



NIAGARA
PARKS
FOUNDATION

YEAR-END IMPACT REPORT

2022-2023



A CARING
commitment
TO PRICELESS PARKLANDS

Our conservation work is driven by a caring commitment to the founding principles of one of Ontario's original environmental organizations.

The heart of our mission lies in preserving the priceless nature and heritage along the Niagara River corridor for the enjoyment of the public and future generations.

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A MESSAGE FROM *the Chair*

As Chair of the Niagara Parks Foundation, it is my pleasure to present the 2022/23 Year-End Impact Report on behalf of our board of directors, as well as our donors and dedicated volunteers who share the belief that the parklands, natural spaces and cultural heritage across the Niagara River corridor are among our greatest resources and worthy of protection.

Niagara Parks is a self-funded organization that relies exclusively on its own revenue streams to cover its operating expenses, including investments to maintain its assets and properties, as well as support for environmental and cultural stewardship initiatives. This self-funded model is unique in Canada.

As tourism recovers and visitation returns following the challenges of the last few years, Niagara Parks has gradually been able to once again reinvest in its properties and guest experiences. However, the need has never been greater to provide additional support for the environmental and cultural heritage work of the Niagara Parks Commission.

Funds raised by the Niagara Parks Foundation whether through generous donations made by like-minded individuals, families and organizations, or by grant funding opportunities, directly support the critical environmental and cultural stewardship work of the Niagara Parks Commission. The Niagara Parks Foundation does not replace the Niagara Parks model; rather, it complements it and allows for greater investments of time, energy and resources into this essential component of Niagara Parks' mandate.

This past year, we have made significant strides as a Foundation. On the governance side, we are laying the groundwork to ensure that the Foundation is set up for success, including updating our bylaws and establishing a fundraising plan to help us achieve our goals and deliver on our priority projects.

We continue to see the direct impacts of our donors' generosity, through initiatives such as tree planting, which allowed Niagara Parks to exceed its annual tree planting target by 2,500, planting 7,500 trees across its properties this past year. Additionally, as an organization we have been focused on spreading awareness for the Foundation and our mission, including at events such as the annual Siege of Fort Erie battle reenactment in August and taking part in hosting the American Public Gardens Association when they visited Niagara Parks in the fall, as well as the community tree planting day in Fort Erie this past October.

For me personally, a highlight was taking part in an event at the Niagara Glen supported by the Niagara Parks Foundation, which provided local school children the opportunity to work with Niagara Parks staff and Indigenous community members to plant a sunflower garden, while learning more about Indigenous culture and traditions.

To all our donors, partners, advisors and others who have given generously, along with the Niagara Parks staff members who have made essential contributions to our success; on behalf of our board, I offer my sincere gratitude. Thank you for joining us in our mission of supporting meaningful stewardship initiatives that will leave a positive legacy for generations to come.

Deborah L. Whitehouse
Chair, The Niagara Parks Foundation

Board OF DIRECTORS

The Niagara Parks Foundation Board of Directors consists of the following members:



DEBORAH WHITEHOUSE

Chair



DAVID ADAMES

Treasurer/Secretary



ANNE CHARETTE

Committee Chair -
Communications + Marketing



SYLVIE CHARTRAND-RAFI

Committee Chair -
Fundraising



APRIL JEFFS

Director



BLAIR MCARTHUR

Director



ROBERT ORSINI

Vice Chair



KIM VINEY

Director
Until December 2022

Special Advisors to the Board of Directors also include Robert Brooker and Robert McIlveen.

[NIAGARAPARKSFOUNDATION.COM](https://niagaraparksfoundation.com)

E foundation@niagaraparks.com

About US

The Niagara Parks Foundation is a registered charity governed by a Board of Directors, established to support and advance stewardship initiatives of Niagara Parks. The Foundation offers unique opportunities for individuals, families, foundations and organizations to actively contribute to one of the world's most beloved public spaces.

mission STATEMENT

Preserving the priceless nature and heritage along the Niagara River corridor for the enjoyment of the public and future generations: a caring commitment to priceless parklands.

land ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Niagara Parks Foundation wishes to acknowledge and honour the lands along the Niagara River corridor as the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples. In both spirit and partnership, we recognize and thank the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation of the Anishinaabek, the Neutral Nation and all who provided stewardship of these lands over millennia.

