



November 14, 2025  
**SENT ELECTRONICALLY**

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City of Hamilton  
Haldimand County  
Regional Municipality of Niagara

**RE: 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies**

At the NPCA’s Full Authority Meeting held on October 24, 2025, the following resolution was passed:

**Resolution No. FA-105-2025**

Moved by: Stew Beattie  
Seconded by: Michelle Seaborn

**THAT** Report No. FA-47-25 RE: 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies **BE RECEIVED;**

**AND THAT** the 2026 Draft Budgets & Municipal Levies **BE APPROVED BY WEIGHTED LEVY VOTE** for discussion with municipal staff, in accordance with Board approved Budget Assumptions;

**AND THAT** the list of 2026 unfunded pressures **BE PROVIDED** to partner municipalities for any future opportunities outside the 2026 budget through collaborative projects or external funding;

**AND FURTHER THAT NPCA** staff **REPORT** the results of discussions with municipal staff to the 2026 Q2 Finance Committee and Board of Directors meetings.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

A copy of Report No. FA-47-25 and associated appendices has been attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Melanie Davis  
Manager, Office of the CAO & Board  
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

cc: Leilani Lee-Yates, CAO/Secretary – Treasurer  
Lise Gagnon, Director, Corporate Services

**Report To: Board of Directors**

**Subject: 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies**

**Report No: FA-47-25**

**Date: October 24, 2025**

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**Recommendation:**

**THAT** Report No. FA-47-25 RE: 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies **BE RECEIVED;**

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**AND FURTHER THAT NPCA** staff **REPORT** the results of discussions with municipal staff to the 2026 Q2 Finance Committee and Board of Directors meetings.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Finance Committee and Board of Directors with:

- 2026 General Levy Apportionment;
- 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies; and
- 2026 Unfunded Budget Priorities.

Full details of the 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies are outlined in Appendices 1 and 2. Please note that Appendix 2 represents the 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies in the *Conservation Authorities Act* Programs and Services Inventory format.

## **Background:**

On September 17, 2025, the Finance Committee passed Recommendation No. FC-18-2025, endorsing the 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies for approval by the Board of Directors. Following endorsement from the Finance Committee, NPCA circulated a copy of the 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies to partner municipalities to provide 30-day notice prior to presentation to the Full Authority for approval.

NPCA staff have met with relevant finance staff at each partner municipality to discuss the 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies and municipal guidelines for budget targets. In preparing the Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies for the Finance Committee consideration, staff included the respective Niagara Region and Haldimand County municipal budget targets of 3.5%. Following the Finance Committee meeting, the City of Hamilton provided their municipal budget target of 4.25% and the Draft Budget and Municipal Levies have been adjusted to achieve that target.

In the development of the recommended budget assumptions for the 2026 budget process, staff have reviewed and considered the following:

- Municipal funding guidelines when available
- Cost of living adjustments (COLA) and grid step increases
- Inflation (Consumer price index – CPI)
- Impacts from tariffs
- Multi-year contractual obligations
- Operating, capital, and program pressures
- Board approved Fee Policy and full cost accounting
- Focus on internal efficiencies
- General economic outlook
- Impacts on service delivery
- Asset management and state-of-good repair
- User-Pay Principle

## **Discussion:**

### 2026 Draft Operating Budgets

NPCA's overall 2026 Draft Operating Budget of \$16.238M is supported by \$8.5M municipal levy, \$5.725M in authority-generated revenue, and \$2.013M in grant and associated leveraged funding. Overall, the operating volume in this zero-based budget is largely static against 2025, increasing marginally by 0.8% (\$142K).

The 2026 Draft Operating Budget is effectively a maintenance budget to address critical priorities and achieve required service levels, while keeping within municipal guidelines in a year of fiscal restraint. Salaries and benefits represent the largest portion of total

expenditures at 72%. Operating pressures for 2026 in the salary envelope include meeting COLA provisions in the collective agreement, and grid and step increases.

NPCA seeks opportunities to offset the municipal levy where possible. One example of this is Land Care, which is a category 1 mandatory service which can be fully included in the municipal levy. Total costs for 2026 equal \$1.188M, but only 19% (\$230,585) is funded through municipal levies. The residual balance of \$957,626 is sourced from authority generated revenues from campgrounds, conservation area user fees, special events, etc., thereby reducing the levy ask of our municipal partners.

### *Assessment of Rockway Conservation Area Parking Fee Revenue*

At the December 15, 2023, NPCA Full Authority meeting, the Board of Directors approved the formal opening of the Rockway Conservation Area entrance in the Spring of 2024 (Resolution No. FA-124-2023). Further, at the April 25, 2025, Full Authority meeting, the Board of Directors passed Resolution No. FA-47-2025 that states:

**WHEREAS** infrastructure upgrades, including automated gates, have been installed at Rockway Conservation Area;

**WHEREAS** paid parking rates have been established at Rockway Conservation Area through the NPCA's budget process;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the NPCA hereby **SUSPEND** the collection of parking fees at Rockway Conservation Area;

**AND THAT** staff **BE DIRECTED** to assess financial implications of the suspension of parking fees at Rockway Conservation Area for the remainder of the 2025;

**AND THAT** staff **BE DIRECTED** to bring forward recommendations that address any financial implications in 2026 budget discussions;

**AND THAT** the NPCA continue to explore equitable initiatives to limit financial barriers to NPCA conservation areas;

**AND FURTHER THAT** NPCA prioritize the completion of management plans for high visitation conservation areas, including but not limited to Rockway Conservation Area.

Since the parking fee was suspended at Rockway Conservation Area, there has been steady use of the parking lot. NPCA staff have examined trail tracker information from 2024 and 2025 for the Rockway Conservation Area and conservatively estimate that upwards of 5,000 cars would park at the Rockway Conservation Area parking lot within any given year. As such it is estimated that the parking fee of \$9 per vehicle would generate approximately \$45,000 of revenue per year.

In total, the NPCA has invested \$673,575 in parking lot infrastructure and trail upgrades at the Rockway Conservation Area to address longstanding health and safety concerns and provide much-needed accessibility upgrades. The enhancement project included designated accessible parking spaces, barrier-free trail access, a barrier-free viewing area and lookout, and accessible washroom facilities. These upgrades also incorporated Low Impact Development features to manage stormwater sustainably, minimizing environmental impacts and aligning with conservation goals. Further, the EV charging stations in the parking lot were damaged in May 2025, and the unexpected repair costs were accounted for within the current operating budget.

In accordance with the Minister's Fee Classes Policy, conservation authorities can charge 'user fees' that are paid to an authority by a person or organization for a service that they specifically benefit from. This includes use of a public resource (e.g., park access or facility rental) or the privilege of doing something (e.g., permit approval). Enabling authorities to charge a fee for programs and services where the User-Pay Principle is considered appropriate increases opportunities for an authority to generate revenue. This may reduce an authority's reliance on the municipal levy to finance the programs and services it provides.

While applying a user fee for parking at the Rockway Conservation Area is appropriate and would generate revenue to help recoup the capital investments and support ongoing land care, staff also understand the community's concerns with equitable access to the site and public safety concerns with vehicles parking along the road to avoid paying the parking fee.

As such, for the 2026 budget, staff recommend including the projected Rockway Conservation Area parking fee revenue shortfall of \$45,000 to the operating municipal levy for Niagara Region. Further, the Conservation Areas division will prepare a comprehensive strategy that will, in part, assess the feasibility and need for gates and parking fees at NPCA's high visitation passive parks, including, Rockway Conservation Area, Woodend Conservation Area, Beamer Conservation Area, and St. John's Conservation Area.

