



NVCA June 2021 Board Meeting Highlights

Next Meeting: August 27, 2021, held virtually.

Please note there is no meeting in July.

For the full meeting agenda including documents and reports, visit [NVCA's website](#).

Presentation on NVCA's Conservation Lands Program

Kyra Howes, Manager of Lands and Operations at NVCA gave a presentation on the Conservation Lands Program.

NVCA manages over 5,300 hectares (13,000 acres) of land across the watershed. There are two main types of properties: conservation areas and conservation reserves.

Conservation areas features infrastructure, such as trails and signage, whereas conservation reserves are preserved in their natural state, and do not have infrastructure.

Many properties also provide functions that support NVCA's flood program, such as snow surveys, rain gauges and weather stations.

Acquiring land

Historically, many NVCA's lands were acquired through cost sharing agreements for lands that were hazardous for development. Many of these were developed for flood control measures, such as the Tottenham Dam.

In recent years, developers may transfer undevelopable land to NVCA. Stewardship fees may be requested to help with long term management.

Recreational opportunities

People are more aware of the benefits of being in nature. In the last five years, NVCA has seen a tenfold increase in visitors from both inside and outside the watershed.

NVCA's conservation areas focus on passive recreational opportunities, hiking, snowshoeing and fishing. Features such as playgrounds and

soccer fields are not supported. Hunting is allowed in NVCA's conservation areas, and NVCA sells a limited amount of hunting and fishing passes each year.

NVCA's conservation areas include over 42 km of multi-use trails, including part of the Bruce Trail, Ganaraska Trail and links to the TransCanada Trail.

Not all visitors' activities are compatible with preserving natural ecosystems. NVCA's Lands Staff are designated Provincial Offences Officers, allowing them to enforce the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CA Act) in order to protect NVCA owned and managed lands.

Preserving Natural Heritage

Some NVCA's lands are only preserved to protect natural heritage features, and do not support recreational activities. These include the Elba Wetlands, Osprey Wetlands and Minesing Wetlands.

NVCA's conservation areas contain significant landforms such as the Niagara Escarpment, Oak Ridges Moraine and Oro Moraine and the Minesing Wetlands.

Partnerships

NVCA works with volunteers and community groups throughout the watershed to help maintain conservation areas and conservation reserves.

Examples include the Rotary Club, Friends of Fort Willow, Friends of Utopia, Friends of Pine River, Friends of Tiffin and Friends of the Minesing Wetlands.

Generating external revenue

NVCA generates external revenue to reduce the reliance on municipal levy. Revenue generated also ensures NVCA can continue to provide a high level of customer service through updating or upgrading infrastructure.

One project the lands team is working on is building a new parking lot at the Nottawasaga Bluffs Conservation Area to accommodate the increased number of visitors.

Some revenue generating opportunities include weddings and events, group camping and managed forests.

Governance accountability and transparency

The Ontario government passed legislation amendments to require conservation authorities to remain committed to accountable and transparent governance.

The NVCA Board of Directors endorsed a commitment to pursue governance accountability measures.

Permit Signing Authority

The NVCA Board of Directors approved staff in the follow positions to approve permits for a maximum of two years: CAO/Secretary-Treasurer, Director, Watershed Management Services, Manager, Planning Services, Senior Regulations Technician, Regulations Technician, Planner III, Planning Ecologist.

Under Section 6 (1) of Ontario Regulation 172/06 issued under the *CA Act*, the staff members above can grant permission to straighten, change, divert or interfere with the existing channel of a river, creek, stream or watercourse or to change or interfere with a wetland.

Permits Approvals under the CA Act

NVCA's permit application service timelines are governed by the Conservation Authority Liaison Committee (CALC), which requires NVCA to complete a policy review within 21 days, and complete a technical review within 30 days for minor applications and 90 days for major applications.

NVCA Regulations staff provided a summary of the permits issued during the period November 28, 2020 to June 8, 2021. A total of 368 permits and clearances were approved by staff for this time period, with 98.3% of the permits were processed within the provincial timelines.

Phase 1 Regulatory Changes Guide to the CA Act

The Ontario government released Phase 1 of the regulatory changes guide to the *CA Act* through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) for public review. Comments on these proposed changes will be accepted until June 27, 2021.

Conservation Ontario submitted comments on behalf of all conservation authorities in Ontario, and the NVCA Board of Directors resolved to endorse this submission through commenting on the ERO prior to the deadline. The Board also approved to have Chair McLeod submit a letter stating NVCA's support of the endorsement.