What WE DO

The Foundation was originally established to focus on the areas of: Environmental Stewardship & Conservation, Heritage Restoration, Accessibility Enhancements, Performing Arts & Music, Stewardship-Focused Research and Active Living.

The Foundation works collaboratively with Niagara Parks to determine priority stewardship projects and initiatives. The following have been identified as priority projects for the Foundation:



TREE
PLANTING



INDIGENOUS
PROGRAMMING &
NATURE TOURS



OLD FORT ERIE
ARCHAEOLOGY
(1764 FORT)



FAMILY
DISCOVERY
GARDEN



RECREATION
TRAIL
REDEVELOPMENT



CHILDREN'S
PROGRAMMING

SHAPED BY THE LAST ICE AGE, THE NIAGARA RIVER CORRIDOR IS A GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT BINATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AREA THAT ENCOMPASSES THE LANDS ALONG THE NIAGARA RIVER, LINKING LAKE ERIE AND LAKE ONTARIO.

Environmental FEATURES

In addition to the majestic and iconic Canadian Horseshoe Falls, the corridor contains rich ecological areas such as the Niagara Glen (a designated Area of Natural and Scientific Interest), the Niagara Escarpment (a World Biosphere Reserve) and the entire Niagara River shoreline, along with numerous land and water habitats that support some of the province's most at-risk species of flora and fauna.



Cultural HERITAGE

The Niagara River corridor is home to a rich and diverse cultural landscape, which stretches back over millennia to its first Indigenous inhabitants. These lands have witnessed key nation-building events, such as the War of 1812 and Fenian Raids, as well as socially significant events including the Underground Railroad and the advent of hydro-electric power generation in Ontario.



Commitment TO STEWARDSHIP

Formed in 1885, the Niagara Parks Commission was established by the Province of Ontario to act as the steward of these lands. Today, Niagara Parks is a financially self-sustaining operational enterprise, generating its own revenue to cover its operating expenses, including its environmental and cultural heritage work. The Niagara Parks Foundation provides an essential new funding source to advance environmental and cultural stewardship along the Niagara River corridor for the enjoyment of residents and visitors today and for future generations.



Indigenous Garden Planting Event at Niagara Glen - June 2023

2022/2023

highlights

AT A GLANCE



Dufferin Islands

VISITOR EXPERIENCE & ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

In collaboration with the Niagara Parks Foundation, TD Bank Group has committed \$400,000 over three years toward the Dufferin Islands Visitor Experience and Ecological Enhancement Initiative.

Dufferin Islands is a 16 hectare (40 acre) natural area/urban park located one kilometre upstream of Niagara Falls. This initiative aims to protect the sensitive natural environment of the site while providing improved opportunities for recreation and environmental education. The project has just wrapped up its first year, with much progress occurring at the site:

- Completion of topographic survey
- Hiring of Toronto Region Conservation Authority to complete trail accessibility assessment
- Invasive Species Bioblitz pilot with students from Brock University and the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture
- Purchase of trail counters for installation at primary trail entrances
- Procurement of engineering consultant for dam and weir assessment and replacement design
- Procurement of landscape architect to develop pedestrian route and sustainable design for central picnic area
- Consultation with external agencies for boardwalk design specifications
- 192 native trees planted and 60 yards of mulch laid
- Wildlife Feeding Education and Ambassador Program
- Completion of Dufferin Islands Interpretive Plan



TOONIES FOR *Trees*

The Niagara Parks Foundation launched the Toonies for Trees program to allow guests to Niagara Parks the opportunity to directly contribute to tree planting across the Niagara River corridor. The program was first launched on-site at Niagara Parks' attractions and retail stores and then online, prompting guests to donate to the program when purchasing a digital attractions pass. The initiative raised over \$24,000 in support of Niagara Parks' tree planting efforts, allowing the organization to surpass its goal of 5,000 trees, resulting in over 7,500 trees planted in 2023.

Funds raised from the Toonies for Trees program supported the planting of 400 trees by volunteers at the Community Tree Planting Event at Old Fort Erie on October 28, 2023, in addition to 500 trees planted along the upper Niagara River shoreline. Moving forward, the Toonies for Trees program will continue to support future community tree planting events, which provide numerous benefits, including hands-on learning opportunities, community engagement and enrichment, in addition to helping Niagara Parks achieve its reforestation targets.



