



**NIAGARA
PARKS**

Business Highlights Presentation

Niagara Parks Commission – Public Meeting

Thursday, February 13, 2025



Niagara Parks

- Founded in 1885
- Operates under the Niagara Parks Act
- Two founding principles:
 - i. Niagara Parks would never be a burden to the taxpayers of Ontario
 - ii. Niagara Parks would as much as possible, be free to enjoy
- Board-governed operational enterprise under the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and Gaming
- 12-member Board of Commissioners
- **Mandate:** To be the environmental and cultural stewards of the Niagara River Corridor
- **Vision:** To be one of the most spectacular parks in the world



Stewards of the Niagara River Corridor

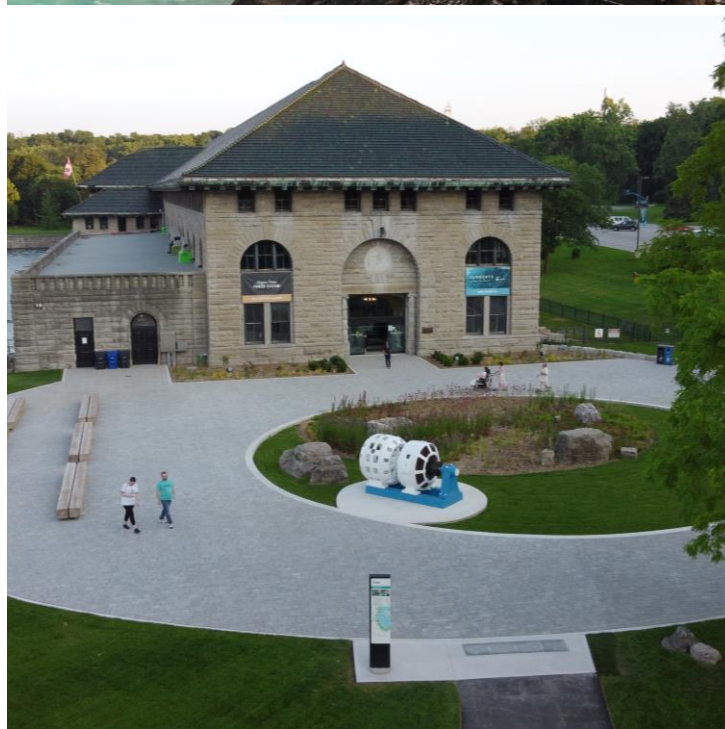
- Niagara Parks is a key demand generator, driving visitation and tourism to Niagara and Ontario.
- Responsible for maintaining 56km Niagara Parkway and 53km recreation trail, numerous parks, gardens and natural areas.
- Breadth of services include Niagara Parks Police Service, School of Horticulture.
- Re-established Niagara Parks Foundation focuses on raising funds to support additional environmental and cultural stewardship projects.
- As a self-funded organization, investments into enhancing our guest experiences that in turn, drive visitation and grow revenue, directly benefit our ability to deliver on our mandate of environmental and cultural stewardship.





Funding & Operations

- One of the region's largest employers; 1,800 headcount in peak season; \$60 million payroll.
- Operating budget covers payroll, operating expenses to run its revenue-producing operations and key operational projects.
- Capital budget covers investments into deferred maintenance and strategic projects to enhance Niagara Parks' visitor experiences
 - \$175 million worth of deferred maintenance across Niagara Parks sites
 - **Major capital projects for 2024-25:**
 - *Replacement of Niagara's Fury*
 - *Repairs and maintenance*





