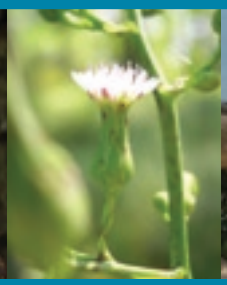
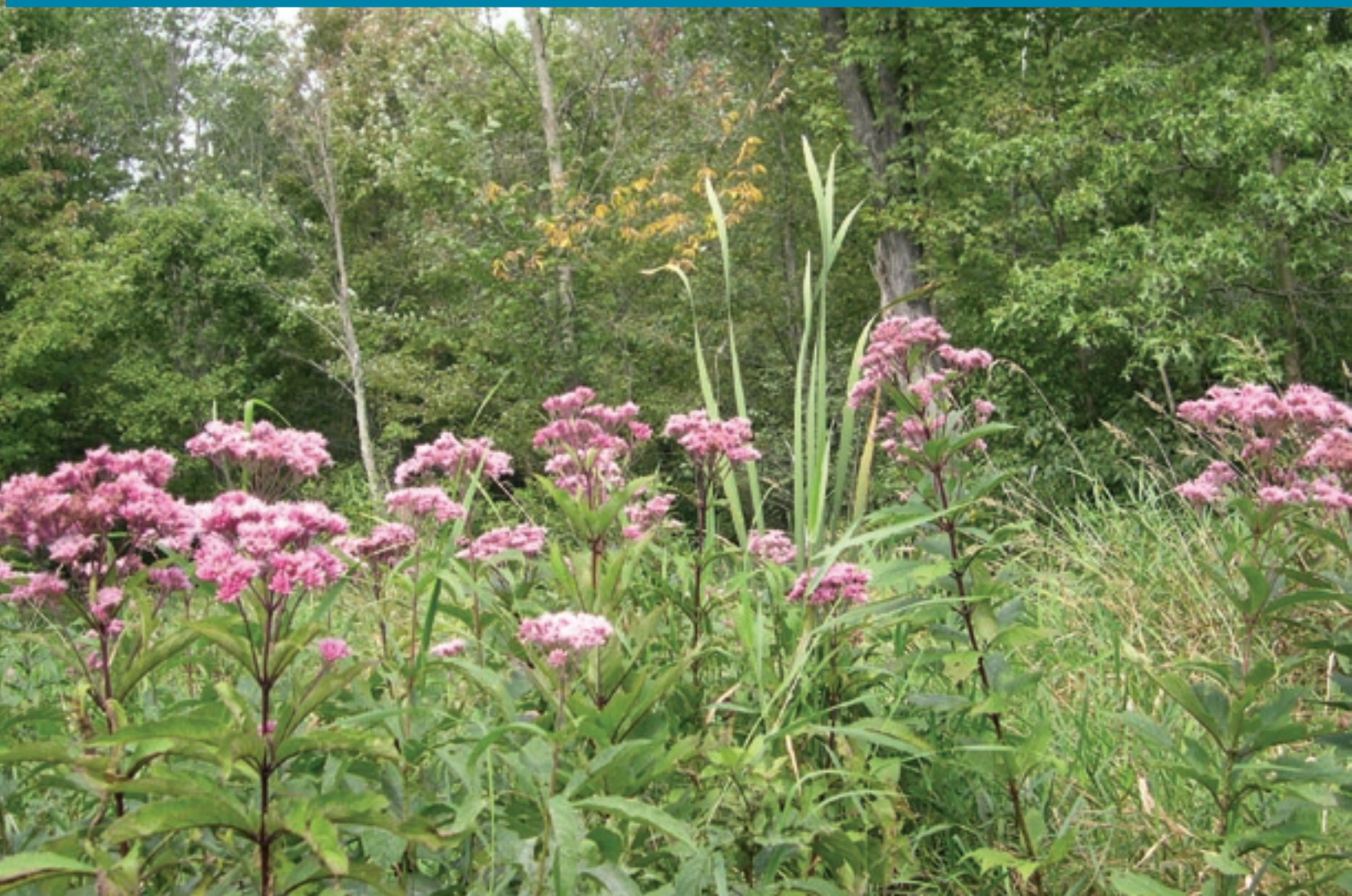
NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

"Do not wait for extraordinary circumstances to do good action; try to use ordinary situations." — JEAN PAUL RICHTER





MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

It is my pleasure to share some highlights of the Conservation Authority's activities during 2007.

