



**NIAGARA
PARKS**

Business Highlights Presentation

Niagara Parks Commission – Public Meeting

Thursday, September 18, 2025



Niagara Parks

- Founded in 1885
- Operates under the Niagara Parks Act
- **Two Founding Principles:**
 - Niagara Parks would never be a burden to the taxpayers of Ontario
 - 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

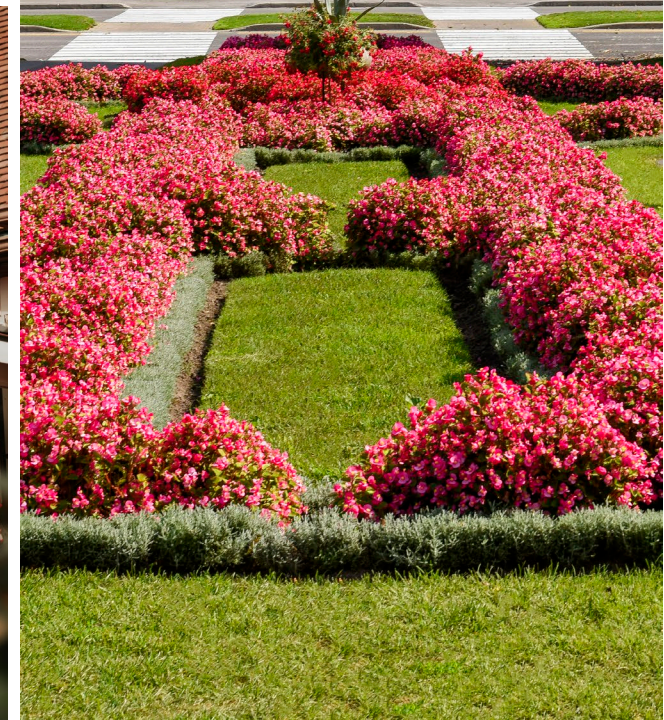
- Niagara Parks is a key demand generator, driving visitation and tourism to Niagara and Ontario.
- Responsible for maintaining 56km Niagara Parkway and 53km recreation trail, numerous parks, gardens and natural areas.
- Breadth of services include Niagara Parks Police Service, School of Horticulture.
- 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; 2,000 employees in peak season; \$70 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
 - **Major Capital Projects for 2025 - 26:**
 - *Brand-new attraction opens, Niagara Takes Flight*
 - *Repairs and maintenance*





Niagara Takes Flight Grand Opening

- \$25 million project marks the completion of a multi-phased transformation of Niagara Parks' flagship site, Table Rock Centre.
- Aug. 17 – 24: Staff and their families, along with those who participated as extras were invited to be among the first to experience the attraction during a special preview week.
- Aug. 29: Public Grand Opening saw an excellent turnout, selling out multiple weekend days with overwhelmingly positive feedback.





Marking the 100th Anniversary of Niagara Falls Illumination Board

- **Sound and Lights Shows:** To mark the 100th anniversary of the binational Niagara Falls Illumination Board, a special light and laser show synchronized to music was presented Sept. 12 – 14, three times each evening, with a dazzling fireworks display sponsored by the Niagara Falls Hotel Association prior to the final show of each night.
- **Falls Illumination Tower Tours:** The Illumination Tower is where operators control the nightly illumination of Niagara Falls. The public is invited to participate in free guided tours of the Illumination Tour on the following dates:
 - Oct. 17 – 19 (sold-out)
 - Oct. 24 - 26
- Tours will take place from 6 - 11 p.m. each night, offering a behind-the-scenes look at the illumination of Niagara Falls.





Recognition Garden Opens at the Botanical Gardens

- Niagara Parks celebrated the grand opening of a new Recognition Garden at the Botanical Gardens On Sept. 13 with alumni, donors, community partners, staff and students.
- The garden pays tribute to all those who have supported the School of Horticulture since its founding in 1936.
- Recent unveiling highlights significant growth for the School of Horticulture.
- September marks the largest student intake in the school's history with 17 students.





Business Development

Retail and Attractions

- The retail merchandising team designed the store layout at Niagara Takes Flight with a curated collection of flight-themed merchandise, as well as Indigenous art inspired by the pre-show experience and popular branded items like apparel, patches, mugs and magnets.
- The retail team attended NY NOW and Shoppe Object in New York City to gain insights on emerging trends and consumer preferences.
- **Ambassador Program:** Since its soft launch in May, the Ambassador Program has received positive guest feedback. Ambassadors at Rapidsview, the GO Station, and key areas of the park have supported pass sales, wayfinding and inquiries.
 - Survey data shows varying support needs by location.
 - The program has been effective for improving guest flow and enhancing the overall experience.