 SPOTLIGHT



Indigenous GARDEN PLANTING AT THE NIAGARA GLEN

In June, an event was held with local students who joined Niagara Parks staff, Indigenous community members and Niagara Parks Chair Debbie Whitehouse for a day of hands-on learning and activities at the Niagara Glen. The students were put into two groups to take part in workshops centered around Indigenous cultures and connections to nature, along with a guided hike in the Niagara Glen. One workshop was focused on sharing the seven grandfather teachings, led by Indigenous community member Michele-Elise Burnett, while the other included planting sunflowers in a newly established Indigenous Garden at the front entrance to the Niagara Glen Nature Centre.

“As the children carried on planting sunflowers in the garden, I was struck by a conversation I had with a young boy. He was so excited to be planting sunflowers – he told me it was the first time he had planted anything. Seeing the joy on the boy’s face as he got his hands dirty in the garden, I couldn’t help but share with him that Niagara Parks has a School of Horticulture and students whose actual classroom is a garden that they care for and maintain. Watching his eyes light up at this thought is a memory I will not soon forget.”

Debbie Whitehouse, Chair, Niagara Parks Foundation



INFO BOOTH AT THE SIEGE OF OLD FORT ERIE *Battle Reenactment*

Each year, Niagara Parks hosts Canada's largest and longest-running battle reenactment weekend - the Siege of Old Fort Erie. Hundreds of reenactors descend on the fort for two days of live battle reenactments and demonstrations, including a military encampment where guests can meet soldiers, merchants and sutlers to get a first-hand look at life during the War of 1812. With Old Fort Erie (the original 1764 Fort site) also being the site of one of the Niagara Parks Foundation's priority projects, an information booth was set up at the Siege event to help spread awareness for the project and the Foundation itself, as well as provide an opportunity for donations.

“Old Fort Erie is the site of one of our priority projects (interpreting the original 1764 site) and with hundreds of reenactors and guests visiting for the annual Siege of Fort Erie Battle Reenactment weekend, this represented an excellent opportunity to engage with the public by showing them some of the artifacts found at the original site, and share more about the mission of the Foundation and how to get involved.”

Sylvie Chartrand-Rafi, Director, Niagara Parks Foundation



Community TREE PLANTING DAY

In addition to the ongoing work by Niagara Parks' forestry team to plant trees along the Niagara River corridor, Niagara Parks also hosts community tree planting events that allow members of the public to take part in local reforestation projects. This year, the event was held at a site near Old Fort Erie where a number of dead ash trees were removed due to the Emerald Ash Borer invasive species. Over 100 volunteers planted 400 trees representing 22 different native tree species. The trees were purchased with funds raised through the Toonies for Trees initiative, in collaboration with the Niagara Parks Foundation. For many volunteers, the community tree planting events represent the first time they have planted a tree. This hands-on, all ages experience encourages a deeper appreciation for the critical environmental work that takes place across the Niagara River corridor, while allowing the community to collectively come together in pursuit of a greener future.



American Public GARDENS ASSOCIATION

In September, with the support of the Niagara Parks Foundation, Niagara Parks hosted the quarterly board of directors meeting of the American Public Gardens Association (APGA). The event facilitated discussions about best practices for public gardens around topics such as fundraising, events, marketing, operations and stakeholder relations. The APGA directors visited a number of Niagara Parks' sites, including the Botanical Gardens, School of Horticulture, Niagara Parks Power Station, Floral Clock, Queenston Heights Park and Landscape of Nations Memorial.



Memorial Tree & BENCH PROGRAM

The gift of a tree planted at Niagara Parks or a memorial bench placed throughout these lands is a lasting tribute that benefits the community and the natural environment. This unique and meaningful remembrance of a loved one provides a restful stopping point to pause and reflect, surrounded by the sights and sounds of the picturesque environment of Niagara Parks.

This special program is a unique opportunity for guests to honour and remember a significant person or event in their lives, while also supporting Niagara Parks. Over the course of 2022-23, \$31,321 was spent through the Memorial Tree & Bench Program.



“ A CARING
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TO PRICELESS PARKLANDS

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE NIAGARA PARKS FOUNDATION
OR TO DONATE VISIT
NIAGARAPARKSFOUNDATION.COM

2022/2023

Governance

UPDATES

BYLAWS

The Niagara Parks Foundation updated its original bylaws to ensure compliance with the latest provincial requirements for not-for-profit organizations. In addition to a legal review by Murray & Associates LLP, the Foundation consulted with the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) and its charitable foundation to align with industry-standard best practices for charitable organizations that support provincial agencies.