With conservation issues so prevalent, the Authority has many opportunities to provide leadership in the wise use of our natural resources. We work with our watershed municipalities and landowners to deliver important programs that contribute to the health and well being of the environment. Our water and land management programs strive to incorporate an integrated and cost effective approach to managing our vital watershed resources while balancing the infrastructure and economic needs of the community to ensure financial viability.

As environmental stewards to our land and water, the Authority's restoration program plays an important role in addressing watershed issues. Staff continues to work with landowners, community groups and our watershed municipalities to achieve our goals, including increased forest cover, riparian buffers, and restoring/establishing natural corridors for wildlife habitat. We are pleased that Ontario Power Generation partnered with the Conservation Authority by providing significant funding for a number of initiatives planned within the Welland River watershed.

Our watershed monitoring program continues to aid the Authority in assessing and understanding the conditions and changes in the environmental health of the watershed. Data collected through these activities will assist in developing future watershed management plans and chart the appropriate course of action.

The Authority has been implementing capital improvement projects at a number of conservation areas for the comfort and safety of our visitors and I'm pleased to note that these improvements are paying off. Several of new events were initiated, contributing to a notable increase in visitation to the conservation areas.

As I conclude, it is with mixed emotions that I announce my retirement. I've had the privilege of serving as the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority for 24 years. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the board, staff, residents and watershed partners for their support and ongoing efforts. We have been through many challenges and accomplished so much together. I'm confident that the NPCA will continue to make an important contribution to the well being of our watershed communities and the residents that we serve.

All the best!

Andy Burt,
General Manager

CORPORATE SERVICES

Established in 1959, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority serves approximately 500,000 people and covers an area of 2,424 square kilometers encompassing the entire Niagara Region, 21% of the City of Hamilton and 25% of Haldimand County. Programs focus on environmental protection and preservation and our watershed management activities include planning, regulations, water quality monitoring and improvement through stewardship and restoration, community outreach, and conservation through land acquisition and public ownership. The activities of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority are governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 15 members appointed by the member municipalities. These Directors are committed to serving the local rural and urban communities on behalf of the watershed municipalities and contribute their leadership and expertise in decisions that determine the policies and programs of the Authority.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS SERVED ON THE BOARD IN 2007

REGION OF NIAGARA

Chairman; Douglas Ransom
Town of Lincoln

Vice-Chairman; Brian Baty
Town of Pelham

Bob Bentley
Town of Grimsby

Gary Burroughs
Town of N.O.T.L.

Barbara Butters
City of Port Colborne

Damian Goulbourne
City of Welland

Mickey DiFruscio
City of Thorold

Barbara Greenwood
City of Niagara Falls

Brian Heit
City of St. Catharines

Norm Johnson
Township of West Lincoln

Barbara Henderson
Township of Wainfleet

Doug Martin*
& Bob Steckley**,
Town of Fort Erie

HALDIMAND COUNTY
Tony Dalimonte

CITY OF HAMILTON
Andy Fevez,
Carmen D'Angelo

* January to September, 2007
**October to December, 2007

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

In 1959, a number of dedicated people moved forward to establish the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority to ensure that our natural resources were protected so future generations would inherit a healthy watershed. The vision of these members has flourished over the years and today all of us as watershed residents are reaping the benefits.

I am delighted to have served as Chairman of the Conservation Authority in 2007. We welcomed 10 new members to the Board. Together, we have had the opportunity to learn about many of the Authority's programs and experienced the benefits of what we do.