The Niagara Parks Women's Invitational took place at Whirlpool Golf Course on August 25. Pictured from left are tournament winners Anna LaCaprara and Pat Reynders with a score of 74 in the two-person scramble format.



Business Development

Golf

- Over 50 golfers competed for the trophy at the Niagara Parks Women's Invitational on Aug. 29 at Whirlpool, followed by a luncheon and awards ceremony.
- All courses have held up well through the summer heat; overall rounds were up slightly up due to dry weather.
- Bunker sand top-ups are ongoing across all courses.
- Whirlpool Dine & Play and Chippawa 9 & Dine promotions have been well-received, continuing through September.
- \$850K+ in capital equipment orders have been issued for agronomy operations.
- Legends irrigation pump station replacement awarded; with installation set for winter/spring 2026 (\$413K).

New Adaptive Golf Clinics at Legends





Business Development

Sales and Events

September 2025 sales and activities included:

Hosted:

- 23 business events
- 19 wedding ceremonies and 13 wedding receptions
- Seven familiarization tours
- Six client site inspections

Attended:

- Receptive Tour Operator Connect Marketplace in Miami, Florida
- Canadian Meeting and Event Expo in Toronto, Ontario



Planning, Environment and Culture

Heritage and Legacy

- Niagara Parks' heritage sites joined the Canada Strong Pass Program, offering free admission for ages 17 and under, and 50% off for ages 18 – 24. Visitation rose 24%, with 1,473 more admissions over 2024.
- Aug. 15 -16: Commissioners Wiens and Salci delivered land acknowledgements each night at Queenston Heights Park for *Song to the Waters* events, featuring Indigenous performances and a cultural festival, hosted in partnership with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.





Siege of Fort Erie Battle Reenactment

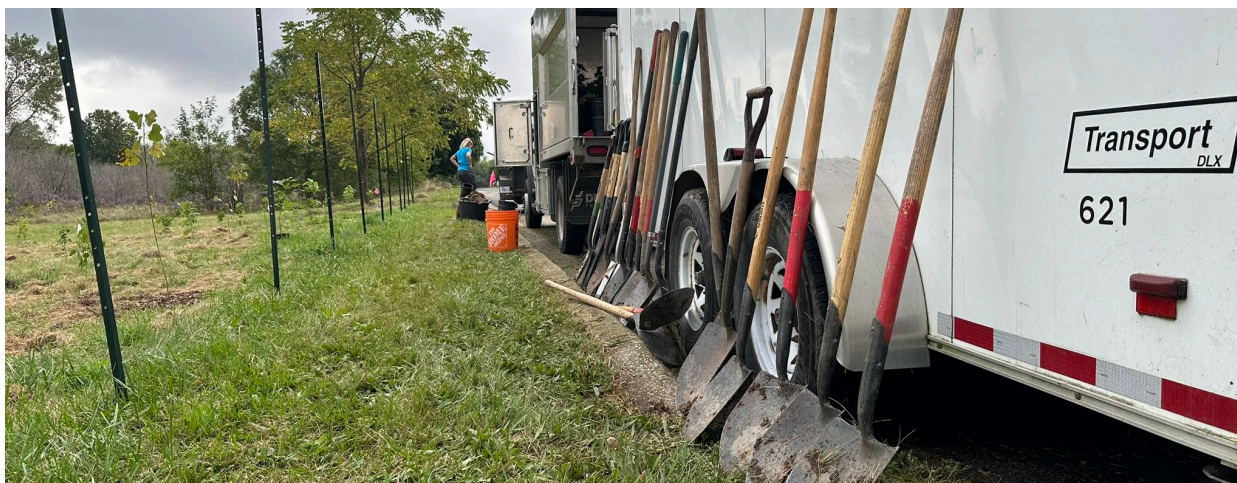
- Hundreds of reenactors gathered Aug. 9 – 10 for the annual Siege of Fort Erie Battle Reenactment, bringing history to life at Old Fort Erie.
- This annual event honours fallen soldiers and fosters public understanding of Canada's military past through powerful, hands-on storytelling.
- Visitors experienced an immersive glimpse into the War of 1812 through live skirmishes, historic weapons demonstrations and family-friendly activities for all ages.