FUNDRAISING PLAN

Through the Community Services Recovery Fund implemented by the Government of Canada, the Niagara Parks Foundation received a grant to develop a fundraising plan to act as a framework to guide the work of the Foundation toward delivering on its established priority stewardship projects. The Foundation engaged fundraising consultancy services from BNP Goldie Canada, a leader in advising for the philanthropic community in Canada. In working with BNP Goldie Canada, a fundraising plan was developed that lays out a series of priorities, recommendations and goals that will help the Foundation achieve its mission of advancing the environmental and cultural stewardship work of Niagara Parks. Moving forward, the Foundation will be implementing the recommendations of this fundraising plan.



2022/2023

Financial

STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

	YEAR TO DATE RESULTS Nov 2022 - Oct 2023 12 Months	YEAR TO DATE RESULTS Nov 2021 - Oct 2022 12 Months
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
REVENUES		
UNRESTRICTED CONTRIBUTIONS	\$17,895	\$26,591
RESTRICTED CONTRIBUTIONS		
GRANT PROGRAMS	\$109,369	-
PRIORITY PROJECTS	\$6,792	\$11,975
MEMORIAL PROGRAM	\$31,321	\$28,968
INTEREST INCOME	\$3,641	\$160
TOTAL REVENUES	\$169,018	\$67,694
EXPENSES		
ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION	\$7,526	\$300
EXPENSES ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
GRANT PROGRAMS	\$109,369	-
PRIORITY PROJECTS	\$6,792	\$11,975
MEMORIAL PROGRAM	\$31,321	\$28,968
OTHER EXPENSES ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	\$4,925	\$1,630
LICENSES, MEMBERSHIPS AND DUES	\$1,222	\$1,829
INSURANCE	\$1,214	\$1,214
INTEREST AND BANK CHARGES	-	\$154
LICENSES, MEMBERSHIPS AND DUES	\$1,222	\$1,829
OTHER	\$1,647	\$693
PROFESSIONAL FEES	\$1,256	-
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$165,272	\$46,763
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$3,746*	\$20,931*

*Funds held for future activities

2022 - 2023

FINANCIAL RESULTS

Funds Received: \$147,701

Expenses on Charitable Activities: \$43,038

- Tree Planting: \$6,792
- Memorial Trees and Benches: \$31,321
- Other Activities: \$4,925

Operating Expenses: \$12,866

Grant Program Expenses: \$109,369

Excess of Revenue over Expenses: \$3,746*

Funds Held for Future Priority Projects: \$424,950

*Funds held for future activities

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	OCTOBER 2023	OCTOBER 2022
ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$277,978	\$86,535
Term Deposits	\$111,706	-
Accounts Receivable	\$123,777	\$405,816
TOTAL ASSETS	\$513,461	\$492,351
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$61,498	\$26,459
Deferred Contributions	\$424,950	\$442,625
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$486,448	\$469,084
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$27,013	\$23,267
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$513,461	\$492,351

GRANT FUNDING

The Niagara Parks Foundation graciously acknowledges the generous support received from TD Bank Group through the TD Ready Commitment program and the Government of Canada through the Community Services Recovery Fund.

Government
of CanadaGouvernement
du CanadaTD READY
COMMITMENT



Looking AHEAD

PRIORITY PROJECTS

In addition to ongoing initiatives such as the Memorial Tree and Bench Program, the Niagara Parks Foundation is focused on implementing the recommendations of its fundraising plan to support the following priority projects in 2023/2024 and beyond:



PLANTING

5,000 trees per year across the 56km Niagara River Corridor



CREATING

the Family Discovery Garden at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens



PRESERVING & PROMOTING

the 1764 Fort site at Old Fort Erie



REBUILDING

the Niagara River Recreation Trail



SHARING

Indigenous history, stories and teachings



DEVELOPING

education programs and supporting class visits

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE PROJECTS AND TO FOLLOW THEIR PROGRESS VISIT [NIAGARAPARKSFOUNDATION.COM](https://niagaraparksfoundation.com)

TREE PLANTING

As guided by its 10-year Urban Forestry Management Strategy, Niagara Parks has established an annual target of 5,000 trees planted to create a healthier and more resilient urban tree canopy that supports wildlife, reduces pollution and mitigates the impacts of flooding, erosion and climate change, while providing numerous benefits for local communities and the visiting public. The Foundation will continue to build on the success of this initiative, including the Toonies for Trees program, aiming to once again surpass the 5,000 trees planted target for 2023/24.