With its numerous and unique resources, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has jurisdiction over one of the most complex watersheds in the Province. Nestled between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario and transversed by the Niagara Escarpment, the NPCA implements and manages numerous stewardship programs which have a significant impact on the health of the watershed and the high quality of life that we enjoy. This quality of life contributes to a thriving economy and sustainable communities and the NPCA recognizes that protecting our natural green space is an important factor in this. Our numerous Conservation Areas contribute to the protection of the watershed's natural and cultural features while providing recreational/financial benefits to our residents, businesses and visitors.

Working with our partners, the board and staff truly believe that we need to make a difference by making wise environmental choices in our daily lives. I encourage you to get involved in whatever way you can by implementing stewardship activities such as planting trees, incorporating native species into your landscape, eliminating the use of fertilizers and pesticides, conserving water and engaging in community environmental projects. As a watershed resident, you can help us ensure that our water and land resources continue to remain as healthy as possible.

As we move ahead, we look forward to the beneficial results of our collective efforts.

Douglas Ransom
Chairman

WATER MANAGEMENT

Tony D'Amario, Director, Water Management

"OUR CHOICES AT ALL LEVELS, INDIVIDUAL, COMMUNITY, CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENT AFFECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. AND THEY AFFECT US."
DAVID SUZUKI

The Watershed Management program makes up approximately 40% of the Authority's operations and is comprised of a number of activites.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2007 WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM:

BINBROOK DAM EMERGENCY SPILLWAY

In order to meet current Ontario Dam Safety Guidelines, the Authority commissioned the re-design of the existing Binbrook Dam emergency spillway, with funding from the Ministry of Natural Resources, Water Erosion Control Infrastructure Program. Construction was started in late 2007 and will be completed in the spring of 2008.

FLOODPLAIN MAPPING

In 2007, the Authority commissioned and undertook the generation of floodplain mapping for 20 Mile Creek from Hamilton to Lincoln, 15 and 16 Mile Creeks in Lincoln, 2, 4, 6, and 8 Mile Creeks in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Kraft Drain, Black, Beaver, Miller and Six Mile Creeks in Fort Erie.

FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING

In 2007 the Authority issued 5 Watercourse Safety Bulletins advising the public of high water conditions due to snow melts and heavy rainfalls. The Authority finalized a new flood prediction computer model for the Welland River to improve the speed and accuracy of the Flood Forecasting & Warning capabilities.

NPCA REGULATIONS AND VIOLATIONS 155/06

The Authority issued 78 permits under O. Reg. 155/06. Previously the most permits approvals issued in one year were 44 (2006). While the vast majority of regulation violations are resolved out of court, the NPCA obtained convictions against 2 landowners in 2007. Other charges and violations are pending before the courts.

PLANNING PROGRAM

The Authority experienced a significant increase in applications. In 2007 staff reviewed 20 Subdivision Applications, 4 Secondary Plans, 14 Site Plans, 20 Zoning Bylaws, 11 Official Plans, 54 Consents, 42 Minor Variances, 33 Niagara Escarpment applications, 186 Municipal Building Permit Reviews and the Fort Erie Official Plan. In June, the Authority Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding developed as part of the consolidation of the Region's Planning Review function.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

The Clean Water Act was proclaimed in July 2007. In September the Province appointed Mr. Mark Neufeld as the Chair of the Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Committee. The 9 member Source Protection Committee was formed in November 2007 and held its first meeting in December. The committee will work towards its mandate of completing a Source Protection Plan for the area over the next 3 to 5 years.

WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

The Water Quality program completed its 5th year of surface water quality data collection. This is an important component of the Water Management program, and is the most extensive stream monitoring network covering the Niagara Peninsula. Sampling was undertaken at 60 sites, including 20 sites for benthic sampling. In 2007 additional monitoring sites were added on Lake Erie and the upper 12 Mile Creek.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Authority was pleased to produce a **Native Plant Guide** to promote the benefits of gardening with native plants. A number of public workshops were held to garner awareness of this resource and encourage landowners to incorporate native plants as part of their landscape. The **Yellow Fish Road** program which was initiated in 2006 was continued with the support of all the watershed municipalities. The **Eco School** program was successful in its second year with 29 schools participating. Through this program students benefitted from learning by doing; giving them an awareness and a new respect for the environment. In 2007, a Public Day was added as part of the **Niagara Children's Water Festival**. The event took place at Ball's Falls Conservation Area on Sunday, September 16 and an estimated 4,000 people were in attendance. Over 5,000 grades 3 and 4 students attended the 5th annual Water Festival which is a partnership of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, the Region of Niagara, City of St. Catharines and Ontario Power Generation.

