

Vol. 4: July-Sep 2016

# QUARTERLY REPORT Q3 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.



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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.



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.



# KEY PROJECTS

Dillon Consulting attended the July NPCA Board of Directors meeting to present the Draft **NPCA Policy Review** Discussion Paper. It outlines the issues and policy gaps that have been identified by stakeholders and the public and includes some potential preliminary options to address them. The commenting period for the Discussion Paper (Phase 2) closed September 30, 2016. The project is now in the third and final phase. Based on this feedback, NPCA, and Dillon Consulting are rewriting and revising the policy document for final review by a broad range of stakeholders and the general public.

The **Welland River Floodplain Mapping** Consultation Summary Report has been posted on the project website ([www.wellandriver.ca](http://www.wellandriver.ca)). During the month of June, Round #2 Public Information Sessions were held at four different locations across the watershed to explain the technical aspects of the floodplain modeling. These meetings also addressed outstanding topics and additional public input on any new issues using the facilitated discussion format. These information sessions were followed up with a Watershed Floodplain Committee (WFC) meeting on

June 22, 2016, at Ball's Falls Conservation Centre. Once approval of the new NPCA policy document has been received, the third and final round of public outreach will take place.

The **CityView** development tracking system went live on August 15th. End user training was conducted for two days at a computer lab at Niagara College. The implementation team received advanced configuration and reporter training in the office. Planning and permitting staff are meeting weekly to discuss any implementation issues as we get more familiar and used to the system, and develop best practices. Staff look forward to providing the Board with a live demonstration and a full report at the October meeting.

Staff has been recruiting volunteers for the **Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival**, Christmas in the Country School Program, Christmas Village event and various other NPCA programs and activities. These programs rely heavily on volunteers to ensure their success. This year's Thanksgiving Festival will need over 200 volunteers, including heritage tours and demonstrations, vendor relief, customer surveys, parking, and recycling team.





# CA ACT REVIEW

Last July 2015, as a first step in the review of the Conservation Authorities Act, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) posted a discussion paper to the Environmental Registry (EBR Registry Number 012-4509) for public consultation. The Province held over twenty stakeholder and indigenous engagement sessions along with targeted meetings across the province to gain feedback on the following three areas:

- Governance
- Funding Mechanisms
- Roles and Responsibilities

In response, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority responded to this initial posting via the following mechanisms:

1. NPCA Board of Directors adopted response via NPCA Report No. 97-15 (September 16, 2015);
2. Board Members and NPCA staff participated in stakeholder meetings for conservation authorities;
3. NPCA CAO participated in conservation authorities CAO/General Managers meetings (including being a member of the CA Act Review Working Group);
4. NPCA Chair and CAO participated in Conservation Ontario's response in association with the 36 conservation authorities in Ontario;
5. Board Members and NPCA staff participated in an agricultural stakeholder meeting held in Niagara-on-the-Lake;
6. NPCA Board Members and NPCA staff participated in an MNRF staff focused meeting held at Ball's Falls Conservation Area; and
7. NPCA staff participated in Niagara Area Planners Group,

which formed a regional report adopted by Niagara Regional Council.

Overall, the MNRF received over 270 individual submissions identifying perspectives from ten different sectors, and more than 2,700 individual or distinct comments related to the review. Based on these responses, the MNRF released a second Discussion Paper and posted the document on the Environmental Registry (EBR Registry Number: 012-7583) on May 12, 2016. Public comments were due by September 9, 2016.

The Discussion Paper, and draft comments from Conservation Ontario, were shared with the NPCA's Community Liaison Advisory Committee (CLAC). The CLAC members were encouraged to provide the NPCA with feedback, and, submit sector specific or individual feedback directly to the province.

In addition to the NPCA Board of Directors approved response, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Board Members and senior staff have provided feedback at one of the multi-stakeholder meetings hosted by the province. Also, NPCA staff will once again make comments to Conservation Ontario and the Niagara Area Planners Group.

Most respondents agreed that the watershed continues to serve as an ecologically appropriate scale for many resource management activities, particularly water management, and allows for a balance in developing and implementing locally appropriate solutions and working across larger scales and political boundaries.



# CA ACT REVIEW (CONT)

All sectors providing input into the review recognized the value and public benefit of conservation authority roles in providing:

- environmental education
- landowner and broader stewardship programs
- the provision of access to natural areas and recreational opportunities provided through conservation areas; and
- the critical role conservation authorities play in protecting people and property from water-related natural hazards.