Stunning Winter Views of the Falls

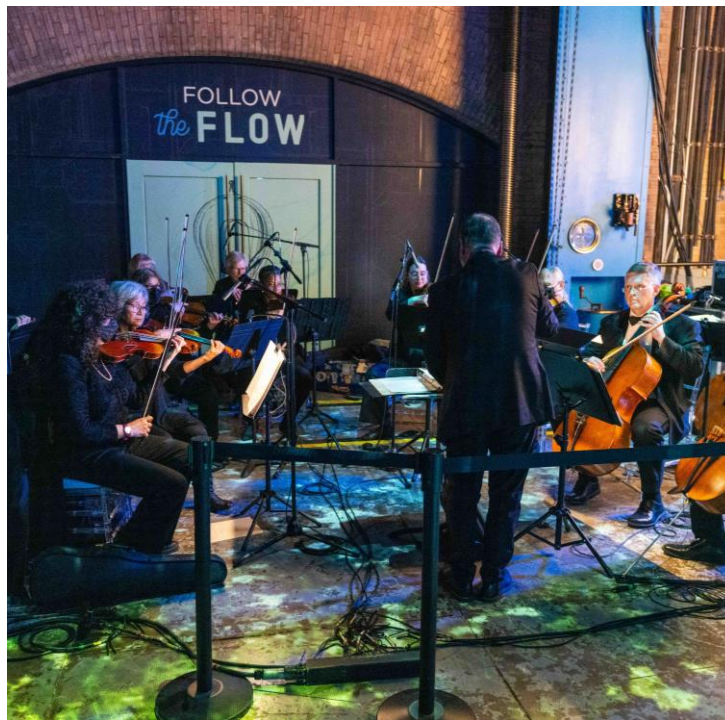
- A polar vortex brought extreme cold to Niagara, creating stunning ice formations around the Falls.
- Queen Victoria Park transformed into a winter wonderland.
- The newly heated Niagara Parks Power Station viewing platform offered prime views of the icy spectacle.
- Visitors and locals shared breathtaking winter landscapes on social media.





Cool as Ice Gala Wrap Up

- Jan. 18: The Niagara Parks Power Station was illuminated in shades of blue and icy tones, setting a magical scene for the Niagara Icewine Festival's Cool as Ice Gala.
- Over 800 guests attended the event.
- Guests savoured premium Niagara icewines, cocktails, mocktails and locally inspired culinary creations from over 30 vendors alongside live entertainment.





Celebrating the Blue Morpho Butterfly

- The striking Blue Morpho butterfly has long been a guest favourite at the Butterfly Conservatory.
- Feb. 15: New stained glass Blue Morpho butterfly by artist Alex Heveri will be added to the Butterfly Conservatory.
- Additionally, 500 more Blue Morpho butterflies will be released into the conservatory.



Family Day Programming

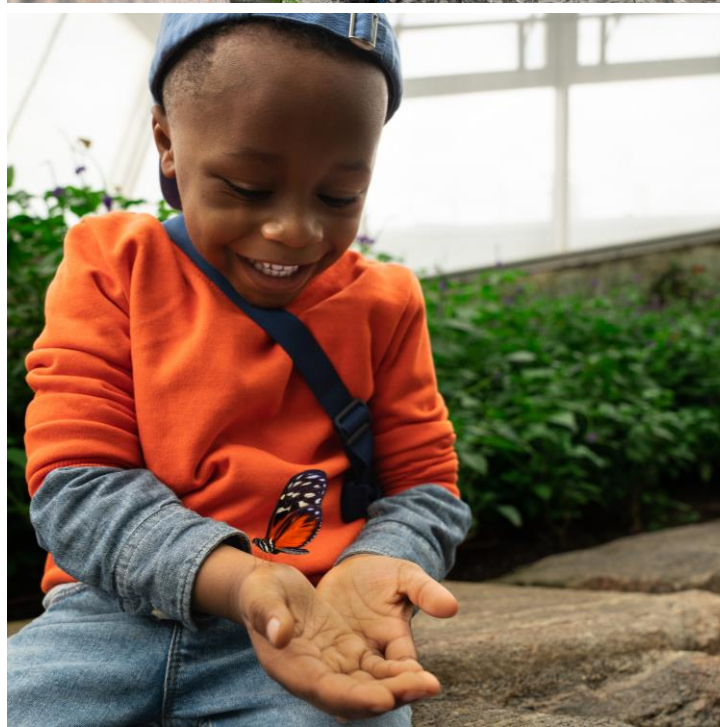
Butterfly Conservatory

Mad Science of Niagara

- Various dates starting Feb. 17 to March 16 at the Butterfly Conservatory.
- 60-minute FUNStations with hands-on activities geared toward children ages five and up.
- Included with admission to the Butterfly Conservatory.

