



NVCA 2021 Annual General Meeting Highlights January 22, 2020

Next Meeting: February 26, 2020, held virtually

For the full meeting agenda including documents and reports, visit nvca.on.ca/about/boardofdirectors

On January 22, 2021, the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) held its 61st Annual General Meeting.

NVCA Board of Directors Election

NVCA Board of Directors elected the following officers for 2021:

- Chair: Mariane McLeod, Councillor for the Town of Collingwood
- Vice-Chair: Gail Little, Councillor for the Township of Amaranth

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Dianne Saxe, former Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, delivered a keynote speech titled 'Why Wetlands Matter'.

She stressed that wetlands are precious, especially in a climate crisis. Climate change is a much more pressing issue than we think. As Ontario expands development, our wetlands are under significant threat. This is especially true for the Nottawasaga Valley Watershed, as we are designated as a high growth area.

Furthermore, wetlands provide habitat and breeding grounds for species at risk, and offer flood and drought protection.

Dr. Saxe emphasized that conservation authorities can protect our wetlands, but are limited by the lack of provincial direction, missing definitions of "interference" and "wetland" and insufficient resources.

She recommends that:

- All unevaluated wetlands are designated significant until proven otherwise
- Real protections
- Empower conservation authorities
- Wetland stewardship on private land
- Creating new wetlands to compensate negative impacts from development is truly a last resort.

Dr. Saxe has generously permitted this presentation to be shared with the public.

[Click here to watch her presentation.](#)

2020 Accomplishments

Staff created a Year in Review video celebrating the work that staff did in 2020.

[Watch the video here.](#)

- In 2020, the stewardship team rehabilitated and protected almost 31 kilometres of streams and shorelines through 29 projects, big and small. This includes removing the Petun dam and rebuilding the river it was on, restoring river and stream banks, and planting new grasslands. All the while hand washing, wearing masks and socially distanced.
- NVCA's Manager of Forestry planted his 2.5 millionth tree. Some of the trees he planted are already small forests!

- Although the pandemic reduced our abilities to monitor the health of the watershed, our staff partnered with Georgian College to develop a database to house the data that was collected. With this information, it will be more efficient for our scientists to measure the success of NVCA's programs going forward.
- Our conservation areas across the watershed welcomed 60% more visitors in 2020 compared to 2019. Our Conservation Lands Staff worked tirelessly to ensure these green space areas were well maintained. Watershed science continues to monitor the health of our ground and surface water
- This year, we received a record breaking 3,307 permit applications, again, making our watershed one of the fastest growing in Ontario. Staff continue to improve upon service delivery, most recently reaching 98% compliance to provincial standards and 92% to new Conservation Ontario standards.
- The Flood Management team continued to monitor weather forecasts and watershed conditions while maintaining and improving the system. Our flood team issued 5 flood messages in 2020.
- Through our environmental education program, we introduced the importance of our natural world to the youth in our watershed. In 2020, over 12,000 students attended our education programs. Staff also developed, due to COVID-19, online programming for students learning from home so they don't miss out on any previous opportunities they had.



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NVCA welcomes two female leaders in preparation of a challenging year

UTOPIA, Ontario (January 22, 2021) – For the second time in its 61 year history, the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) will be led by two women. In today's Annual General Meeting, Mariane McLeod, Councillor for the Town of Collingwood was elected as Chair, while Gail Little, Councillor of the Township of Amaranth was elected as Vice Chair.

Keith White, Councillor of the Township of Essa declined both nominations to be in this year's executive team. In 2020, Councillor McLeod served as NVCA's Vice Chair, while Councillor Little was on the agricultural committee. She will continue taking on this role while serving as Vice Chair.

"This is going to be a challenging year for NVCA and all 35 other Conservation Authorities," said Councillor McLeod. "I am grateful for the leadership of former Chair, Keith White and for the fine example he set during the past year. I'm certain Councillor Little will be a terrific Vice Chair and I look forward to working closely with her."

Councillor Little commented, "It's a privilege to be elected as Vice Chair of the NVCA. I have great respect for their work, and recognize the improvements that NVCA has made to the watershed. I look forward to providing any assistance to the authority while learning and growing in this role."

NVCA's Board of Directors and staff recognize that 2021 will be a challenging year, as conservation authorities adapt to the changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, along with the ongoing difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In the Nottawasaga Valley watershed, we are also facing immense growth pressures," continued McLeod. "This will pose an additional test for our staff to remain efficient and effective in the work they do, which is, of course, protecting people and property from flooding and erosion. Thank you for the confidence from the Board of Directors and I will do my best to deserve it."

About NVCA: The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is a public agency dedicated to the preservation of a healthy environment through specialized programs to protect, conserve and enhance our water, wetlands, forests and lands.

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