

Vol. 5: Oct-Dec 2016

QUARTERLY REPORT Q4 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.

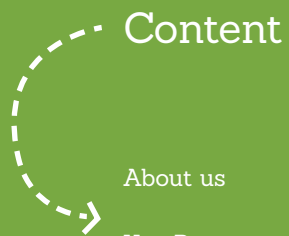
VISION

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.



Peter Graham, MBA, P.Eng
Acting 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 has examined the submissions regarding the **NPCA Policy Review** - Living Landscape Discussion Paper. Based on the feedback received from the general public, NPCA staff, Area Planners, and a broad range of stakeholders, Dillon Consulting is preparing the draft NPCA policy document. Dillon is also preparing for the enhanced public consultation process recommended by the Board at the September 2016 meeting.

Following two rounds of extensive public consultation MMM Consulting Group is now working on the development of the floodplain model as part of the **Welland River Floodplain Mapping** Study. The hydrology component of the model is complete, and the results of this stage of the modeling process have been presented to the Watershed Floodplain Committee on October 12.

The **Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival** attracted over 22,000 guests with an additional 7,000-10,000 children over the course of the four-day event. In total 175 vendors participated in the event which included two breweries and one winery, 10 Farmer's Market Vendors, 17 concession vendors, and 145 Artisan vendors.

We are happy to report that we met our waste reduction goal and diverted over 95% of the waste generated at the event. 4082kg of garbage was generated in 2015, in comparison, just 297kg at this year's event. This represents a 1300% improvement over last year. Of course, the credit for this extraordinary achievement goes to the **Eco-Defenders** group. This team sorted each and every piece of garbage at this event with a team of volunteers. As a result of their efforts, 5214kg of organics were saved from the landfill. Further improvement can be made by ensuring vendors use bio-based materials that can be composted.



RESEARCH

Staff continue to monitor daily water levels at our 15 stream gauge stations, climatic data at our 15 climate stations, and undertake routine maintenance, calibration, and inspections at all 30 installations, as part of the NPCA's usual **Flood Forecasting and Warning** duties. The public may access this real-time water level and rainfall information through the NPCA's website.

As part of this program's approved 2016 capital projects, NPCA staff have installed a **new stream gauge station** on 20 Mile Creek in the City of Hamilton (at Woodburn Road) to provide advanced flood warning for the community of Smithville in West Lincoln. The new station is operational, and the water levels are displayed on the NPCA website.

The NPCA was successful in obtaining a \$60,000 grant from the federal government's 'National Disaster Mitigation Program' in order to update old 1989 **floodplain mapping** on watercourses in the Town of Lincoln (Bartlett Creek, Beamsville Creek, Prudhommes Creek) and the Town of Grimsby (Lake Ontario Tributaries #29, 31, 32, 39, 44 and 44a). This grant will fund 50% of the anticipated \$120,000 cost of the project. The project is anticipated to begin in April 2017 and is scheduled to be completed by March 2018. The staff are in the process of compiling an RFP to issue to qualified engineering firms.



COMMUNITY

Volunteers assisted NPCA staff in planting two pollinator gardens, one at **St. John's Valley Centre** and one at Smith-Ness Forest Conservation Area. The St. John's planting was in partnership with the Niagara Catholic District School Board and Brock University. These plantings are generously funded by the Government of Ontario's Community Environment Fund. Signs will be erected at all three sites this Fall.

The **Glanbrook Conservation Committee** has been busy at Binbrook Conservation Area over the month of September. Volunteers planted 20 14-foot Sugar Maple trees in the Tyneside Trail parking lot and the main park area. The trees were donated by Braun Nurseries. Volunteers also removed garbage, worked on shoreline stabilization, and trail maintenance for a total of 40 hours.

On Saturday, October 22, over 25 volunteers assisted in seeding a wild turkey habitat area at the **Binbrook Conservation Area**. The initiative was spearheaded and sponsored by The Canadian Wild Turkey Federation, Mount Hope Chapter. Approximately 0.4 hectares was seeded by volunteers including tall grass and forbs. This seeding will increase the diversity of species and vegetative communities at the site for improved environmental health.

The 2016 **Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival** was a tremendous success and a great deal of that is owed to the large number of volunteers that helped make this possible. There was a total of 264 volunteers at the Festival, and they contributed over 2400 hours. Volunteers helped with vendor relief, heritage tours and demonstrations, flour sales, recycling, and Festival preparation.