WATERSHED RESTORATION

The Authority's Watershed Restoration program is "where the rubber hits the road" The program is important to the long term improvement of our natural resources and water quality. In 2007, the Authority in partnership with landowners and other partners invested over $1.5 million towards restoration projects. These include: 11 manure storages; 2 milk-house washwater treatment systems; 2 trickle irrigation projects with a water savings of approximately 8,500,000 gallons; 82 acres planted with native trees and shrubs; 1 Butterfly Meadow project; 8+ acres of restored wetlands; 2 grassed waterways; over 1.5 km of riparian restoration; 400 meters of windbreak planting; 800 meters of hedgerow planting; 2 stream fencing projects totaling 1 km of stream; 2 streambank erosion control projects; 1 gully erosion control project; 1 nutrient reduction stream restoration projects and 2 constructed wetland projects (filtering tile and overland drainage). The Authority, with special funding assistance from Ontario Power Generation, continued significant restoration work on the Welland River watershed. A major project undertaken was the E.C. Brown Constructed Wetland, a property purchased from a local farmer. Historically, the property retains water for extended periods due to the low-lying, heavy clay nature of the soil and is prone to extensive flooding. The land was identified by the Authority as a priority area for restoration to its historic wetland potential. The project has made a significant contribution to achieving the goals outlined in the Conservation Authority's Welland River Strategy by increasing wetland coverage in the Welland River by 21 acres. This is an important accomplishment as very few wetland areas exist along the main channel of the river.

NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS INVENTORY

In 2007 over 300 sites were assessed as part of this project. Numerous samples of rare species and species at risk were found.

LAND MANAGEMENT

Darcy Baker, Director, Land Management

"IT IS GOOD TO REALIZE THAT IF LOVE AND PEACE CAN PREVAIL ON EARTH, AND IF WE CAN TEACH OUR CHILDREN TO HONOUR NATURE'S GIFTS, THE JOYS AND BEAUTIES OF THE OUTDOORS WILL BE HERE FOREVER." JIMMY CARTER

The Land Management program is a vital component of the Authority's operations. The land holdings contribute significantly to the health and well being of the watershed and provide an abundance of recreational activities and economic benefits.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2007 LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM:

BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

Hawk Migration inventory continued this year in conjunction with the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. On April 6th, the Authority unveiled a commemorative plaque by Carolinian Canada Coalition designating the Conservation Area as a signature site.

BINBROOK CONSERVATION AREA

The Glanbrook Conservation Committee provided assistance with projects at Binbrook C.A. including various fishing derbies and ongoing maintenance work. Capital improvement amenities were completed including a new children's fishing dock, splash pad, gatehouse and workshop.

BALL'S FALLS CONSERVATION AREA

The construction of the Centre for Conservation continued relatively smoothly although some delays were experienced. New programming initiatives including the addition of new workshops, special events and other education programs were well attended and received. A number of capital improvements on the heritage buildings were completed.

CHIPPAWA CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

The warm dry summer contributed to a successful camping season, but did have an impact on the water system. Staff trucked in municipally treated water to ensure that a good supply of safe water was always available. Increased site activity and vegetative buffers have helped resolve problems in keeping Canada Geese population down around Dils Lake.

GORD HARRY CONSERVATION TRAIL

On April 19, the former Wainfleet Rail Trail was re-named the Gord Harry Conservation Trail in recognition of former Chairman Gord Harry. A ribbon cutting ceremony was attended by over 300 people. The trail is well used by bicyclers, hikers and equestrians.