Niagara Glen Nature Centre

- Monday, Feb. 17 hosted in collaboration with Birds on the Niagara.
- Free admission.
- Open house to include:
 - Bird identification workshops and presentations from local birding experts
 - Guided birding walks.





White Water Walk Restoration

- Through careful planning and hands-on efforts, challenges like steep slopes and invasive Tree of Heaven removal have been tackled, successfully treating dense patches spanning 400 feet
- This work has not only helped control invasive species but also created space for native plants to thrive, improving the health and biodiversity of the area
- A huge thank you to the incredible funders, the Ontario Invasive Species Centre and the Niagara Parks Foundation, for their generous support in making this restoration possible



Parks, Environment and Culture

Heritage and Legacy

- Presented Landscape of Nations: Beyond the Mist to the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, receiving an excellent response from a large audience of local history experts.
- Staff coordinated with Brock University History professors to schedule in-class presentations on heritage summer jobs with NPC.
- Toured 180 members of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board through the Landscape of Nations and Queenston Heights to showcase Niagara Parks sites and connections to curriculum content.





Parks, Environment and Culture

Parks Operations

- Installed stone in front of waste bins at the Butterfly Conservatory to address a health and safety concern regarding slipperiness.
- Installed new safety ropes and signage at Rambler's rest along the parapet wall.
- Multiple electrical, elevator and escalator maintenance projects are underway prior to 2025 season opening.
- Jan. 29-30 A two-day power shutdown by Niagara Peninsula Energy took place for pruning around high voltage lines. The School of Horticulture and Butterfly Conservatory were powered by generators during the shutdown to avoid business interruptions. This work aims to reduce future outages in the area.
- Installed winter signage at the Old Fort site as an initial step for Winter/Recreational Trail signage.



Parks, Environment and Culture

Environmental Services

- Forestry assisted the Butterfly Conservatory with pruning activities.
- Cedars in urns moved from the Bridge of Flowers to Niagara-on-the-Lake for the Ice Wine Festival.
- Partnered with the City of Niagara to address overgrown brush and tree pruning needs along Portage Road moraine.
- Removal of dead pines at the Whirlpool Golf Course.
- Tree removal at Legends golf course to prepare for new path cart installation.
 - Trees will be replanted at a 5:1 ratio across the Park, in consultation with the Environmental Stewardship Team





Capital Projects

North Parks

- Significant efforts have been made to enhance walkability and rejuvenate pedestrian pathways.
- Replacement of recreation trail pedestrian bridges remains a key focus for improved safety and convenience.
- Upgrades aim to make navigation easier and more enjoyable for all visitors.
- Pedestrian Bridge #35 in Niagara-on-the-Lake will be tendered in February 2025, with completion expected by July 2025.
- Queenston Heights Park store to be renovated to support new court rentals and merchandise for sale.
- Queenston Heights Park Creche washrooms tendered and construction to renovate scheduled to start in February.



Capital Projects

Central Parks

- Flying theatre construction is ongoing, with an anticipated opening in summer 2025.
- Collaborating with Niagara City Cruises to refresh the tunnel from Grandview to the lower boat tour platform, including painting, LED lighting, and a new ventilation system to reduce humidity and enhance the guest experience.
- Niagara Parks Power Station platform heating is now operational and functioning well.
- Exterior washroom is being constructed on the west side of the Power Station, expected to open in early spring.