FAMILY DISCOVERY GARDEN

Located on a two-acre parcel of land within the world-renowned Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens along the Niagara Parkway, the Family Discovery Garden will reimagine the spectacular features of the Niagara River corridor through the philosophy of natural and imaginative play, inviting families and children of all ages to explore and connect with nature in a safe and accessible setting. The Family Discovery Garden will be a key focus of the Foundation's future capital campaign, as guided by the newly developed fundraising plan.

The setting of the Family Discovery Garden provides connections to existing amenities such as the popular Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory attraction and the Garden Cafe, as well as ample parking and access to public transportation. The design concept for the Family Discovery Garden is divided into three phases, each incorporating unique elements that capture the authentic character and legacy of the Niagara River corridor, all guided by the principles of sustainability, accessibility, inclusivity, exploration and diversity.

OLD FORT ERIE ARCHAEOLOGY (1764 FORT)

The original remains of the oldest British Army fort in Ontario lay just east of today's Old Fort Erie heritage site. Originally constructed in 1764, the fort was the site of an important archaeological dig in 2019 by the Wilfrid Laurier University archaeological field school.

Now, with support from the Niagara Parks Foundation, Niagara Parks will be adding interpretation and signage to showcase this important heritage site and share its story with the public. Initial concepts and interpretive content has been developed by Niagara Parks staff and funds generated through the Foundation will bring the vision to life.





RECREATION TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

The Niagara River Recreation Trail is a 53-kilometre paved path for non-motorized traffic along the Canadian side of the Niagara River, stretching from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake. The trail is a key visitor amenity at Niagara Parks and popular destination for walking, jogging and cycling, providing stunning views of the Niagara River and the spectacular lands and features that make up the Niagara River corridor. The recreation trail also connects to larger trail systems including the Trans Canada Trail, the Waterfront Trail, the Greater Niagara Circle Route, the Greenbelt Route and the Empire State Trail.

The recreation trail is in need of repair and widening to keep up with the growing demand and use by local residents and tourists alike. In addition to paving work, there are numerous foot bridges that require repair. Niagara Parks has and will continue to address regular repairs to the recreation trail. Funds generated through the Foundation will complement existing budget allocations and expand Niagara Parks' ability to restore additional sections of the trail.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMING AND NATURE TOURS

Niagara has a rich heritage and legacy of Indigenous life, culture and community. These lands, which have been inhabited by Indigenous peoples for millennia, have witnessed in more recent times the presence of the Neutral Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River of the Haudenosaunee and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation of the Anishinaabek.

The Niagara Parks Foundation is committed to supporting programming, tours and public events that help to share stories of the culture, heritage and community of Indigenous people in the region. In 2024, a new audio tour experience will be launched at the Niagara Glen, curated and produced by Indigenous community members Michele-Elise Burnett and William Reich. The self-guided audio tour will allow guests to immerse themselves in Indigenous teachings and music focused on cultivating a deeper understanding of and appreciation for nature at the Niagara Glen. Both Burnett and Reich are Métis citizens of Ontario with Algonquin roots and members of the Bear Clan.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

Niagara Parks strongly believes in the importance of place-based learning for students to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of curriculum content. Educational programming at Niagara Parks is developed in alignment with curriculum standards to provide strong connections between our sites and learning objectives.

As an identified priority project of the Niagara Parks Foundation, funds generated through the Foundation will help offset costs related to transportation and admission, so that even more students can participate in important hands-on learning opportunities at Niagara Parks sites.



WAYS YOU CAN *help*

Support the Niagara Parks Foundation to advance the mandate and work of Niagara Parks that provides social, economic, environmental and community benefits for us all.

Make a one-time donation, monthly gift or dedicate a tribute to a loved one.



ONE-TIME DONATION

One-time donations can be made online toward a specific priority project or to the Foundation more generally to direct as needed.



MONTHLY DONATION

Monthly donations can be set up online with tax receipts issued annually.



COMMEMORATIVE TRIBUTE

Make a tribute gift to the Niagara Parks Foundation to mark a special occasion or to honour the memory of a loved one.



NIAGARA
PARKS
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