This strategy will also examine the general operational and capital costs to manage these sites, compare gate and parking fee strategies of other conservation authorities, identify potential revenue generation through parking fees while maintaining equitable access to the conservation areas, enhanced NaturePlus Pass revenue potential to assist in offsetting land care costs, and recommendations for implementation. **The strategy will be presented to the NPCA Board of Directors in Q1 of 2026.**

#### 2026 Capital, Special Projects and Land Securement

The 2026 Draft Capital and Special Projects Budget includes critical conservation area infrastructure projects to meet service level needs, health and safety and state of good repair priorities. The special levy also includes funding for critical natural hazard management projects, such as floodplain and shoreline hazard mapping.

NPCA’s overall 2026 Draft Capital and Special Project Budget of \$1.9M is supported by \$1.67M municipal levy, \$50K in authority-generated revenue, and \$175K in Federal and Provincial grant funding. In 2026, the capital volume decreased by 35% (\$1M). However, in 2025, NPCA undertook several material (totaling \$1M) critical infrastructure repairs and upgrades to address health and safety and state of good repair priorities. There were also several one-time capital purchases funded through external grants, such as equipment and tree stock for the Trees for All program.

Since 2019, NPCA has successfully acquired 13 parcels adding approximately 226 ha to our public land holdings. Approximately 73 ha were secured in Niagara Region, 45 ha in the City of Hamilton and 108 ha in Haldimand County. Between 2019-2025, the NPCA has successfully leveraged \$4,602,122 of external funding to cover 52% of the overall acquisition costs. The success of NPCA’s land securement program is due to the continued financial support from the participating municipalities through contributions to the land securement reserves, and private donors that enable staff to leverage external funding opportunities.

Five land acquisitions all closed by March 31, 2025, and resulted in the addition of 126 hectares of conservation land to NPCA’s land holdings, representing 70% of the NPCA’s 10-year land acquisition goal. In just two years, the NPCA has exceeded the 180-hectare target set through the Land Securement Strategy. While NPCA has achieved the 10-year goal, staff continue to assess strategic opportunities to enhance our conservation areas, protect ecologically significant areas and connect people to nature.

Considering the municipal guidelines in a year of fiscal restraint, and the need to maintain a base budget, it is recommended that the Land Securement Special Levy is scaled back to reflect the earlier commitments from Niagara Region (2023) and City of Hamilton (2024), while continuing with the current contribution from Haldimand County to leverage external funding opportunities.

NPCA’s 2026 budgets include a provision for land securement from each municipality as follows:

- Niagara Region \$250,000
- City of Hamilton \$148,000
- Haldimand County \$14,800

### Summary - 2026 Draft Municipal Levy

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) provides the levy apportionment ratios, which are calculated from assessment data provided by MPAC and further revised based on Ontario Regulation 401/22 under the *Conservation Authorities Act*. 2026 Levy Apportionment Ratios break down as follows:

Table 1: 2026 Levy Apportionment

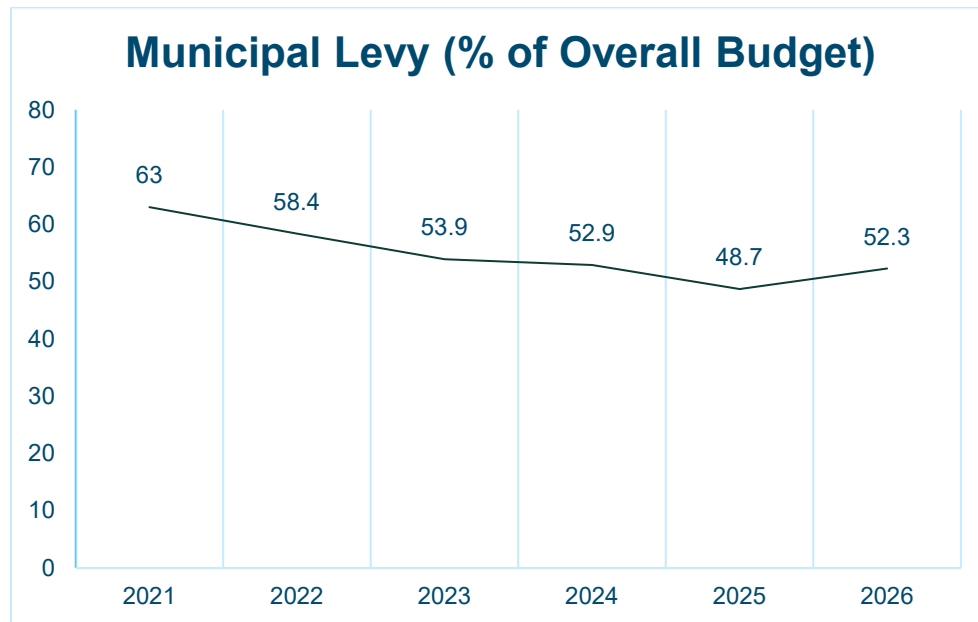
Municipality	2026	2025	Variance
Niagara	76.8667%	76.9078%	-0.0411%
Hamilton	21.2010%	21.1713%	0.0297%
Haldimand	1.9322%	1.9209%	0.0113%

A breakdown of municipal levies, including Capital, Special Projects and Land Securement special levies, is provided in Table 2 below. Additional details are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

Table 2: 2026 Levy Summary, by Municipality

LEVY SUMMARY - 2026					
	2026	2025	Variance		
			Amount	%	
<b>NIAGARA</b>					
General Levy	6,543,932	6,034,060	509,872	8.45%	
Special Levy - Capital	1,437,278	1,655,273	- 217,995	-13.17%	
Special Levy - Land Securement	250,000	269,750	- 19,750	-7.32%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,231,210</b>	<b>7,959,083</b>	<b>272,127</b>	<b>3.42%</b>	
<b>HAMILTON</b>					
General Levy	1,792,506	1,661,065	131,441	7.91%	
Special Levy - Capital	223,022	254,503	- 31,481	-12.37%	
Special Levy - Land Securement	148,000	159,734	- 11,734	-7.35%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,163,528</b>	<b>2,075,302</b>	<b>88,226</b>	<b>4.25%</b>	
<b>HALDIMAND</b>					
General Levy	163,367	150,711	12,656	8.40%	
Special Levy - Capital	13,069	19,924	- 6,855	-34.41%	
Special Levy - Land Securement	14,800	14,299	501	3.50%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>191,236</b>	<b>184,934</b>	<b>6,302</b>	<b>3.41%</b>	
<b>CONSOLIDATED</b>					
General Levy	8,499,805	7,845,836	653,969	8.34%	
Special Levy - Capital	1,673,369	1,929,700	- 256,331	-13.28%	
Special Levy - Land Securement	412,800	443,783	- 30,983	-6.98%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,585,974</b>	<b>10,219,319</b>	<b>366,655</b>	<b>3.59%</b>	

Municipal contributions to the overall budget envelope represent 52.3%, which continues to demonstrate a decrease since 2021. Please note graphical representation below.



### 2026 Unfunded Budget Priorities

In the last several years, NPCA's ability to undertake both operating special projects and capital investments have been significantly impacted by a lack of financial resources. The following issues contributed in part:

- a) NPCA needs to make significant investments in infrastructural upgrades and staffing resources to safely serve our communities. An Asset Management Plan and 10-Year Financing Strategy is currently being completed and will provide further refinement to the Asset State-of Good Repair Gap and funding requirements.
- b) Staff anticipate significant planning and growth pressures in the coming years in NPCA's jurisdiction requiring NPCA to proactively invest in science and information to support decision making.
- c) Completion of NPCA's 10-Year Strategic Plan has identified several gaps and priorities that NPCA must address in the coming years.
- d) *Conservation Authorities Act* amendments and associated regulations require several priorities to be completed; this includes a significant number of investments in updating conservation areas management plans, shoreline and coastal resilience technical updates and flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects.