Capital Projects

South Parks:

- Legends on the Niagara Golf Course is undergoing a large-scale replacement of the cart paths on its Battlefield Course.
 - The project will improve safety, playability, aesthetics, and durability while reducing maintenance costs.
 - Excellent progress has been made in the base and granular preparation stages, as shown in the progress mapping.
- Marina shoreline protection being installed and some electrical upgrades expected to be completed prior to opening in the spring.
- Repair and restoration work completed along Fort Erie Breakwall.



Niagara Parks Police



Chief Forcier, Insp. Gallagher, Sgt. Kitson and several other members were accompanied by NPC Chair Gale and CEO David Adames at the Niagara Regional Police Service Recruit Swearing in Ceremony held at NRPS headquarters on January 23, 2025. The ceremony included Probationary Constable Brock Wunovic.

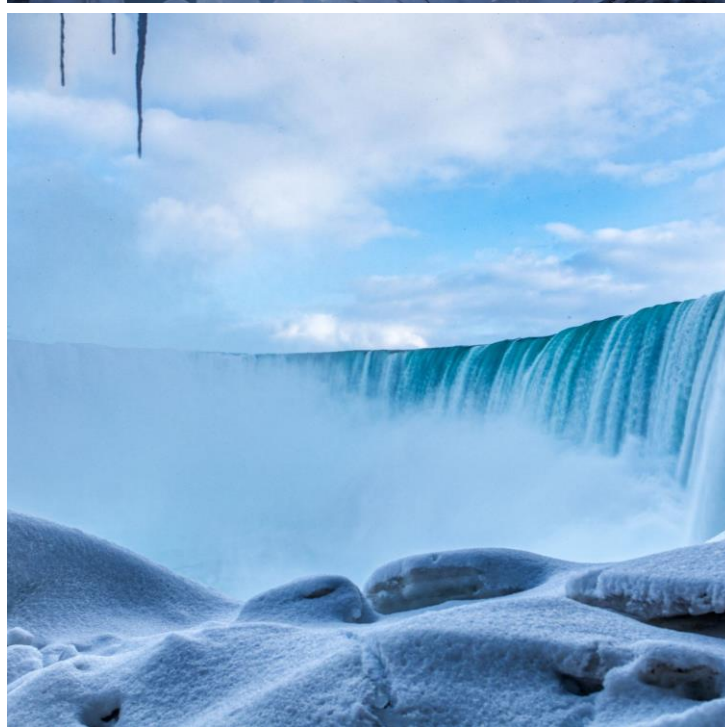
- Jan 6: Chief Forcier participated in three virtual meetings related to the Next Gen 9-1-1- system with stakeholders.
- Jan 23: Chief Forcier participated in a virtual meeting with law enforcement stakeholders concerning border security.
- Jan 23: NPPS attended Recruit Swearing in Ceremony held at NRPS headquarters. The ceremony included Probationary Constable Brock Wunovic.
- Jan 29: Hosted a Casino Police Security Alliance meeting with tourism industry stakeholders.



Upcoming Events

- Feb. 14: Valentine's Day Dinner at Table Rock House Restaurant **(SOLD OUT)**
- Feb. 17 – Mar. 16: Mad Science at Butterfly Conservatory
 - Various dates during Family Day weekend through to March Break
- Feb. 17: Birding Open House at Niagara Glen Nature Centre
- Feb. 20: The R&B Jazz Songbook Concert in partnership with TD Niagara Jazz Festival
- Mar. 7: Opening Event for new Nikola Tesla Exhibit at Niagara Parks Power Station
- Mar. 8: Orchid Show at the Floral Showhouse
- Mar. 9 & 16: Butterfly Stained Glass Workshop at Butterfly Conservatory

Questions & Comments





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2025 Environmental Stewardship Highlights



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FOUNDATION**

Growing the Forest Canopy

- 7350 trees planted in 2024. Resources and planting plans are in place to exceed this total in 2025.
- Several corporate, student, and community planting events already scheduled.
- Ongoing soil health analysis work with Vineland Research to increase survival.
- Funding provided through the Niagara Parks Foundation's Toonies for Trees Program and other external partners (Niagara Community Foundation, Canada Trees for Life, Niagara Falls Tourism).
- Curation - Ongoing Tree Inventory and Collections Management – IrisBG Software.



