



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Maple syrup produced by volunteers supports many good causes

UTOPIA, Ontario (March 4, 2021) – The trees are tapped, and lines are running to welcome the first drop of sap from the sugar maples at the Tiffin Conservation Area. For more than 40 years, the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) has run a volunteer based maple syrup program to support the local community.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, hundreds of litres of Tiffin Maple Syrup was sold at the annual Spring Tonic Maple Syrup festival, a fundraiser hosted by NVCA and Rotary Club of Barrie. Although the festival is cancelled this year, NVCA is still producing the maple syrup in hopes to further support local causes.

"NVCA started its maple syrup program in the 1980s as an environmental education program for schools and families in the Nottawasaga Valley Watershed, said Byron Wesson, Director of Conservation Services at NVCA. "As the program evolved, the Spring Tonic Festival was born. Over the past decade, NVCA has been in a partnership with the Rotary Club of Barrie that sees all revenues split 50/50 with each side allocating their portion accordingly."

The share received by NVCA is invested back into the maintenance of the maple syrup operation and our conservation areas while the Rotary Club of Barrie redirects their portion to the local community.

"Every year the event size and participation has been building," said Darren Robinson, Director of the Spring Tonic Festival at the Rotary Club of Barrie. "A big part of our fundraising is driven by maple syrup sales at the event. The proceeds help the club provide donations to local charities and also allows us to take on self-directed initiatives that benefit the community as a whole. We look forward to working with the NVCA for years to come."

Volunteers who help with the maple syrup program mainly comprise of seniors and students. In a normal year, the seniors would be on the production line and students would be collecting sap buckets in the sap mobile. NVCA staff only plays a small role, including site preparation and overseeing the production process.

Tiffin Maple Syrup is available for sale online on NVCA's website or during the weekend at the Tiffin Conservation Area from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Cash is not accepted at this time.

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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Spring Safety: Be careful near waterways

Issued to: local municipalities and school boards, local conservation authorities, emergency response agencies, health unit, media, NVCA Board and staff

Date: March 5, 2021

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority reminds everyone to stay well back from waterways, ditches, ponds and lakes this time of year.

With spring-like temperatures arriving soon, unsafe ice and slippery banks already exist. The onset of spring will bring rain and melting snow, which will cause the breakup of ice along watercourses and lakes as well as high stream flows. **These hazardous conditions can cause life-threatening injury if a person falls into the extremely cold water.**

Conservation authorities across the region remind residents to keep family and pets away from the edge of streams, rivers, ponds and lakes at this time of year. Especially during this transitional season, it is important to supervise children and help them understand the dangers of playing near creeks and streams. Anglers, canoeists, hikers, hunters and other recreational users need to be aware of the dangerous conditions that could pose a risk to personal safety.

Play it safe and stay well back from waterways as the snow and ice melts. Help make this a safe and enjoyable spring.

- Keep family and pets away from the edges of all bodies of water.
- Avoid all recreational activities in or around water, especially near ice jams or ice-covered watercourses and waterbodies—including municipally managed stormwater ponds.
- Do not attempt to walk on ice-covered waterbodies or drive through flooded roads or fast-moving water.
- If you live close to the water, move objects such as chairs or benches away from the water's edge to avoid losing them during potential spring high water.
- Avoid walking close to and across riverbanks and ice-covered water to prevent falling through.

The NVCA continues to monitor waterways and will issue flood messages as conditions warrant.

For more information, call your local conservation authority:

- Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (705) 424-1479
- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (905) 895-1281
- Toronto & Region Conservation Authority (416) 661-6514
- Conservation Halton (905) 336-1158

- Credit Valley Conservation (905) 670-1615
- Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (905) 579-0411
- Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (905) 885-8173
- Kawartha Conservation (705) 328-2271

Sheri Steiginga
Flood Operations Field Specialist

This **Spring Safety Reminder** is a general notice issued during spring runoff to remind residents that potential conditions exist that could pose a risk to personal safety or which have the potential to lead to flooding. High flows, unsafe banks, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous for recreational users such as anglers, canoeists, hikers, children, pets, etc. Flooding is not expected at this time.