In keeping with previous budget cycles, an assessment of current unfunded operating and capital priorities was prioritized by staff. These initiatives (\$17.379M), classified in seven categories, are further detailed in Appendix 1. This critical exercise is intended to identify

the required investments in the NPCA for long-term sustainability of the organization, and support asset management state of good repair protocols.

### **Financial Implications:**

NPCA's 2026 Budgets and Municipal Levies have been developed in accordance with the existing levy guidelines of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. *Conservation Authorities Act* regulations specify the programs and services that Conservation Authorities must provide, requirements for service level agreements with partner municipalities, levy and budgets. Please note that Appendix 2 represents the 2026 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies in the *Conservation Authorities Programs and Services Inventory* format.

The NPCA is required to prepare annual budgets as part of the fiscal control and financial responsibilities of the organization. The budget is also used in the audit process for evaluation by the external auditing firm. Annual audits are required as per Section 38 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

Unfunded budget priorities are currently not included in the 2026 Budget. A diverse range of strategies will be deployed to address these gaps. Staff will investigate external funding sources, support from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation, and liaise with external partners and all levels of governments to look for collaborative opportunities outside the existing budget processes.

### **Related Reports and Appendices:**

Appendix 1: NPCA 2026 Draft Budgets & Municipal Levies – Historical Format

Appendix 2: NPCA 2026 Draft Budgets & Municipal Levies – CA Programs and Services Format

Appendix 3: NPCA 2026 Budget Book (*distributed separately*)

Available upon request:

1. Land Securement Strategy – 2022 to 2032
2. Strategic Plan – 2021 to 2031

### **Links To Policy/Strategic Plan:**

Goal 4.1: Strengthen government relations toward collective outcomes and impact

Goal 5.2: Improve internal operations and processes

Goal 6.1: Ensure responsible, sustainable, and sound fiscal practices

Goal 6.3: Improve asset management and close the state of good repair gap

**Authored by:**

*Original Signed by:*

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Lise Gagnon, CPA, CGA  
Director, Corporate Services

**Reviewed and Submitted by:**

*Original Signed by:*

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Leilani Lee-Yates, BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

# 2026 DRAFT BUDGETS & MUNICIPAL LEVIES

October 2025



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## 2026 DRAFT BUDGET SUMMARY

Operating Budget - Revenues	2026 Budget	2025 Budget	Variance
Municipal Funding	8,499,805	7,845,836	653,969
Provincial Funding	487,845	447,574	40,271
Provincial - S39 Hazard Funding	90,000	90,000	0
Federal Funding	1,021,985	1,562,960	-540,975
Program Revenue	4,346,037	4,693,831	-347,794
Other	1,792,172	1,455,756	336,416
Total - Operating Revenues	16,237,844	16,095,957	141,887
Operating Budget - Expenses	2026 Budget	2025 Budget	Variance
Salaries and benefits, Employee Related	11,629,798	10,595,982	1,033,816
Governance	34,354	32,764	1,590
Professional Fees, Contractor Services	864,689	1,581,351	-716,662
Materials & Supplies, Vehicles & Equipment	807,716	1,082,803	-275,087
Occupancy Costs	790,830	838,989	-48,159
Park Maintenance	691,493	665,734	25,759
Information Management/GIS	708,112	549,111	159,001
Marketing, Advertising, Printing, Signs	118,964	60,158	58,806
Special Events	197,212	215,176	-17,964
Flood Forecasting & Water Quality	159,700	155,950	3,750
Miscellaneous	234,976	317,939	-82,963
Total - Operating Expenses	16,237,844	16,095,957	141,887
Capital and Special Projects	2026 Budget	2025 Budget	Variance
Facilities	940,999	2,028,787	- 1,087,788
Equipment	342,764	314,598	28,166
Infrastructure (excluding facilities)	241,511	239,323	2,188
Data and Technology Assets	319,848	212,016	107,832
Land Management Plans	0	83,062	- 83,062
Health and Safety	53,247	51,915	1,332
Total - Capital & Special Projects	1,898,369	2,929,701	- 1,031,332
Land Securement	412,800	443,783	- 30,983
TOTAL	18,549,013	19,469,441	- 920,428

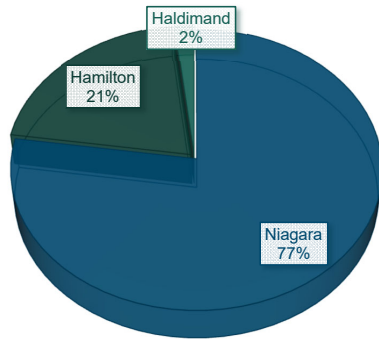
## 2026 MUNICIPAL LEVY SUMMARY

### Levy Apportionment - 2026

The levy apportionment ratios are calculated from assessment data provided by MPAC, and further revised based on the Conservation Authority Levies Regulation.

Municipality	% in CA	Municipal Population	Municipal Population in CA	Prior Year CVA in CA	2026 Levy Apportionment	2025 Levy Apportionment	Variance
Haldimand	25%	42,461	10,488	\$1.913B	1.9322%	1.9209%	0.0113%
Hamilton	21%	450,212	94,995	\$21.082B	21.2010%	21.1713%	0.0297%
Niagara	100%	373,586	373,586	\$76.583B	76.8667%	76.9078%	-0.0411%
<b>Total</b>		<b>866,259</b>	<b>479,069</b>	<b>\$99.578B</b>	<b>100.0000%</b>	<b>100.0000%</b>	

### 2026 MUNICIPAL LEVY - CONSOLIDATED



LEVY SUMMARY - 2026					
		2026	2025	Variance	
				Amount	%
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General Levy		6,543,932	6,034,060	509,872	8.45%
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<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10,585,974</b>	<b>10,219,319</b>	<b>366,655</b>	<b>3.59%</b>

**2026 UNFUNDED BUDGET PRIORITIES**

Description	2026 Unfunded Priority	2026 Unfunded Budget Priorities - Proposed Funding Sources			
		Municipal Funding			Other
		Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	
<b><u>Integrated Watershed Strategies</u></b>					
Four Mile Creek Water Budget & Subwatershed Planning	100,000	100,000			
Invasive Species Strategy - Phase 2	20,000	15,373	4,240	387	
Climate Change Action Program Corporate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment	150,000	115,300	31,802	2,898	
Flood and Erosion Mitigation - Assessment and Design for Vulnerable Areas	2,000,000	1,537,336	424,020	38,644	
Non-Point Source Water Quality Best Management Practices Stewardship	200,000	153,734	42,402	3,864	
Shoreline Climate Modeling and Risk Assessment (incl Lake Erie Shoreline Hazard Mapping)	500,000	500,000			
Sustainable Technologies Program	260,000	199,853	55,123	5,024	
Urban Climate Stewardship for Nearshore Watershed (Land to Lake Initiative)	240,000	184,481	50,882	4,637	
<b>Total - Integrated Watershed Strategies</b>	<b>3,470,000</b>	<b>2,806,077</b>	<b>608,469</b>	<b>55,454</b>	<b>-</b>
<b><u>Natural Hazard Management</u></b>					
Upper Virgil Dam Erosion Protection	200,000	200,000			
Lower Virgil Dam Erosion Protection	200,000	200,000			
<b>Total - Natural Hazard Management</b>	<b>400,000</b>	<b>400,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b><u>Conservation Authorities Act Requirements</u></b>					
Land Management Plans	125,000	96,084	26,501	2,415	
<b>Total - Conservation Authorities Act Requirements</b>	<b>125,000</b>	<b>96,084</b>	<b>26,501</b>	<b>2,415</b>	<b>-</b>
<b><u>Corporate Services and Asset Management</u></b>					
Strategic Asset Management Policy/Planning	80,000	61,493	16,961	1,546	
Sustainable Technologies and Green Infrastructure (NPCA-owned lands)	100,000	76,867	21,201	1,932	
IT Security Audit	50,000	38,433	10,601	966	
IT Equipment Upgrades	50,000	38,433	10,601	966	
Growth FTE's - IT/IM/ Tech / Records Management Tech	250,000	192,167	53,003	4,830	
Operationalize Digital Strategy	500,000	384,334	106,005	9,661	
Corporate Support - Process Reviews	100,000	76,867	21,201	1,932	
Facilities - furniture, upgrades, EV Stations, etc.	250,000	192,167	53,002	4,831	
Accounting Clerk	91,325	70,199	19,361	1,765	
GIS Technician	91,325	70,199	19,361	1,765	
<b>Total - Corporate Services and Asset Management</b>	<b>1,562,650</b>	<b>1,201,159</b>	<b>331,297</b>	<b>30,194</b>	<b>-</b>