Gonder's Flats Wetland – An Educational Opportunity

- Interpretation and place-based learning opportunities.
- Installation of trailhead, wayfinding, and interpretive signage.
- Installation of Amenities (benches, picnic tables, etc.) and additional lookouts.
- Accessible viewing nodes into the Niagara River (installed fall 2024).
- Official launch event to be held in 2025.





Chippawa Battlefield Restoration

- As of 2017, 50 ha (120 acres) have been restored to native tallgrass prairieland to support grassland nesting birds.
- Based on ongoing monitoring, Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolink, both species at risk, have now returned and are successfully breeding at the site.
- Prescribed burning program continues to be effective at managing grassland.
- Continue to receive funding support from INNIO (formerly GE Canada) for ongoing maintenance.



Chippawa Battlefield - Interpretive Opportunities

- Development of a viewing platform overlooking the grasslands to create a destination and foster education.
- Design incorporates Indigenous symbolism (Sun – energy and life).
- Platform was redesigned to reflect an Eastern Meadowlark, one of the target species.
- Interpretation will focus on both natural and cultural heritage elements of the site, building on the existing War of 1812 elements.
- Incorporated into corporate and student group tours.





Prescribed Burn Program

- Using controlled fire to manage over 80 ha (200 ac) of grassland habitat.
- Effective at controlling invasive species and encouraging native plant growth.
- Team consists of more than 20 cross-departmental, provincially-certified trained staff (Burn Bosses and Burn Workers).
- 2025 sites include: Paradise Grove, Legends and Whirlpool Golf, Legacy Garden, Lilac Garden, Chippawa Battlefield.



Niagara River Coastal Wetland Program

- Recycles dead/removed trees by anchoring them into the riverbed to create fish habitat and reduce erosion.
- To date, over 8.5 acres of coastal habitat has been created.
- Fish population monitoring is showing increased population levels and more species diversity.
- Program continuing in 2025 in collaboration with Parks Canada.





Dufferin Islands Visitor and Ecological Enhancement

- Funding support through TD Canada – year 3 of 3.
- Thousands of native trees and shrubs planted.
- Bioengineering on over 200 m of shoreline.
- Upgrades to trail surfaces.
- Restoration of man-made islands.
- Installation of interpretive elements in 2025 – signage, wayfinding, and program development.



Invasive Species Management

- Utilizing current best management practices to monitor and manage invasive species.
- Collaboration with Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture.
- Continuation of pilot to utilize goats to feed on Phragmites within environmentally sensitive areas.
- Management of Tree of Heaven along White Water Walk – Funding provided by Ontario Invasive Species Centre.





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Moraine Management

- The moraine is a unique geological feature with natural significance.
- Ongoing management preserves wildlife habitat, esthetics, and bank stability.
- Successful collaboration with City of Niagara Falls to remove invasive species and remaining dead ash trees.
- Planting of low-growing native vegetation will occur in spring 2025 to prevent erosion.



Niagara Glen Nature Centre Refresh

- Collaboration with Science North to update Nature Exchange Program.
- Refresh displays and programming.
- Continuation of Wilderness Weekends – Nature-based programs.
- Installation of temporary exhibits (Brock University - Connections to Nature – Photovoice Exhibit).
- Ongoing improvements to Niagara Glen trail wayfinding, user experience, and habitat protection.





Research Collaborations

- Supporting student development and faculty research.
- Comparison of constructed/restored wetlands to naturally occurring wetlands.
- Building Connections to Nature.
- Impacts of climate change on the forest canopy.
- Niagara College – Ecosystem Restoration:
 - Niagara Gorge Restoration Strategy
 - Plant and animal inventories