Planning, Environment and Culture

Environmental Stewardship

- Over 2,000 ft. of invasive plants were cleared during August's shoreline restoration efforts.
- Ongoing maintenance and watering of newly planted trees.
- Dead trees have been repurposed for underpinning in Coastal Wetlands projects at both Boyer's and Black Creek.





Planning, Environment and Culture

School of Horticulture

- Niagara Parks School of Horticulture has confirmed 17 students enrolled in the incoming Class of 2028 — the highest on record. Studies began September 2, 2025.
- The General Knowledge Practical Assessment is held over two days each July. This hands-on evaluation tests student competency in ornamental horticulture across key areas: Arboriculture, Occupational Health and Safety, Landscape Plant Installation, Integrated Pest Management, Landscape Construction, Surveying and Plant Identification.



Planning, Environment and Culture

Horticulture

- The Niagara Parks School of Horticulture hosted a Professional Advisement Committee meeting focused on Environmental Stewardship in Ornamental Horticulture, with participation from alumni, industry experts, and educators.
- The discussion aimed to align the curriculum with Niagara Parks' environmental mandate along the Niagara River Corridor. Outcomes from the meeting will be integrated into the curriculum starting this September.



Planning, Environment and Culture

Events, Programming and Education

- August Staff BBQ: Raised \$1,305 for United Way, with an additional \$5,077 pledged via payroll deductions.
- Sept. 4: A romantic comedy filmed scenes at Table Rock, the brink of the Falls and Journey Behind the Falls.
- Aug. 7 – 8: Niagara 5000 featured the McLaren VIP reception at Queen Victoria Place Restaurant, family-friendly activities, and a supercar rally in Queen Victoria Park.
- Asian Night Market: First-ever event at Oakes Garden Theatre, supported by LiUNA, drew approximately 10,000 visitors over three days.



Engineering and Parks Operations

Engineering and Project Management

- **Fort Erie Shoreline Protection:** Completion planned for October. Staff reviewed options to keep the path open but found no cost-effective solution.
- **Anger Ave. & Netherby Rd. Boat Launches:** Erosion control work completed.
- **Service Road Resurfacing of Roads 23, 30, 20 & 63:** work completed.
- **South Boulevard Trail Realignment:** Scheduled for Sept. 8 - 26.
- **Fisherman's Trail Stair Repairs:** Scheduled for Sept. 8 - 15.
- **Queenston Boat Ramp Safety Improvements:** Scheduled for Sept. 22 - Oct. 6 (boat launch to be closed during this period).
- **Falls Avenue Sidewalk Resurfacing (West Side):** Scheduled for Sept. 29 - Oct. 10.

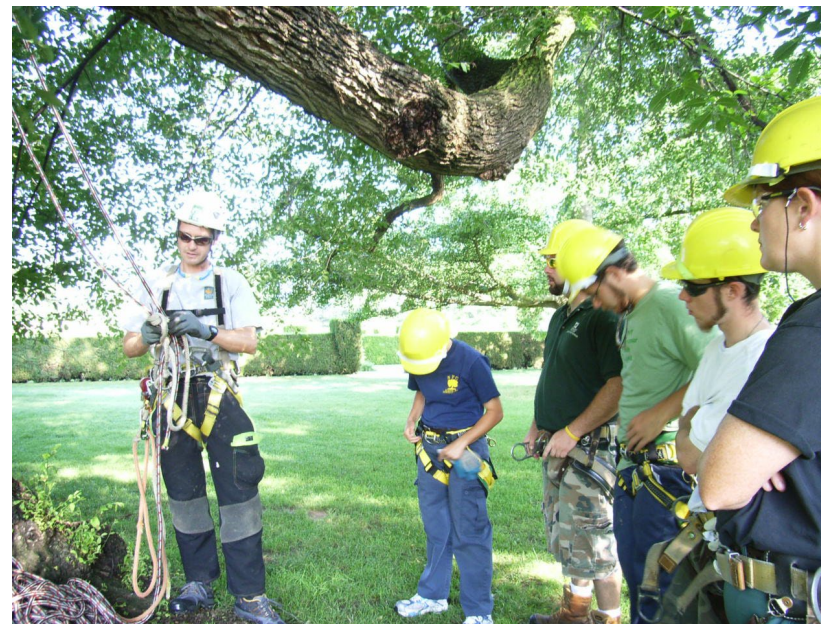




Engineering and Parks Operations

Forestry

- Ongoing branch pruning along the Niagara River Recreation Trail (NOTL to Queenston) to enhance visitor safety, including Queenston Heights event areas.
- Assisted with restoration painting of the Niagara Parks Power Station's Ice Breaker, requiring suspended work over water.
- Forestry team member is leading a specialized Climbing Practices course for School of Horticulture students.
- Winter Festival of Lights team have begun tree light wrapping and display repairs in Dufferin Islands.