**2026 UNFUNDED BUDGET PRIORITIES**

Description	2026 Unfunded Priority	2026 Unfunded Budget Priorities - Proposed Funding Sources			
		Municipal Funding			Other
		Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	
<b>Corporate Administration</b>					
NPCA Website Technical Maintenance & Redesign	50,000	38,433	10,601	966	
<b>Total - Corporate Administration</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>38,433</b>	<b>10,601</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Watershed Planning &amp; Permits</b>					
Compliance Technician	91,325	70,198	19,362	1,765	
<b>Total - Watershed Planning &amp; Permits</b>	<b>91,325</b>	<b>70,198</b>	<b>19,362</b>	<b>1,765</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>State of Good Repair (SOGR) / Health and Safety</b>					
Asset replacement and sustainment (amortization)	1,400,000	1,076,135	296,814	27,051	
Campground Upgrades	500,000	500,000			
Barn Storage Facility - Balls Falls	200,000	200,000			
Automated Gates - All Parks	330,000	330,000			
Furniture - Parks and Administrative Offices	25,000	19,217	5,300	483	
Lime Kiln Restoration - Balls Falls	100,000	100,000			
New Metal Stairs for Bruce Trail - Balls Falls	200,000				200,000
Interpretive and Wayfinding Signage - All Parks	500,000	384,334	106,005	9,661	
Pavilion 1 Demolition - Binbrook	50,000		50,000		
Natural Playgrounds - Long Beach, Morgan's Point, Balls Falls, Chippawa	750,000	500,000	250,000		
Main Boat Launch Upgrade - Binbrook	500,000		500,000		
Northside Playground - Long Beach	125,000	125,000			
Drainage South Side - Long Beach	100,000	100,000			
Rebuild Comfort station #2 South Side - Long Beach	400,000	400,000			
Beach Washroom Renovations - Chippawa	50,000	50,000			
Electrical Upgrades - Long Beach and Chippawa	1,000,000	1,000,000			
New Pavilion - Binbrook	125,000	125,000			
Tile Drain in Day Use - Long Beach and Chippawa	125,000	125,000			
Roadway Improvements - All Parks	1,350,000	837,702	486,214	26,084	
St. Johns Valley Retaining Wall - Phase 3 and 4	500,000	500,000			
St. Johns Valley Centre Septic System	225,000	225,000			
Fencing for All Parks	300,000	230,600	63,603	5,797	
Waste bins for All Parks	30,000	23,060	6,360	580	
Outdoor Education Natural and Cultural Heritage Campus - Balls Falls	1,000,000	1,000,000			
Morgan's Point Washroom Renovations	300,000	300,000			

**2026 UNFUNDED BUDGET PRIORITIES**

Description	2026 Unfunded Priority	2026 Unfunded Budget Priorities - Proposed Funding Sources			
		Municipal Funding			Other
		Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	
Morgan's Point Boardwalk	150,000	150,000			
EV Charging Stations - All Parks	170,000	140,000	30,000		
CFC - Back Up Generator	100,000	100,000			
CFC - Front Entrance (Pond Replacement)	300,000	300,000			
CFC - Replace Windows and Repair Siding	200,000	200,000			
Campground Upgrades - AODA Accessibility	100,000	100,000			
NPCA Net Zero Headquarters Planning, Feasibility Assessment & Design	75,000	57,650	15,901	1,449	
Historical Buildings Restoration - Balls Falls (lime kiln and Ball home interior)	400,000	400,000			
<b>Total - State of Good Repair / Health and Safety</b>	<b>11,680,000</b>	<b>9,598,697</b>	<b>1,810,197</b>	<b>71,104</b>	<b>200,000</b>
<b>TOTAL 2026 UNFUNDED BUDGET PRIORITIES</b>	<b>17,378,975</b>	<b>14,210,649</b>	<b>2,806,427</b>	<b>161,899</b>	<b>200,000</b>
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Niagara</b>	<b>Hamilton</b>	<b>Haldimand</b>	<b>External</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Integrated Watershed Strategies	2,806,077	608,469	55,454	-	3,470,000
Natural Hazard Management	400,000	-	-	-	400,000
Conservation Authority Act Requirements	96,084	26,501	2,415	-	125,000
Corporate Services and Asset Management	1,201,159	331,297	30,194	-	1,562,650
Corporate Administration	38,433	10,601	966	-	50,000
Watershed Planning & Permits	70,198	19,362	1,765	-	91,325
State of Good Repair (SOGR) / Health and Safety	9,598,698	1,810,197	71,104	200,000	11,680,000
	<b>14,210,650</b>	<b>2,806,427</b>	<b>161,899</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>17,378,975</b>

Note: Unfunded budget priorities are currently not included in the 2026 Budget. A diverse range of strategies will be deployed to address these gaps. Staff will investigate external funding sources, support from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation, and liaise with external partners and all levels of governments to look for collaborative opportunities outside the existing budget processes.

**Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority**

**2026 Budgets and Municipal Levies (Budget by Programs and Services)**

**Appendix 2 - Report No. FA-47-25**

		Levy				Non-Levy			TOTAL	
Dept	Description	Category	Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	Total Levy	Provincial	Federal	Self-Generated	BUDGET
<b>General Levy - Category 1</b>										
<b>Natural Hazard Management</b>										
301	Flood Forecasting and Warning	1	266,437	73,487	6,698	346,622	31,000			377,622
157	Flood and Erosion Management	1	60,249	16,618	1,515	78,381	5,200			83,581
323	Water Resources	1	123,637	34,101	3,108	160,846		34,374		195,220
335	Climate Resilient Coastal Communities Program	1	61,470	16,954	1,545	79,969				79,969
345	Environmental Planning and Policy	1	226,110	62,365	5,684	294,158			140,000	434,158
361	Planning and Permitting	1	277,583	76,562	6,978	361,123	38,600		641,000	1,040,723
371	Compliance and Enforcement	1	533,933	147,267	13,422	694,622			56,450	751,072
391	Planning Ecology	1	209,443	57,768	5,265	272,476				272,476
125	Regulatory Mapping Technical Studies	1	19,217	5,300	483	25,000				25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1,778,079</b>	<b>490,421</b>	<b>44,696</b>	<b>2,313,196</b>	<b>74,800</b>	<b>34,374</b>	<b>837,450</b>	<b>3,259,820</b>
<b>Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change</b>										
265	Watershed Monitoring and Reporting	1	312,612	86,223	7,858	406,694	4,000		51,628	462,322
217	Special Projects (groundwater sampling)	1	12,683	3,498	319	16,500				16,500
303	Climate Change Resilience	1	143,701	39,635	3,612	186,948				186,948
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>468,996</b>	<b>129,356</b>	<b>11,789</b>	<b>610,142</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>51,628</b>	<b>665,770</b>
<b>Other Watershed Related Programs</b>										
205	Drinking Source Water Protection	1				-	194,931			194,931
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>194,931</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>194,931</b>
<b>Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas</b>										
427	Land Care Program	1	187,653	39,346	3,586	230,585			163,036	393,621
357	Land Management Planning	1	278,500	76,815	7,001	362,315				362,315
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>466,153</b>	<b>116,160</b>	<b>10,587</b>	<b>592,900</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>163,036</b>	<b>755,936</b>
<b>Enabling Services</b>										
101/107/127/129	Corporate Services (incl HR, Corp Sup, AM, Grant)	1	790,230	217,958	19,864	1,028,052	23,665	257,644	626,654	1,936,015
105	Financial Services	1	213,977	59,018	5,379	278,374			101,593	379,967
109/131	Information Management and Technology	1	863,358	238,127	21,703	1,123,188			63,600	1,186,788
103/150	Governance and Corporate Administration	1	467,402	128,917	11,749	608,068	15,200			623,268
111	Communications, Marketing and Public Relations	1	503,580	138,895	12,659	655,134				655,134
801	Vehicles and Equipment	1	218,849	60,362	5,501	284,712			24,860	309,572
153/155	Asset Management	1	62,438	17,221	1,570	81,229			83,372	164,601
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>3,119,833</b>	<b>860,499</b>	<b>78,425</b>	<b>4,058,756</b>	<b>38,865</b>	<b>257,644</b>	<b>900,079</b>	<b>5,255,344</b>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL LEVY</b>			<b>5,833,060</b>	<b>1,596,437</b>	<b>145,497</b>	<b>7,574,994</b>	<b>312,596</b>	<b>292,018</b>	<b>1,952,193</b>	<b>10,131,801</b>
<b>General Levy - Category 3 - Cost Apportionment MOU</b>										
<b>Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change</b>										
227	Restoration	3	216,886	59,821	5,452	282,159	8,000	21,242	267,344	578,745
123	Community Engagement and Stewardship	3	135,923	37,490	3,417	176,830			19,643	196,473
343	Integrated Watershed Planning	3	358,063	98,759	9,001	465,823				465,823
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>710,872</b>	<b>196,070</b>	<b>17,870</b>	<b>924,812</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>21,242</b>	<b>286,987</b>	<b>1,241,041</b>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL LEVY - CATEGORY 3</b>			<b>710,872</b>	<b>196,070</b>	<b>17,870</b>	<b>924,812</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>21,242</b>	<b>286,987</b>	<b>1,241,041</b>
<b>Special Levy</b>										
TDB	Capital and Special Projects	1	1,437,278	223,022	13,069	1,673,369	75,000	100,000	50,000	1,898,369
TDB	Land Securement	3	250,000	148,000	14,800	412,800				412,800
<b>TOTAL SPECIAL LEVY</b>			<b>1,687,278</b>	<b>371,022</b>	<b>27,869</b>	<b>2,086,169</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>2,311,169</b>
<b>Fee for Service - Schedule A</b>										
265	Watershed Monitoring and Reporting						-	-	181,500	181,500
<b>TOTAL FEE FOR SERVICE - SCHEDULE A</b>			<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>181,500</b>	<b>181,500</b>

**Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority**

**2026 Budgets and Municipal Levies (Budget by Programs and Services)**

**Appendix 2 - Report No. FA-47-25**

Dept	Description	Category	Levy				Non-Levy			TOTAL BUDGET
			Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	Total Levy	Provincial	Federal	Self-Generated	
<b>Provincial, Federal, Authority Generated</b>										
<b>Other Watershed Related Programs</b>										
241	Niagara River Remedial Action Plan	3					225,250	70,000		295,250
307	Trees for All and Lakewood CA Restoration	3					12,000	499,353	88,498	599,851
133	Natural Asset Management	3							50,000	50,000
335	Climate Resilient Coastal Communities Program	3						139,372		139,372
<b>TOTAL</b>							<b>237,250</b>	<b>708,725</b>	<b>138,498</b>	<b>1,084,473</b>
<b>Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas</b>										
395/401/403/405	Active Recreation Programs	3					20,000		3,066,029	3,086,029
407/411										
413	Educational Programming	3							513,000	513,000
<b>TOTAL</b>							<b>20,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,579,029</b>	<b>3,599,029</b>
<b>TOTAL PROVINCIAL, FEDERAL, AUTHORITY GENERATED</b>							<b>257,250</b>	<b>708,725</b>	<b>3,717,527</b>	<b>4,683,502</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>										
			<b>8,231,210</b>	<b>2,163,528</b>	<b>191,236</b>	<b>10,585,975</b>	<b>652,846</b>	<b>1,121,985</b>	<b>6,188,207</b>	<b>18,549,013</b>

<b>SUMMARY</b>									
Operating	6,543,932	1,792,506	163,367	8,499,806	577,846	1,021,985	6,138,207	16,237,844	
Capital	1,437,278	223,022	13,069	1,673,369	75,000	100,000	50,000	1,898,369	
Land Securement	250,000	148,000	14,800	412,800	-	-	-	412,800	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,231,210</b>	<b>2,163,528</b>	<b>191,236</b>	<b>10,585,975</b>	<b>652,846</b>	<b>1,121,985</b>	<b>6,188,207</b>	<b>18,549,013</b>	



Niagara Peninsula  
**CONSERVATION**  
*nature for all*

**BUDGET BOOK**  
**2026**



# Nature for All

Morgan's Point Conservation Area

## INTRODUCTION

Ontario's 36 conservation authorities operate under the Conservation Authorities Act, administered by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). Originally enacted in 1946, the Act has undergone several amendments to reflect evolving environmental priorities and governance requirements.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) was established in 1959 under the Act. It is mandated to develop and deliver programs and services focused on the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources within its watershed.

NPCA serves three participating upper-tier municipalities within its jurisdiction: Niagara Region, City of Hamilton, and Haldimand County.

Funding contributions are based on Modified Current Value Assessment (MCVA) data from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and are apportioned according to Ontario Regulation 402/22 under the Conservation Authorities Act. Lower-tier municipalities in Niagara Region work with NPCA through various collaboration initiatives, as appropriate.

# NPCA Watershed and Conservation Areas



## ABOUT THE NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

NPCA is a community-based natural resource management agency dedicated to protecting, enhancing, and sustaining healthy watersheds. With over 65 years of expertise, NPCA delivers programs and services that focus on flood and hazard management, source water protection, ecosystem restoration, community stewardship, and land management. NPCA manages 43 conservation areas within the Niagara Peninsula watershed, held in public trust for recreation, heritage preservation, conservation, and education.

The NPCA watershed covers 2,424 square kilometres, encompassing the entire Niagara Region, and parts of the City of Hamilton (21%) and Haldimand County (25%). Since time immemorial, this land has been the home of Indigenous peoples - a place for sharing, trading, hunting, gathering, stewardship, and friendship.

The watershed supports a population of approximately 478,966 people and is recognized as a unique natural treasure with distinct cultural, geological, hydrological, and biological aspects not found elsewhere in North America. It is part of the Carolinian life zone, the most biodiverse yet threatened eco-region in Canada, and

includes approximately 30 per cent natural cover, providing critical habitats such as forested woodlots, slough forests, alvars, and coastal wetlands. These habitats support rich biodiversity, including numerous rare plants and animal species.

Uniquely situated between two Great Lakes, with the Niagara River as its shared boundary with the United States, the watershed features notable natural landmarks including the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, Niagara Falls, the Wainfleet Bog, Ball's Falls, Willoughby Marsh, and the Fonthill Kame.

The micro-climate created by the Niagara Escarpment and region's rich soils support one of Ontario's most productive agricultural areas, including vineyards, tender fruit orchards, livestock farms, and various specialty crops such as greenhouses, flower farms, sod farms, and mushroom operations.

These unique watershed features provide life-sustaining benefits for all and countless opportunities for residents and visitors to discover the area's rich natural and cultural heritage.



