STUDY NATURE, LOVE NATURE, STAY CLOSE TO NATURE. IT WILL NEVER FAIL YOU.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

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. 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.

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 Niagara on the Lake

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

Barbara Henderson, Township of Wainfleet

Norm Johnson, Township of West Lincoln

Bob Steckley, Town of Fort Erie

HALDIMAND COUNTY

Tony Dalimonte

CITY OF HAMILTON

Carmen D'Angelo

Andy Fevez

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

"TO LIVE A PURE UNSELFISH LIFE, ONE MUST COUNT NOTHING AS ONE'S OWN IN THE MIDST OF ABUNDANCE." BUDDHA

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 projects undertaken by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

2008 FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS

- Continued to raise funds for the Centre for Conservation at Ball's Falls.
- Annual raffle at the Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival.
- Annual Bob Welch Memorial Charity Golf Classic.
- 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.

NPCF
NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/ SECRETARY-TREASURER

Since taking on the role of CAO/Secretary-Treasurer in May, 2008, I have had the pleasure of working with many gifted people to help further the conservation cause. The work that we carry out through our various programs has an impact on the health and well being of the environment and the citizens who reside in our watershed. We work diligently to ensure that we deliver these programs in a cost effective way while balancing the needs of the community.

It is my pleasure to share some highlights of the Conservation Authority's activities during the past year. We were excited to open the Centre for Conservation at Ball's Falls on May 9th, 2008. This award winning building was designed to have a limited impact on natural resources. The Authority is being recognized extensively for its innovation in bringing this project to fruition. The site allows the Authority to offer visitors an opportunity to learn about the area's rich history through the interactive exhibits as well as a temporary gallery.

Another significant project was the construction of the E.C. Brown Wetland which was completed with a financial investment from Ontario Power Generation. The project was a collaborative effort of the Land and Water Departments. Located along the Welland River, the project was initiated in 2005 with the purchase of 23 acres of floodplain property. Now the site contains a 3 acre wetland and small half acre vernal pool. To date we have planted over 3 acres of trees and shrubs and 13 acres of meadow habitat was restored. The site also includes 3 kilometers of trails with interpretative signage, a floating dock, 2 observation decks and parking area. The site was officially opened on September 15th, 2008.

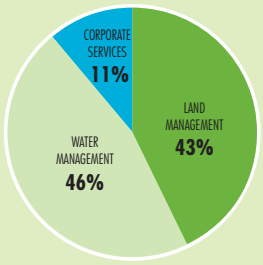
I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board, staff, residents and watershed partners for their support and ongoing efforts. We have accomplished so much together and will continue to serve our watershed residents to the best of our ability.

Tony D'Amario
CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

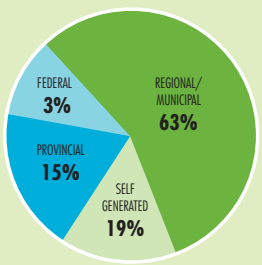
EXPENDITURES

Corporate Services	$1,213,603	11%
Water Management	$5,115,500	46%
Land Management	$4,832,008	43%
TOTAL	$11,161,111	



REVENUES

Provincial	$1,666,618	15%
Federal	$329,303	3%
Regional/Municipal	$6,981,330	63%
Self-Generated	$2,050.012	19%
TOTAL	$11,027,263	



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

WATER MANAGEMENT

"IF THERE IS MAGIC ON THIS PLANET, IT IS CONTAINED IN WATER." LORAN EISELY

The Water Management Department comprises of 5 Divisions working cooperatively to achieve corporate priorities.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2008 WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM:

WATERSHED REGULATION

- Responsible for Administration of O.Reg 155/06, Flood Control Structures, Flow Monitoring, Floodplain Mapping and Capital flood or erosion control projects.
- Reviewed 58 permit applications for works affecting wetlands, valley lands and waterways pursuant to Ontario Regulation 155/06.
- Investigated 100 complaints related to the regulation, resulting in three restoration convictions with trials pending for three others.
- The NPCA is under agreement with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to review near water to determine whether the work is likely to result in harm to fish habitat (HADD). Staff reviewed & provided advice on 74 proposals including 30 Municipal Drain Projects.
- Issued 5 Flood Safety Bulletins which warned the public of high water conditions due to snow melts and heavy rainfalls.
- Completed floodplain mapping for Hunter's Drain in Niagara Falls, Spring Garden Creek in St. Catharines and 12 individual locations in support of Planning & Enforcement activities.
- Constructed 2 large wetlands at Shriner's Creek upstream of the Flood Control Dam.
- To meet current Ontario Dam Safety Guidelines the re-design of the existing emergency spillway at the Binbrook Reservoir Dam was commissioned. Construction was completed in the spring.