Feedback provided in response to the Ministry's discussion paper did not indicate a need for drastic, wholesale changes. A strong desire from all sectors, including from conservation authorities themselves, to update the existing legislative, regulatory and policy framework to match current expectations for clarity, transparency, and accountability in the operation of public sector organizations.

In response to feedback obtained from the initial phase of the Ministry's review, the government has established five priorities for updating the Conservation Authorities Act legislative, regulatory and policy framework:

1. Strengthening oversight and accountability in decision-making;
2. Increasing clarity and consistency in roles and responsibilities, processes, and requirements;
3. Improving collaboration and engagement among all parties involved in resource management.
4. Modernizing funding mechanisms to support conservation authority operations.
5. Enhancing flexibility for the province to update the

Conservation Authorities Act framework in the future.

When establishing these priorities, the province notes "...In many instances, conservation authorities have already taken steps to help meet these expectations by voluntarily incorporating best management practices into their operations and working together to share and coordinate resources and expertise. In fact, several of the proposed actions contained within this consultation document are explicitly intended to integrate and build upon these best management practices formally." In the NPCA's initial comments, there are examples where the NPCA have already incorporated best management practices.

The objective of the second consultation document is to obtain feedback on the Ministry's priorities for updating the Conservation Authorities Act legislative, regulatory and policy framework and the actions being considered by the Ministry in support of these priorities.

NPCA staff have engaged in the following activities related to this review:

- Consultation with NPCA's Community Liaison Advisory Committee;
- Consultation with the Niagara Area Planners Group;
- Participated at the provincial multistakeholder meetings;
- Participated in the discussions with Conservation Ontario and the 36 conservation authorities;
- Provided a formal NPCA Board of Director's response (prior to the September 9, 2016 deadline).





# OUR LAND

As part of the site resource inventory being completed at the **New Wainfleet Conservation Area**, plants and reptiles are being assessed. To date, the spring ephemeral plant inventory is complete, while the reptile survey continued through September. When completed this information will assist in providing baseline information for site management and site use decisions. The work is being completed by the staff Ecologist with the assistance of volunteers. The 2016 results to be completed in November. Staff met with the adjacent development to coordinate restoration work for the required Fowler's Toad Habitat Enhancement Area on the two properties. An estimate of the site restoration costs for the required 10 years (2017-2027) was provided to the adjacent landowner for further discussion.

The NPCA, in partnership with the Township of Wainfleet, is in the process of developing a **Master Plan** to guide the future development and management of certain NPCA owned and managed properties in the Township, including: Long Beach Conservation Area, Morgan's Point Conservation Area, Wainfleet Wetlands, and the recently acquired former Easter Seals property. NPCA Staff and the consultants retained to assist in preparing the Master Plan are soliciting feedback via online survey to help guide the process.

The NPCA was successful in obtaining a \$25,000 grant from the Ministry of Natural Resource and Forestry's 'Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure' (WECI) program in order to undertake an overall 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 is scheduled to be completed by March 2017.

Two fire events were discovered and extinguished at **Wainfleet Bog Conservation Area** over the summer. The Conservation Area was closed to the public on June 30 due to the high-risk of fire. On July 5, a substantial fire was discovered and later confirmed to be 6.4 hectares. Firefighters from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry arrived within 18 hours of discovery and began to extinguish the fire. A second fire was discovered on Aug 14 and was extinguished within a few hours by the Wainfleet Fire Department. NPCA staff regularly patrolled the Conservation Area throughout the summer months, and continue to monitor lightning strikes within the Bog.





# MILESTONE

The NPCA Board of Directors honoured their longest tenured member at the September meeting. Dominic 'Mickey' Difruscio in celebration of his 90th birthday. Secondly, Mr. Difruscio has also represented the City of Thorold for 23 years at the NPCA Board.



# THE NUMBERS

by the quarter

**\$12,711,912** 2016 Gross Approved  
Budget

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Total Expenditure to  
Date **\$8,476,264**

**239**

Planning Act  
Applications (YTD)

**250**

Building Permit  
Reviews (YTD)

**145**

NPCA Permits  
(YTD)

**263** Hunting Permits  
Issued

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**221** Site Visits by Watershed  
Ecological Technicians





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