## NPCA BY THE NUMBERS

- 478,966** Residents
- 242,525** Hectares Watershed Jurisdiction
- 43** Conservation Areas
- 3,167** Hectares NPCA Land Holdings
- 202** Local Waterways
- 2** Great Lakes
- 15** Municipalities (Upper and Lower Tier)
- 5** New Land Acquisitions

## WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

- 355** Permits Issued
- 1,014** Planning Applications Reviewed
- 415** Compliance Incident Reports
- 771** Surface Water Quality Samples Collected
- 52** Groundwater Samples Collected
- 84** Surface Water Monitoring Stations
- 46** Groundwater Wells



## CONSERVATION AREAS BY THE NUMBERS

- 160,000** Paid Day-Use Visitors at Four Active Parks
- 12,265** Students Engaged in Outdoor Education
- 25,000+** Guests at Signature Events
- 1,065** NaturePlus Pass Members
- 500,000** Visitors at Passive Conservation Areas



## RESTORATION BY THE NUMBERS

- 41,833** Trees Planted
- 5,826** Shrubs Planted
- 22.99** Hectares Reforested
- .73** Hectares of Riparian Habitat Restored
- 5.8** Hectares of Wetland Restored
- 2,020** Wildflowers Planted
- 3** New Pollinator Gardens

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Improving nature for the betterment of all life across the watershed.</i></p> 	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Supporting Sustainable Growth</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Helping to create resilient communities through land-use planning and the use of sustainable technologies to prepare for a changing climate and related environmental challenges.</i></p> 	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Connecting People to Nature</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Creating equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people.</i></p> 	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Partner of Choice</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Strengthening our relationships with stakeholders, partners, the watershed community, and Indigenous peoples.</i></p> 	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Organizational Excellence</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Striving for excellence through high service delivery standards and accountability to the environment and its people.</i></p> 	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Financial Sustainability</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Ensuring a financially stable and sustainable organization and continued service-delivery through innovative business models, diverse funding sources, and best practices.</i></p> 
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## STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2020, the NPCA Board of Directors approved the development of a staff-led process to create a new strategic plan that would guide NPCA for the next ten years while reflecting its mandate as per the Conservation Authorities Act and fulfilling its significant role within the community.

The plan charts the course for future actions and collective outcomes through six overarching strategic priorities, twenty-one specific goals, and measurable actions. The strategic priorities guide our efforts toward a vision of the Niagara Peninsula watershed with robust nature, thriving agriculture, and resilient urban areas vital to the health and well-being of our residents.

The strategic plan lays the groundwork for guiding strategies for further 10-year direction on programs and services:

- [Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy](#)
- [Climate Action Plan - Decarbonization Roadmap](#)
- [Conservation Area Strategy](#)
- [Stewardship Outreach, Education Strategy, and Cultural Heritage Strategy](#) \*
- [Government Relations Strategy](#) \*
- [Marketing and Ecotourism Strategy](#) \*
- [Talent Management Strategy](#) \*
- [Digital Transformation Strategy](#) \*

The NPCA is committed to undertaking specific goals and actions with its partners and communities to achieve a thriving environment that sustains life for future generations.

\* under development



## KEY NPCA SERVICES AREAS

### Natural Hazard Management

Protecting people and properties from flood, erosion, and other natural hazards.

### Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change

Understanding the current conditions, cumulative impacts, and risks to watersheds. Strategies and measures to protect, enhance, and restore watersheds toward creating healthy and climate-resilient watersheds.

### Other Watershed-Related Programs

Drinking Water Source Protection, Niagara Remedial Action Plan (RAP), and other projects/programs funded through external funding sources that benefit partners and the watershed.

### Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas

Management of over 3,000 hectares of land, including 43 conservation areas essential to watershed management, environmental protection, cultural heritage, and recreation.

### Enabling Services

Support to NPCA programs, the Board of Directors, member municipalities, and the public to enable NPCA to operate in an accountable, transparent, efficient, and effective manner.



Twelve Mile Creek Restoration

## BUDGETING UNDER THE CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT

NPCA's 2026 Budgets and Municipal Levies have been developed in accordance with the existing levy guidelines of the Conservation Authorities Act. Conservation Authorities Act regulations define the mandatory programs and services, set requirements for municipal service level agreements, and outline processes for levy and budget developments.

The NPCA is required to prepare annual budgets as part of its fiscal accountability and financial responsibilities. The budget also supports the annual external audit process, as required under Section 38 of the Conservation Authorities Act.

**O. Reg 686/21:** Mandatory Programs and Services - establishes the required components of Conservation Authority programs and services.

**O. Reg 687/21:** Transition Plans and Agreements for Programs and Services Under Section 21.1.2 of the Act - outlines the need for MOUs with municipalities.

**O. Reg 401/22:** Determination of Amounts Under Subsection 27.2 (2) of the Act - establishes the criteria for apportionment for Category 1 and Category 2 operating and capital expenses.

**O. Reg 402/22:** Budget and Apportionment - prescribes the budget development process, meeting timelines, and approval requirements.

Under the Conservation Authorities Act, NPCA's programs and services are classified into three categories. These categories define what NPCA delivers and how each program can be funded.

### Category 1 – Mandatory

Programs and services required by the Province under Ontario Regulation 687/21 to protect people, property, and the environment from natural hazards.

#### Examples of NPCA Programs & Services

- Flood forecasting and warning
- Natural hazard mapping, data collection, & relevant studies
- Enabling services
- Drought/low water response
- Water and erosion control infrastructure
- Public awareness and outreach

#### Funding Mechanism

Primarily municipal levy  
- User fees and/or grants

### Category 2 – Municipal

Programs and services provided at the request of a municipality, under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or service agreement.

#### Examples of NPCA Programs & Services

- Trees for All
- Natural Asset Management

#### Funding Mechanism

Municipal levy, user fees, and/or grants

### Category 3 – Other

Programs and services that NPCA's Board of Directors deems advisable to further the purpose of the Conservation Authorities Act.

#### Examples of NPCA Programs & Services

- Restoration, Community Engagement and Stewardship
- Integrated Watershed Planning
- Grant Funded Initiatives
- Active Recreation
- Educational Programming

#### Funding Mechanism

Combination of cost-apportioned levy through MOU's, grants, and/or user fees.



51st Annual Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival



## NPCA BUDGET, FUNDING BREAKDOWN & LEVY PROCESS

The NPCA's expenditures focus on reducing flood damage, improving water quality, maintaining a reliable water supply, protecting natural areas and biodiversity, providing environmental education, operating conservation areas and trails, and managing sensitive environmental lands. NPCA also maintains data assets that support these activities and are available for public use, helping to inform planning and community awareness.

*Appendix 1 provides a full description of each of the 33 individual programs and services delivered by the NPCA.*



**The NPCA has three main sources of revenue:**

### MUNICIPAL LEVY

Apportioned among 3 municipalities based on Modified Current Value Assessment statistics. Represents 52.3 per cent of the total conservation authority budget.

There are three types of levies:

- **Operating Levy:** Supports day-to-day program and service delivery.
- **Capital & Special Projects Levy:** Supports large-scale or infrastructure and asset renewal projects.
- **Land Securement Levy:** Supports strategic land acquisition and leveraging external funding to conserve environmentally significant lands.

### AUTHORITY-GENERATED FUNDS

\$5.725M of 2026 revenues are derived from fees for services and other sources, such as user fees, educational programs, and planning and permit fees.

### OTHER REVENUES AND GRANT FUNDING

Make up the balance, equating to \$2.01M.