LONG BEACH CONSERVATION AREA

Long Beach enjoyed a strong campground attendance in spite of the numerous beach postings. The hot dry summer had an impact on the water treatment plant, but staff took all the necessary precautions and were able to ensure a safe water supply at all times.

MORGAN'S POINT CONSERVATION AREA

The Ontario Trillium Foundation compiled a documentary and included the restoration project at Morgan's Point in the production. In addition, the OTF recognized the Wainfleet Lions Club and the Conservation Authority with a "Great Grants Award" for the restoration work at Morgan's Point. Lion's International magazine also featured a story on the partnership efforts that helped to bring this project to fruition. The conservation area continues to be well used by residents and visitors and members of the Lion's Club continue to assist the Authority with ongoing maintenance.

MUD LAKE CONSERVATION AREA

Wetland Restoration efforts continued and monitoring shows an increase in habitat diversity. Birds such as Great Blue Heron and Common Egret have been observed using this site. Monitoring of water levels and changing habitat continues to assess the effectiveness of management activities.

ST. JOHNS CONSERVATION AREA

The Authority continues to stock the pond with Rainbow Trout and despite inclement weather, over 200 avid anglers attended the opening day of Trout Fishing season April 28th .

WAINFLEET BOG CONSERVATION AREA

Restoration of the bog wetland is progressing at the site. Monitoring indicate an increase of several bog plant species including sphagnum moss. This is a result of moister soils, slower water loss, and groundwater levels being closer to the surface. In July 2007 an abandoned gas well was also plugged to prevent the potential for affecting groundwater quality. The most environmentally friendly and timing techniques were used.

WAINFLEET WETLANDS CONSERVATION AREA

The monitoring program showed an increase in the variety of plants and animal inhabiting the site. The information will be used to track the progress of ecosystem restoration on this property.

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

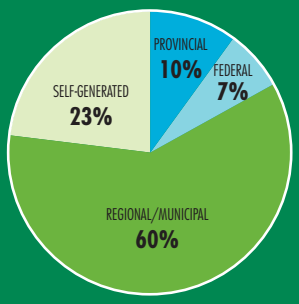
Terry McDougall, Executive Director

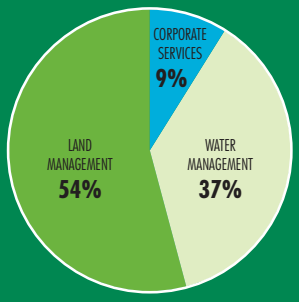
The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation is a registered charity founded in 1969. Led by a volunteer Board of Directors, the Foundation raises funds to support the projects undertaken by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

2007 FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS:

- Continued to raise funds for the Centre for Conservation at Ball's Falls, with more than $300,000 raised to date
- Annual raffle at the Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival and the wine/coffee garden in partnership with Harbour Estates Winery & Starbucks Coffee Canada
- Annual Bob Welch Memorial Charity Golf Classic assisting with the funding for the Natural Heritage Areas Inventory
- Supporting the construction of a wetland demonstration site adjacent to E.C. Brown Conservation Area
- Annual Elimination Draw & Dinner
- Sale of Break-Open Nevada tickets throughout the watershed
- Awarded 4 bursaries, in conjunction with the Fort Erie Conservation Women's' Auxiliary, to support students pursuing conservation-related studies

FINANCIAL INFORMATION





REVENUES

Provincial	$1,014,426	10%
Federal	$691,312	7%
Regional/Municipal	$6,299,409	60%
Self-Generated	$2,388,413	23%
TOTAL	$10,393,560	100%

EXPENDITURES

Corporate Services	$1,046,266	9%
Water Management	$4,156,118	37%
Land Management	$5,968,450	54%
TOTAL	$11,170,834	100%

For further information or to obtain a copy of the Audited Financial Statements please contact Mary Stack, Director of Communications.

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

250 Thorold Road West, 3rd Floor, Welland, Ontario L3C 3W2
p. 905.788.3135 | f. 905.788.1121| www.conservation-niagara.on.ca