WATERSHED PLANNING

Responsible for Plan Review under the Regional MOU, Watershed Plan Preparation and the Natural Areas Inventory Project.

"IF IT IS GREEN OR WET, IT COMES TO NPCA".

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Region, the local municipalities and the NPCA was fully implemented. The MOU clarified roles and responsibilities and formalized a process of pre consultation. It also provides a greater role for the NPCA in the review of natural heritage and natural hazard issues.
- Completed Watershed Plans for 15, 16, 18 Mile Creeks and South Niagara Falls. Restoration and implementation will proceed in 2009.
- Lake Erie North Shore Watershed Plan and Central Welland River Watershed Plan - 2008 was year 2 of the 3 year study phase for both of these plans.
- Natural Areas Inventory: This was the 3rd year for this project. Staff completed the field collection of natural vegetation data level to Ecological Land Classification (ELC) standards as well as, Ontario Wetland Evaluation System (OWES) protocols. When completed the project will provide the NPCA with up-to-date data bases and mapping of natural areas, that is scientifically defensible. The project is a cooperative effort supported by government, landowners, local NGO's, nature clubs and volunteers.
- Lyons Creek East Fluvial Geomorphology Study: An in-depth study was initiated on Lyons Creek East in order to address residents' concerns regarding lack of flow in the watercourse.

WATERSHED RESTORATION

Responsible for implementing capital restoration projects identified in NPCA's Watershed Plans as well as Environmental Awareness and RAP initiatives. Completed 81 watershed restoration projects:

- Niagara River Area of Concern (AOC) /Welland River: 30 projects were completed including 14 woodland habitat enhancements, 5 wetland, 6 riparian and 5 BMP's.
- Fort Erie's Creeks: 2 projects were completed including a riparian project along the Niagara River and a livestock restriction project.
- Twenty Mile Creek: 10 projects were completed including 4 woodland habitat enhancements, 2 riparian, 1 livestock restriction, 1 shelterbelt and 2 BMP's.
- Twelve Mile Creek: 12 projects were completed including 5 woodland habitat, 2 riparian, 2 wetland, and 3 BMP's.
- Niagara-on-the-Lake Creeks: 10 projects were completed including 1 woodland habitat, 6 riparian buffers, 2 nutrient management and 1 BMP (grape pumice composter).
- General Restoration: 24 projects were completed including 6 woodland habitat, 4 wetland, 3 riparian, 2 shelterbelt, and 9 BMP's.
- Yellow Fish Road: Approximately 220 children participated in 5 municipalities and 309 storm drains were painted.
- ECO School Program: This year 29 schools in 12 municipalities participated.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION DIVISION

Responsible for implementing the Provincial source water protection initiatives and the NPCA's core water quality monitoring program and related special project initiatives. The following major initiatives were completed in 2008:

- Terms of Reference (TOR) which will guide the next two years of hazard identification and mitigation work.
- Tier One Water Budget was started to help forecast long term water trends and needs in the basin.
- Intake Protection Zones (IPZ) were developed for the 6 water treatment plant intakes in Niagara based on dynamic lake/flow models. Surface Water Vulnerability reports were also completed which will form the basis for upcoming Threats Inventory, Issues Evaluation and Risk Assessment Analysis.
- 12 Source Protection Committee meetings and 3 public meetings were held in 2008.
- Surface Water Quality Sampling & Testing at 65 stations throughout the watershed for nutrients, metals, bacteria, and sediment 8 times per year for a total of 520 samples.
- Groundwater Analyses & Testing at 15 PGMN Stations. Water is tested for nutrients, metals and bacteria in spring and fall for a total of 90 analyses. Hourly groundwater levels are also recorded.
- Collected Biological (BioMAP) Assessment Sampling from 30 Water Quality Stations as opposed to more typical chemical parameter testing. This sampling identifies the ecological health of the watercourse.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS SERVICES

Responsible for providing technical expertise on data base management and mapping, as well as related advanced technical tasks in support of the other divisions.