Rockway Conservation Area

## NPCA 2026 BUDGET

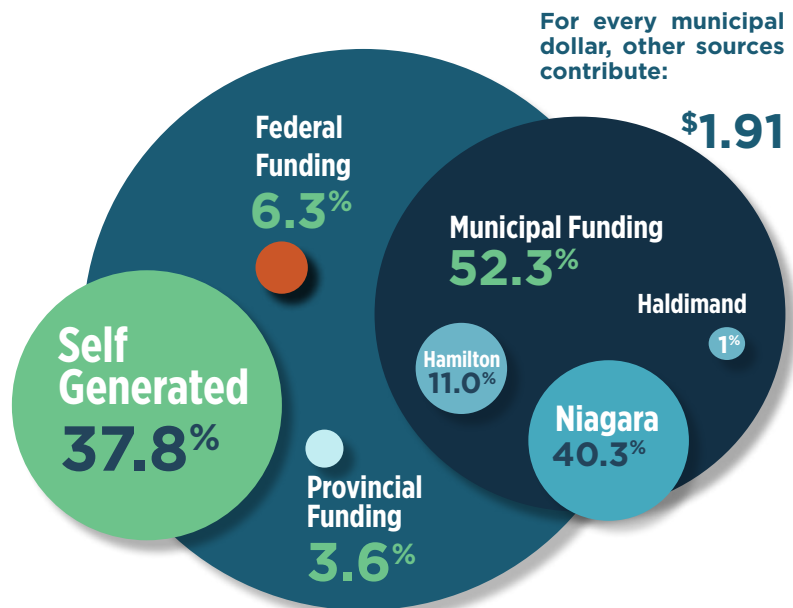
In the development of the 2026 budgets, the following issues were considered:

- **Municipal funding guidelines when available**
- **Cost of living adjustments (COLA) and grid step increases**
- **Inflation (Consumer price index – CPI)**
- **Impact from tariffs**
- **Multi-year contractual obligations**
- **Operating, capital and program pressures**
- **Board approved Fee Policy and full cost accounting**
- **Focus on internal efficiencies**
- **General economic outlook**
- **Impacts on service delivery**
- **Asset management, state of good repair for asset base**
- **User-Pay Principle**

## 2026 Draft Operating Budgets

NPCA’s overall 2026 operating budget of \$16.238M is supported by \$8.5M municipal levy, \$5.725M in authority-generated revenue, and \$2.013M in grant funding. Overall, the operating volume in this zero-based budget is largely static against 2025, increasing marginally by 0.8% (\$142K).

The 2026 operating budget is effectively a maintenance budget to address critical priorities and achieve required service levels, while keeping within municipal guidelines in a year of fiscal restraint.



## SOURCES OF OPERATING REVENUE

	2026 Budget	2025 Budget	Variance
Municipal Funding	8,499,805	7,845,836	653,969
Provincial Funding	577,845	537,574	40,271
Federal Funding	1,021,985	1,562,960	-540,975
Program Revenue	4,346,037	4,693,831	-347,794
Other	1,792,172	1,455,756	336,416
<b>Total - Operating Revenues</b>	<b>16,237,844</b>	<b>16,095,957</b>	<b>141,887</b>

## OPERATING EXPENSES

	2026 Budget	2025 Budget	Variance
Salaries and benefits, Employee Related	11,629,798	10,595,982	1,033,816
Governance	34,354	32,764	1,590
Professional Fees, Contractor Services	864,689	1,581,351	-716,662
Materials & Supplies Vehicles & Equipment	807,716	1,082,803	-275,087
Occupancy Costs	790,830	838,989	-48,159
Park Maintenance	691,493	665,734	25,759
Information Management/GIS	708,112	549,111	159,001
Marketing, Advertising, Printing, Signs	118,964	60,158	58,806
Special Events (Festival)	197,212	215,176	-17,964
Flood Forecasting & Water Quality	159,700	155,950	3,750
Miscellaneous	234,976	317,939	-82,963
<b>Total - Operating Expenses</b>	<b>16,237,844</b>	<b>16,095,957</b>	<b>141,887</b>

## 2026 MUNICIPAL SPECIAL LEVY

The 2026 Draft Capital and Special Projects Budget includes critical conservation area infrastructure projects to meet service level needs, health and safety, and state of good repair priorities. The special levy also includes funding for critical natural hazard management projects, such as floodplain and shoreline hazard mapping.

Since 2019, NPCA has successfully acquired 13 parcels adding approximately 226 ha to our public land holdings. Approximately 73 ha were secured in Niagara Region, 45 ha in the City of Hamilton and 108 ha in Haldimand County. Between 2019-2025, NPCA has successfully leveraged \$4.6M of external funding to cover 52 per cent of the overall acquisition costs. The success of NPCA's land securement program is due to the continued financial support from the participating municipalities through contributions to the land securement reserves, and private donors that enable staff to leverage external funding opportunities.

Capital & Special Projects	2026 Budget	2025 Budget
Facilities	940,999	2,028,787
Equipment	342,764	314,598
Infrastructure (excluding facilities)	241,511	239,323
Data and Technology Assets	319,848	212,016
Land Management Plans	0	83,062
Health and Safety	53,247	51,915
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,898,369</b>	<b>2,929,701</b>

**VARIANCE -1,031,332**

### Investing in Conservation Areas and Enhancing Visitor Experience

The NPCA continues to invest in key infrastructure and visitor amenities across its conservation areas to improve safety, accessibility, and enjoyment for all who visit.

#### Campground Electrical – Phase 1

Upgrading essential electrical infrastructure, including panels, breakers, pedestals, and meters, to modern standards. This first phase sets out the foundation for future campground expansion, supporting greater capacity, reduced maintenance costs, and improved reliability for campers.

#### Signage – Phase 1

Replacing outdated signage with refreshed, branded designs across conservation areas. New entrance, wayfinding, and interpretive signage will make navigation easier, enrich the visitor experience, and promote environmental education and stewardship.

#### Flood and Natural Hazard Data Assets

Another key focus area for NPCA is advancing data assets to strengthen natural hazard and floodplain mapping. By modernizing datasets, improving digital mapping accuracy, and integrating climate and watershed data, NPCA is enhancing its ability to assess risks, inform planning decisions, and support resilient communities. These investments ensure that local partners and residents have access to reliable, science-based information for managing natural hazards.

- Four Mile Creek Floodplain Mapping Update – Phase
- Lake Erie Shoreline Natural Hazard Mapping Update – Phase 1



Kala Property donated to the NPCA

## LAND SECUREMENT

In 2025, NPCA completed five land acquisitions, adding 126 hectares of conservation land to its land holdings, representing 70 per cent of NPCA’s 10-year land acquisition goal. In just two years, NPCA surpassed the 180-hectare target outlined in its Land Securement Strategy. While this milestone marks significant progress, staff continue to pursue strategic opportunities to enhance conservation areas, protect ecologically significant lands, and connect people to nature.

Recognizing fiscal restraints across municipalities, the 2026 budget recommends scaling back the Land Securement Special Levy to reflect earlier commitments from Niagara Region (2023) and City of Hamilton (2024), while maintaining Haldimand County’s contribution to leverage external funding opportunities.

