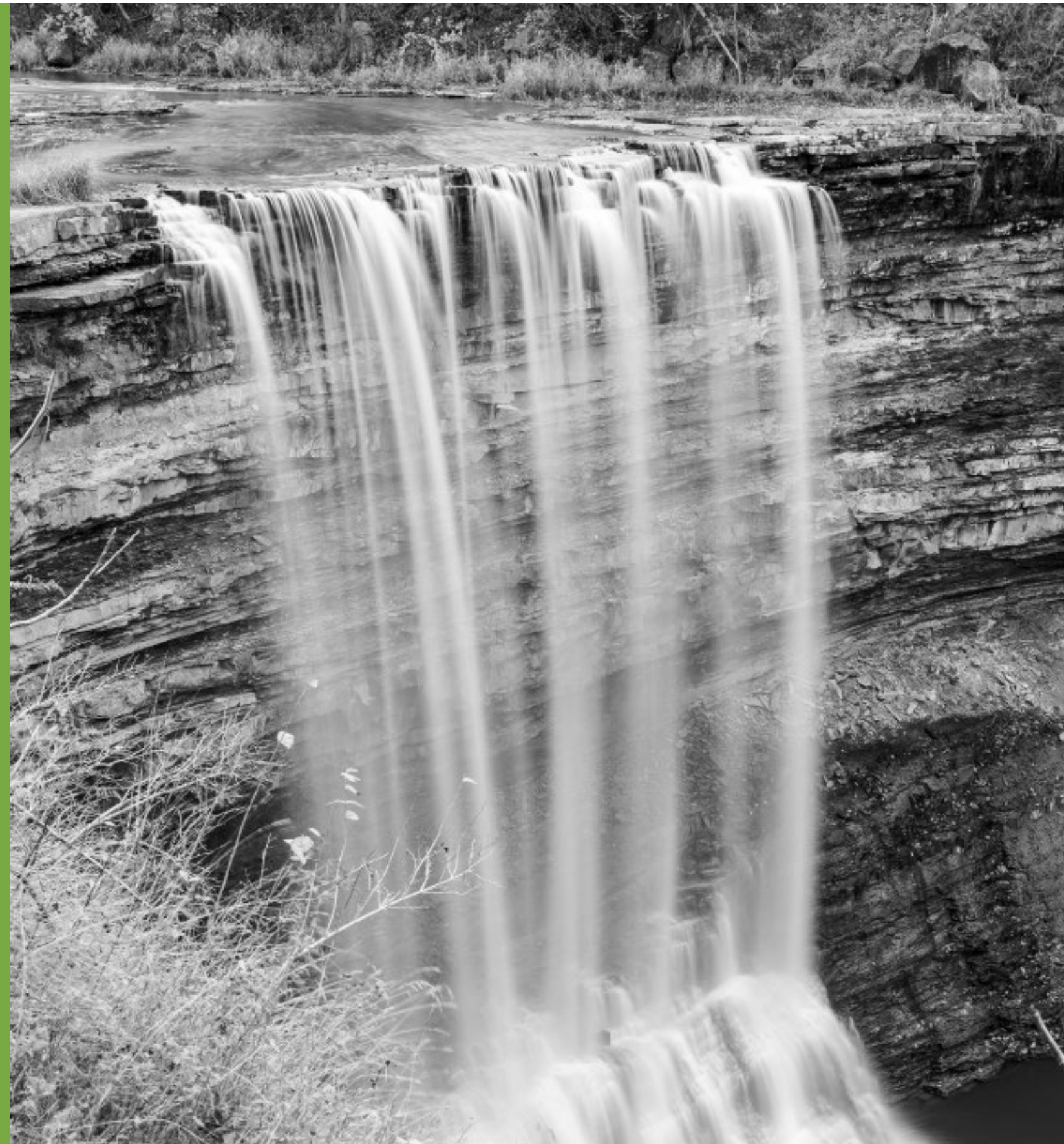
30

NPCA Permits
(YTD)

113 Hunting Permits Issued

Site Visits by Watershed
Ecological Technicians **94**

50 Voluntary Restoration
Plans Implemented





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