Engineering and Parks Operations

Forestry

- Extra staff deployed during storms to clear hazardous trees and improve parking safety ahead of the Siege of Fort Erie.
- Select tree removals continued at Whirlpool Golf Course Hole 2, per design plan.
- Bobcat Forestry Head rental enabled clearing of overgrowth and invasive species at four sites:
 - Rapidsview Dr.
 - Behind Chippawa Church
 - Redan area, Queenston slope
 - Firelane, Queenston Dock



Engineering and Parks Operations

Environmental Services

- Marina: Upgraded safety buoys and installed a new pole with protective cabinet for improved visibility and safety.
- Marina Boat Launch: Shoreline protection measures implemented.
- Queen Victoria Park: Street light audit conducted.
- School of Horticulture: Scrap metal cleanup completed.
- White Water Walk: New trash receptacles installed and area cleaned.





Engineering and Parks Operations

Central Parks

- New plants installed along Bridge of Flowers
- Overhauled gardens approaching Table Rock; mulched and cleaned up west side of the building.
- Sod restoration at Burning Springs at Dufferin Islands near newly repaved paths
- Improvements at new bus stop at Niagara Parks Power Station and entrance from Table Rock parking lot – new layer of rocks to remove potential safety hazard.





Engineering and Parks Operations

Health, Safety and Compliance

- Partnered with Positive Living Niagara to facilitate two Naloxone training sessions.
- Assisted Senior Manager, Events, Programming and Education with the submission of the EASE grant application. If successful, up to \$60,000 could be awarded for accessibility improvements for pathways around Queenston Heights.
- Met with accessibility consultant and with representative from the Niagara Children's Centre to discuss accessibility needs for the Children's Garden project.

Information Technology

- Network and Wi-Fi installed to support the launch of Niagara Takes Flight and its retail space.
- Antennas added to all WEGO buses, achieving a live scan rate over 90%, with full coverage expected soon.





Niagara Parks Police

August Highlights

- Police Chief attended swearing in ceremony for Deputy Chief Ryan Hogan, of the York Regional Police; a former Provincial Offences Officer with Niagara Parks Police Services.
- Police Chief and Inspector participated in introductory meeting with the Executive Director of Crimestoppers Niagara.
- Virtual meeting with local emergency services via the Emergency Niagara Management Committee.
- Meeting with waterway enforcement and safety agencies during a meeting hosted by the Niagara Regional Police Service Marine Unit.
- **Ongoing:** Police Chief engaged in discussions about the NG-9-1-1 project with stakeholders and vendors.
- Aug. 14: Officers conducted covert surveillance at the Gatehouse on Niagara River Parkway following copper wire thefts. A suspect was caught pulling cable through a window and fled by bicycle. He was arrested and charged with break & enter and theft.
- Aug. 24: A suspect fleeing on foot after a theft from auto near Whirlpool Road was arrested and found with stolen property linked to earlier incidents.



Niagara Parks Police conducted traffic enforcement along the Niagara Parkway on Sept. 2. Officers issued several Provincial Offences Notices throughout the day for various infractions such as speeding and driving without a licence.



Upcoming Events

- Sept. 13 - Oct. 19: Fall Display at the Floral Showhouse
- Sept. 20 - 21: Majestic Monarchs at Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory; 11:00 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Sept. 20 & 27: Old Fort Erie Ghost Tours
- Sept. 21: Accessible Golf Clinic at Legends
- Sept. 21: “Dye Day” Workshop at Laura Secord Homestead
- Sept. 30: Truth and Reconciliation events with Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Oct. 12: Thanksgiving Menus at Queenston Heights Restaurant, Legends on the Niagara Golf Course and Table Rock House Restaurant; Various times.
- Oct. 17: Battle of Queenston Heights Commemorative Dinner; Details to be announced.
- Oct. 17 - 19: Niagara Falls Illumination Board 100th Anniversary Doors Open Events.
- Oct. 24 - 25: All Hallow’s Eve at Old Fort Erie
- Oct. 25: Community Tree Planting Day at Legends²⁵



Questions & Comments