Land Securement	2026 Budget	2025 Budget
Niagara	250,000	269,750
Hamilton	148,000	159,734
Haldimand	14,800	14,299
<b>Total</b>	<b>412,800</b>	<b>443,783</b>

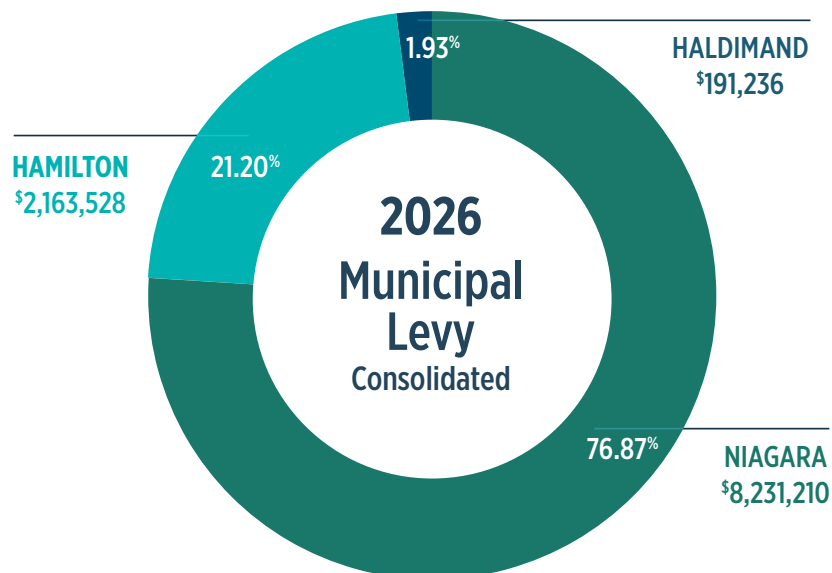
**VARIANCE -30,983**



Jordan Harbor Conservation Area

## MUNICIPAL FUNDING

The levy apportionment ratios are calculated from assessment data provided by MPAC, and further revised based on the Conservation Authority Levies Regulation. Consolidated municipal funding for 2026 is \$10,585,974 (including land securement). Levy apportionment based on Modified Current Value Assessment is:



# LEVY SUMMARY 2026

## NIAGARA

	2026	2025	Variance	
			Amount	%
General Levy	6,543,932	6,034,060	509,872	8.45%
Special Levy - Capital	1,437,278	1,655,273	-217,995	-13.17%
Special Levy - Land Securement	250,000	269,750	-19,750	-7.32%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,231,210</b>	<b>7,959,083</b>	<b>272,127</b>	<b>3.42%</b>

## HAMILTON

HAMILTON	2026	2025	Variance	
			Amount	%
General Levy	1,792,506	1,661,065	131,441	7.91%
Special Levy - Capital	223,022	254,503	-31,481	-12.37%
Special Levy - Land Securement	148,000	159,734	-11,734	-7.35%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,163,528</b>	<b>2,075,302</b>	<b>88,226</b>	<b>4.25%</b>

## HALDIMAND

	2026	2025	Variance	
			Amount	%
General Levy	163,367	150,711	12,656	8.40%
Special Levy - Capital	13,069	19,924	-6,855	-34.41%
Special Levy - Land Securement	14,800	14,299	501	3.50%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>191,236</b>	<b>184,934</b>	<b>6,302</b>	<b>3.41%</b>

## CONSOLIDATED

	2026	2025	Variance	
			Amount	%
General Levy	8,499,805	7,845,836	653,969	8.34%
Special Levy - Capital	1,673,369	1,929,700	-256,331	-13.28%
Special Levy - Land Securement	412,800	443,783	-30,983	-6.98%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,585,974</b>	<b>10,219,319</b>	<b>366,655</b>	<b>3.59%</b>

## 2026 UNFUNDED PRIORITIES (Outside 2026 Proposed Municipal Levy)

In the last several years, NPCA's ability to undertake both operational special projects and capital investments has been significantly constrained by limited financial resources. Several factors have contributed to this situation:

**Infrastructure & Staffing Needs:** NPCA must invest in infrastructure upgrades and staffing to continue serving our communities safely and efficiently. An Asset Management Plan and Financing Strategy are currently underway to further define the Asset State-of-Good-Repair gap and associated funding requirements.

**Planning & Growth Pressures:** Anticipated growth and development within NPCA's jurisdiction will require proactive investment in science and data to support informed decision-making. The completion of NPCA's

10-year Strategic Plan has identified critical gaps and priorities, including climate vulnerability and risk mitigation, that must be addressed.

**Conservation Authorities Act Changes:** Conservation Authorities Act amendments and associated regulations requires several priorities to be completed; this includes a significant number of investments in updating conservation areas management plans, shoreline and coastal resilience technical updates and flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects.

An assessment of current unfunded pressures was prioritized by staff; these initiatives totaling \$17.379M, classified in seven categories are summarized below.

Classification	Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	External	TOTAL
Integrated Watershed Strategies	2,806,077	608,469	55,454	-	3,470,000
Natural Hazard Management	400,000	-	-	-	400,000
Conservation Authority Act Requirements	96,084	26,501	2,415	-	125,000
Corporate Services and Asset Management	1,201,159	331,297	30,194	-	1,562,650
Corporate Administration	38,433	10,601	966	-	50,000
Watershed Planning & Permits	70,198	19,362	1,765	-	91,325
State of Good Repair / Health and Safety	9,598,698	1,810,197	71,105	200,000	11,680,000
	<b>14,210,649</b>	<b>2,806,427</b>	<b>161,899</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>17,378,975</b>

These unfunded priorities are not included in the 2026 budget. To address these gaps, NPCA will employ a range of strategies, including exploring external funding sources, collaborating with stakeholders, and engaging with all levels of governments to pursue opportunities beyond the existing budget framework.

# Appendix

## SERVICE AREA PROFILES

### Conservation Areas

The NPCA manages more than 3,000 hectares, including 43 conservation areas that are essential to watershed management, environmental protection, cultural heritage, and provide recreation. Our focus is on improving visitor experiences while supporting environmental stewardship.

#### **Programs & Services**

- Recreation, camping, and facility rentals (including weddings and events)
- Nature-based education, day camps, and school programs
- Heritage and cultural programs
- Conservation area management, land care, and enforcement

### Enabling Services

Enabling services provide the essential support that allows NPCA to operate efficiently, transparently, and effectively, ensuring programs and services are delivered to municipalities and the public with accountability and impact. A key focus is on leveraging IT and digital transformation to improve workflows, data-driven decision making, and public-facing services.

#### **Core Services:**

- Corporate Services & Financial Management - Finance, accounting, procurement, capital budgeting, asset management, and reporting.
- People & Performance - Talent acquisition, training, health and safety, and employee engagement.
- Information & Technology - IT, GIS, digital services, and technology-driven process improvements.
- Business Planning, Public Relations, Communications and Marketing- Brand management, public relations, and community and stakeholder engagement.
- Corporate Administration & Governance - Board and committee support, policy development, procurement, and risk management.
- Corporate support, assets and operations - Facilities, vehicles, equipment, and capital projects.

### Watershed Planning & Development

The NPCA delivers programs and services that protect people, properties, and communities from flooding, erosion, and other natural hazards. Natural hazards include dynamic beach hazard, erosion hazard, flooding hazard, hazardous lands, hazardous sites and low water or drought conditions.

By reducing public risk and supporting resilient communities, these programs contribute to Ontario's long-term prosperity, environmental health and social well-being.

#### **Programs & Services**

- Drinking Source Water Protection
- Flood and Erosion Management
- Flood Risk Management
- Water Resources Engineering
- Shoreline Hazard Management
- Environmental Planning and Policy
- Planning, Permitting, and Section 28 Compliance
- Planning Ecology

### Watershed Resource Management & Climate Change

The NPCA provides programs and services grounded in science and evidence-based research to understand watershed conditions, assess cumulative impacts, and identify environmental risks. This knowledge informs strategies and actions that protect, restore, and enhance watershed health, supporting resilient ecosystems and communities in the face of climate change.

#### **Programs and Services:**

- Integrated Watershed Monitoring and Reporting
- Community Engagement and Ecological Restoration
- Technical Studies to inform Regulatory Mapping Updates
- Natural Asset Management
- Conservation Areas Land Management Planning
- Special Projects (e.g., groundwater monitoring)
- Climate Change Resilience & Coastal Community Planning
- Watershed and Sub-watershed Resource Planning
- Other Watershed Related Programs (e.g., Niagara River Remedial Action Plan, Trees for All)

