



**NIAGARA  
PARKS**

# **Business Highlights Presentation**

Niagara Parks Commission – Public Meeting

Thursday, March 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, Culture 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:**
    - *New flying theatre attraction*
    - *Repairs and maintenance*





# Tesla: A Spark of Genius

- March 7: Launch of new Nikola Tesla exhibit at Niagara Parks Power Station
- Launch event attended by representatives from the Nikola Tesla museum in Belgrade, Serbia, Serbian Ambassador Dejan Ralević, political dignitaries, staff, stakeholders and local media
- Educational exhibit features rare artifacts and personal items graciously on loan from the Nikola Tesla Museum in Belgrade Serbia
- Exhibit on display through Oct. 2025









## Chefs' Signature Dinner

- April 4: The Niagara Parks Culinary Team is preparing for the Chefs' Signature Dinner at Table Rock House Restaurant starting at 6 p.m.
- Menu to feature six unique courses paired with VQA wines
- Dishes to be prepared by Chef Bill Greenan, Chef Gary Schroeder, Chef Matt Hemmingsen, Chef Chris Totah & Chef Rick Bieber
- More information:  
[niagaraparks.com/chefs-dinner](https://niagaraparks.com/chefs-dinner)





# Orchid Show at Floral Showhouse

- Began March 8 & continues until April 27
- Orchid Show features over 1,700 Phalaenopsis Orchids, Ferns and Tropical plants.
- A sunset palette of rich reds, maroons and purples will add warmth to the centre house display.
- Brighter yellows, oranges and pinks will transform the north house into a dreamy sunrise.
- More info: [niagaraparks.com/floralshowhouse](https://niagaraparks.com/floralshowhouse)







## Mad Science at the Butterfly Conservatory

- Niagara Parks partnered with Mad Science to bring hands-on activities to the Butterfly Conservatory
- Select dates in February & March
- Daily programming running March 9 to March 16
- Children encouraged to learn about what makes a bug a bug, how scientists classify butterflies, insects and more
- Included with admission
- Program well received by guests
- More information:  
[niagaraparks.com/madscience](http://niagaraparks.com/madscience)





# Plans to Develop a Children's Garden

- Working with the Niagara Parks Foundation, a two-acre Children's Garden is proposed for development at the Botanical Gardens—an interactive space where children can explore and connect with Niagara's natural environment
- In February, Niagara Parks hosted focus group sessions with local educators from DSBN, Niagara Catholic and Brock University
- Throughout March Break, visitors to the Butterfly Conservatory can stop by an information booth to learn more about the Children's Garden.
- Children are encouraged to draw, colour & create artwork inspired by their favourite aspects of nature and the outdoors
- Parents can share their input by participating in a brief online survey.
- More information: [niagaraparks.com/childrensgarden](https://niagaraparks.com/childrensgarden)



Pictured: Representatives from Brock University's Faculty of Education participating in a focus group at the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture.



## Marking Milestones: Retirement Recognition

- Steve Barnhart, Senior Director of Planning, Environment, and Culture, retired after nine years of dedicated service to Niagara Parks
  - He will continue part-time as Senior Landscape Architect, supporting major projects two days a week
- Feb. 24: A retirement tea was held at the Maintenance Centre to celebrate his many contributions and career highlights



From Left to Right: Niagara Parks Commissioner Ted Salci, Niagara Parks Chair Bob Gale, Steve Barnhart, David Adames, City of Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati.



## Corporate Recognition

- Niagara Parks received the Community Partner award from United Way at their 2025 campaign celebration breakfast
  - This award recognizes an outstanding organization that has shown exceptional commitment and collaboration in supporting a charitable event, embodying the true spirit of community engagement and philanthropy
- Niagara Parks has been named 2024 Co-op Employer of the Year (to be announced later in March)



Sarah Wood, Senior Manager of Events, Programming and Sponsorship Development, (centre) received the award for United Way Community Partner on behalf of Niagara Parks.





# 100th Anniversary of Niagara Falls Illumination Board

- For the past century, Niagara Falls has been illuminated nightly with a breathtaking, multi-coloured spectacle
- These illuminations are carried out by the Niagara Falls Illumination Board
- On February 24, 2025, the binational organization celebrated its 100th anniversary
- A media release was issued on behalf of the Board, celebrating the anniversary and announcing further celebratory events throughout the year



# Environmental Stewardship

- Completed a survey of the oak tree inventory for Spongy Moth, with low populations eliminating the need for spraying in 2025
- GIS mapping of the Niagara River Recreation Trail completed
- GIS mapping of waste receptacles throughout Niagara Parks ongoing
- New GIS mapping project underway to track concentrated areas of invasive species across Niagara Parks
- Invasive Species Council hosted a virtual three-day seminar in February, attended by NPC arborist and Field Technician to learn new techniques and discuss project successes with colleagues across North America







# Business Development

## Retail & Attractions

- Preparations for the new Flying Theatre are underway, with footage review and finalization in progress. Vendors have been secured for art and video designs, working closely with the director to ensure continuity in storytelling and experience.
- Retail Managers recently visited the DC Warehouse to select vibrant, nature-inspired décor for the Spring merchandising season, creating an inviting shopping experience.
- Attraction managers attended an IAAPA webinar on AI advancements in the theme park industry, with positive feedback on potential applications to enhance operations and guest experiences.