- Creation of corporate standardized 1:2000 scale Digital Elevation Model and Mapping for NPCA jurisdictions.
- Technical support for IPZ studies, including compilation of initial Drinking Water Threats Inventory.
- Capture of 1:2000 scale Ecological Land Classification Mapping for entire jurisdiction.
- Develop base mapping for floodplain hydrologic and hydraulic modelling/analyses.
- Maintenance of Restoration Database.
- Partnership with Ducks Unlimited to identify wetland restoration opportunities.

REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN (RAP)

Responsible for implementing and coordinating the joint federal-provincial program aimed at improving Great Lakes Water Quality. Activities focused on:

- Lyon's Creek Contaminated Sediments Study: The Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments were completed in the spring. A public open house was held to present and discuss the recommended sediment management strategy of Monitored Natural Recovery.
- Stage 2 RAP Update: The draft update report was completed and is currently under review by partners and implementers.
- International Liaison: Collaborated with cross border government and NGO's to develop delisting criteria for the U.S. Niagara River and the Buffalo River Areas of Concern.

LAND MANAGEMENT

"CONSERVATION IS A STATE OF HARMONY BETWEEN MEN AND LAND." ALDO LEOPOLD

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 2008 LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- Ice Fishing Derby and other fishing programs were held at Binbrook.
- Undertook several Fish habitat projects.
- Received MNR approval for Walleye stocking at Binbrook – stocked 500 Walleye in 2008.
- 34th annual Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival was highly successful. The beautiful weather contributed to drawing huge crowds to this premiere event.
- Implemented Regional Tree By-law agreement.
- Attendance at Ontario Municipal Board Hearing for Reeb Quarry application.
- The Season Pass was re-developed as a Membership Pass with great success.
- Annual Beamer Memorial Hawkwatch was held in March in conjunction with the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Association and other community partners.
- Numerous outreach programs implemented at Ball's Falls including March Break Eco-Adventures Camp.
- Early results of Gypsy Moth eggmass counts indicate high populations in Haldimand Properties (Ruigrok and Hedley).
- Opened the Centre for Conservation on May 9th at Ball's Falls. The Centre allows travelling exhibits and expanded public programming... Blacksmithing, Herb workshops, Wildlife Workshops, Native Awareness Program. There was significant Media coverage including European Travel Magazine, Sustainable Architecture and Building Magazine, LCBO Food and Drink Magazine, Frommers Guide, AAA Travel, several freelance writers.
- Participated actively in the Lincoln Communities in Bloom project.
- Gypsy Moth Spray – 2 applications.
- Russian Folk Festival at Long Beach.
- Willoughby Moss Survey resulted in identifying new populations.
- The wet summer following drought conditions of 2007 forced the shut down of our campgrounds at Long Beach and Chippawa Creek for several weeks in August.
- The Niagara Children's Water Festival was held at Ball's Falls with over 4,500 students in grades 2 – 5 attending; 500 volunteers and over 1,000 visitors to the Public Day.
- Town of Lincoln drainage improvements along 6th Avenue.
- Hosted the NEC Annual Meeting Dinner at the Centre for Conservation.
- Centre for Conservation received LEED Gold Certification in November.
- The weather cooperated in the fall allowing for a good extended season at all the conservation areas.
- Hosted Cross Country Event at Chippawa Creek.
- 105 University students tour Wainfleet Bog.
- E.C. Brown official opening.
- Hunting and Controlled Hunting at Binbrook & Mud Lake continued with great support.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am delighted to have served as Chairman of the Conservation Authority in 2008. We are so fortunate in Niagara to have a well established conservation authority, one of only 36 in the Province of Ontario. Operating under the 'Conservation Authorities Act', our authority will continue to ensure that the lands and water under our jurisdiction will be preserved and protected for many generations to come.

During 2008, Andy Burt, the Authority's General Manager of 24 years retired. Following a search for a replacement, the Board made a decision to appoint Tony D'Amario, P.Eng. as the Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer. Tony has been part of the Authority for more than 20 years and his commitment is evident through the ongoing success and growth of the Water Management programs over the years. The Board and staff will benefit from his expertise and we look forward to his continued leadership in this vital role as CAO.

As environmental stewards of our land and water, the Authority continues to focus its resources on protecting and enhancing our valuable ecosystems. One of our goals is educating the public about the value of our land and water resources. NPCA programs play an important role in dealing with watershed issues. We work with landowners, community groups and the watershed municipalities to achieve our mandate. Our staff and members attended and participated in many community events to promote the Authority's programs and activities.

Thanks go out to all our staff, Authority and Foundation members, funding partners, volunteers and our residents. We could not be successful without them.

Douglas Ransom
Chairman

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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