Three classes participated in **education programs** in the month of September at Ball's Falls. In total 97 students participated, generating \$644.25 in revenue. A new curriculum was developed this year, "Fall Harvest", targeting grade three students and supporting teachers that teach their pioneer or early settler unit in the fall. Students were able to visit the Grist Mill and see how wheat is ground into flour. They also visited the blacksmith shop and assisted in making tools. Students visited the cabin and fruit drying shed to dry apples over the fire and save pumpkin seeds for spring planting. We received excellent feedback from teachers that attended this program. They loved that the students were able to have a hands-on experience on all the required jobs before winter.



OUR LAND

Construction of the new splash pad area at **Binbrook Conservation Area** has now commenced. All existing concrete has been removed, and many of the new features have arrived on site. Upon receipt of the electrical demands of the new splash pad, quotations are now being received to address the increased electrical demand for this site.

The work of the Niagara Region Wind Corporation has been completed on the **Gord Harry Trail Conservation Area** section west of Etling Road in the Town of Wainfleet. The NPCA staff Ecologist has reviewed the vegetation assessment of the project, comparing 2015 to 2016. The trail was widened with vegetation removal on the south side of the trail. Other areas of vegetation removal include a bypass station area, entrance to the Wind Turbine 23, and the turning corner (Etling and Gord Harry Trail juncture). These areas are restored with a hydroseed mix of native grasses and wildflowers. It will replace the removed vegetation of Canada goldenrod, wild grape, and non-native White Sweet Clover, and Queen Anne's lace and the regrowth of non-native Charlock Mustard (*Brassica kaber*). Staghorn Sumac, Poplar, several smaller dbh (diameter at breast height) trees and willow shrubs were removed in these disturbed areas with replacement to be determined later.

The ecological reptile study has been completed for 2015 at **St. Johns Annex and Lathrop Conservation Area**. The survey was completed by the staff Ecologist with summer students and area volunteers. The results for snakes at the site (using cover boards and transect) revealed common garter snakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), Dekay's brown snake (*Storeria dekayi*), Eastern Milksnake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*) using the site. The hot summer with varying weather conditions has possible limitations on the species identification results. Surveys for skinks using cover boards and transects resulted in no findings. Given the hot relatively uniform conditions and the elusiveness of these species, two more years of surveys will be conducted to determine the possible presence/absence of this species at the site.

These surveys are two of some species surveys to assess the overall ecological community of the site including, birds, bats, small mammals studies, large mammals, amphibians, plants, etc. being completed at the site to determine the baseline resource information on which site management decisions can come.



OUR LAND

Restoration of the meadow is complete at **Smith Ness Conservation Area**. Four sections were prepared, tilled and seeded with tall grass prairies species of grasses, sedges, and wildflowers. This assists in providing potential habitat (otherwise limited) for some rarer bird species (i.e. bobolinks or Eastern Meadowlark) and well as, habitat needs for other species such as butterflies, a variety of common birds, amphibians, insects, small mammals, etc. Overall the meadow and tall grass area contribute to a greater representation of this vegetative community on our Conservation Areas, resulting in wildlife habitat for rare species and support for species of the larger ecosystem cycle.

The ecological reptile study has been completed for 2015 at the new **Wainfleet Acquisition Conservation Area**. The survey was completed by the staff Ecologist with summer students and area volunteers. The results for snakes revealed garter snakes on the site. Surveys for skinks using resulted in no findings. Given the hot relatively uniform conditions and the elusiveness of these species, two more years of surveys will be conducted to determine the possible presence/absence at the site. As well, turtle surveys were completed using basking surveys, and none were observed. These surveys are two of a number of species surveys to assess the overall

ecological community including, birds, bats, small mammals studies, large mammals, amphibians, plants, etc. being completed to determine the baseline resource information on which site management decisions can be made.

The archaeological study for **Rockway Conservation Area** is complete as of December 31, 2016. The final report by Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. will include historical research, archaeological site assessment (via a Test Pit and document archaeological resources), and structure condition evaluation and a Strategic Conservation Plan. This will assist NPCA staff in furthering the historical restoration work at the site including conservation of any significant historic features, and development and implementation of appropriate signage and educational messaging/programs related to the site's history.

THE NUMBERS

YEAR TO DATE

\$12,711,912 2016 Gross Approved
Budget

Total Expenditure as of
Nov 2016* \$10,229,494

289

Planning Act
Applications (YTD)

300

Building Permit
Reviews (YTD)

188

NPCA Permits
(YTD)

389 Hunting Permits Issued

Site Visits by Watershed
Ecological Technicians 294

87 Voluntary Restoration
Plans Implemented

* Year-End available at completion of
2016 Audited Financial Statements





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