# Business Development

## Culinary

- Feb. 14: Table Rock House Restaurant hosted a special 3 course prix fixe menu for Valentine's Day, featuring many local ingredients, serving over 200 guests that evening.
- Feb. 20: Table Rock House Restaurant hosted the Twilight Jazz and Blues Series featuring R&B musician Cinnamon Jones with the Quincy Bullen Band and offering a special prix fixe menu and an a la carte appetizer menu







# Business Development

## Golf

- Legends on the Niagara Battlefield cart path replacement is on schedule with excavation and base complete, including new drainage to support the paths and course. Asphalt installation, covering over 11 km, will begin in the spring when conditions allow.
- Legends is accepting registrations for the 2025 men's and women's leagues following a successful 2024 season.
- Niagara Parks courses are scheduled to open on April 18, weather permitting.
- Renovations on Whirlpool's 18th hole are complete, featuring a new fairway bunker, expanded fairway, and over 40 new trees along the Niagara Parkway to enhance safety.
- The TaylorMade Performance Center opens in March for club fittings by appointment, while the Golf Academy remains available for private indoor instruction.







# Business Development

## Sales and Events

- Business Events: Hosted 4 groups and 8 client site inspections in February
- Travel Trade: Hosted 4 familiarization tours and attended the American Bus Association (ABA) Annual Marketplace in Philadelphia (Feb. 1-5)
- Weddings: Hosted 2 ceremonies and attended The Ring Annual Wedding Show in Niagara-on-the-Lake (Feb. 22)
- Industry Engagement: Attended the Candian Society of Association Executives Tête-à-Tête Marketplace in Ottawa (Feb. 23-26)







# Parks, Environment and Culture

## Heritage and Legacy

- Parks Canada hosted an event at Navy Hall with Tim Johnson and Jim Hill, focusing on Indigenous history in 1812 and featuring sales of *The Landscape of Nations: Beyond the Mist*
- Met with Brock History to discuss MOU activities and recruit for Heritage Department summer positions during lectures
- Archival research for the Engineering team on the original Journey Behind the Falls tunnel and supported the Production team with historical research for the Flying Theatre attraction.
- Partnered with the City of Niagara Falls History Museum for Family Day, with a hands-on printing project highlighting the Mackenzie Printery
- Winter tours at Queenston Heights allowed children to explore and learn about Niagara's history, geography, and geology





# Engineering and Parks Operations

## Parks Operations

- Ongoing winter maintenance, including ice removal to ensure safety at all facilities
- Annual Hornbeam Allee maintenance at the Botanical Gardens completed in February
- New Winter Festival of Lights building completed in December 2024 and now in use
- Lighting orders for 2025/26 nearing completion.
- Forestry removed declining Kwanzan cherry trees in Kingsbridge Park and conducted maintenance at Whirlpool Golf Course and the WEGO garage. Trees in construction zones were removed and will be replanted at a 5:1 ratio
- Niagara Parks Arborists attended the International Society of Arboriculture conference in Windsor to learn new techniques and network with industry colleagues

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# Engineering and Parks Operations

## Parking and Transportation

- WEGO buses now use the Accesso scanning program, aligning with Niagara Parks attractions. NPC operates the Green Line within the Parks, the Orange Line to Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the Blue Line in the Niagara Falls hotel district
- The Falls Incline Railway was closed for annual winter maintenance until Saturday, March 8, 2025, as part of its regular February/March schedule





# Niagara Parks Police Service

- Niagara Parks Police Service representatives attended:
  - Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Zone 4 Meeting, hosted by Niagara Regional Police Service
  - Virtual meetings with Emergency Management Niagara, Niagara Regional Police - Information Systems, Ministry of Transportation, and Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Special Investigations Unit Committee.
  - Casino Security Police Alliance meeting at Fallsview Casino.
  - Employment Conference, hosted by the Police Association of Ontario in Toronto.
- In February, members of the Service arrested three drivers for impaired driving and issued several Provincial Offences Act charges related to these incidents.







## Upcoming Events

- April 18: Niagara Parks' golf season begins
- April 19: Niagara Falls Adventure Pass/Spring-Summer season Launch
- April 20: Easter Brunch at Queenston Heights Restaurant, Legends on the Niagara & Table Rock House Restaurant
- May 10 –11: Heritage Sites Re-open
- May 10 –11: Mother's Day Tea at McFarland House
- May 11: Mother's Day Brunch at Queenston Heights Restaurant, Legends on the Niagara & Table Rock House Restaurant
- May 3: Hydrangea Display at the Floral Showhouse
- May 28: Women's Golf Day – 10th anniversary
- May 30: Music Trivia Night at Old Fort Erie
- June 15: Father's Day Special/Brunch at Legends on the Niagara, Whirlpool Bar + Lounge & Queenston Heights Restaurant



# Questions & Comments

