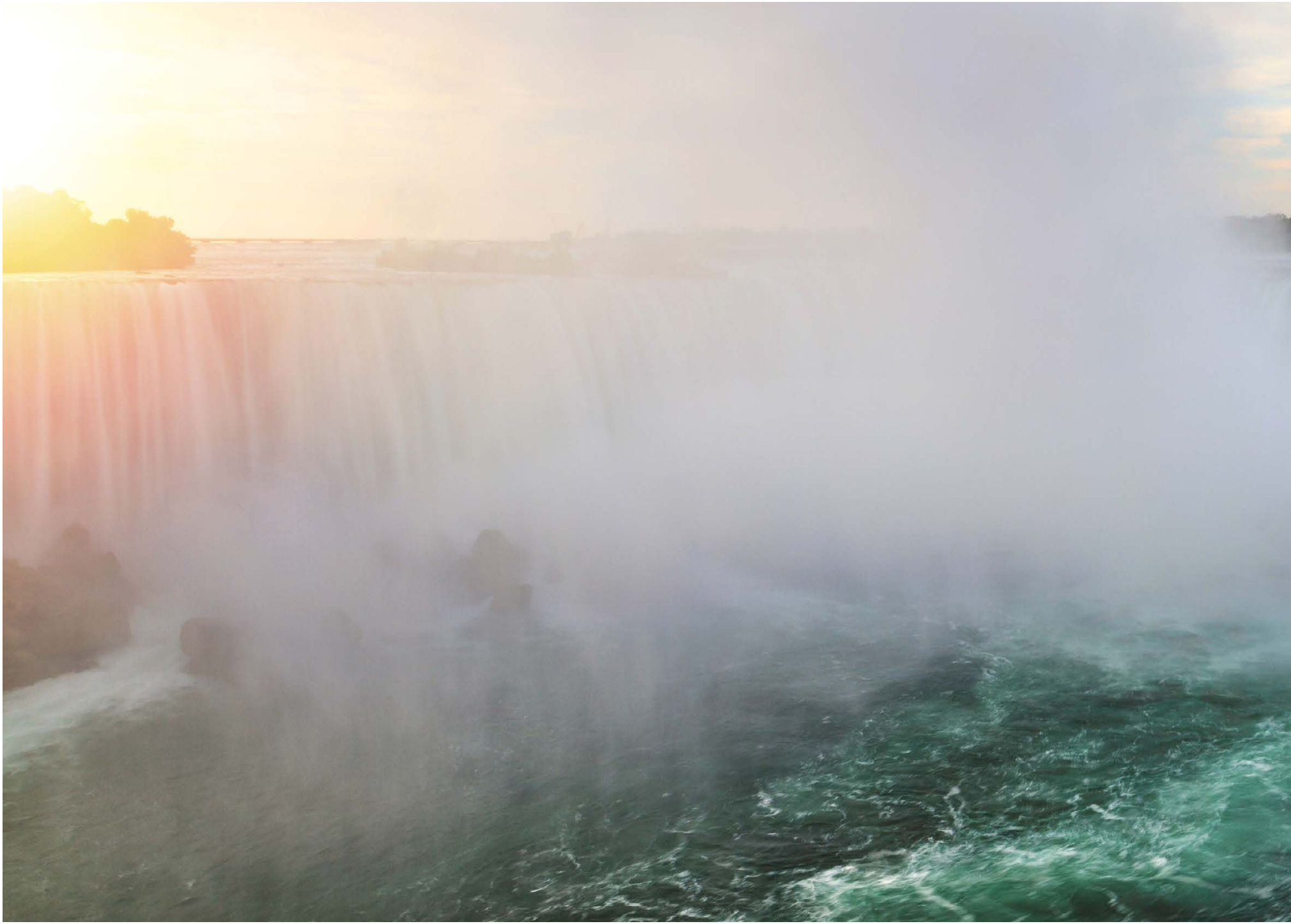
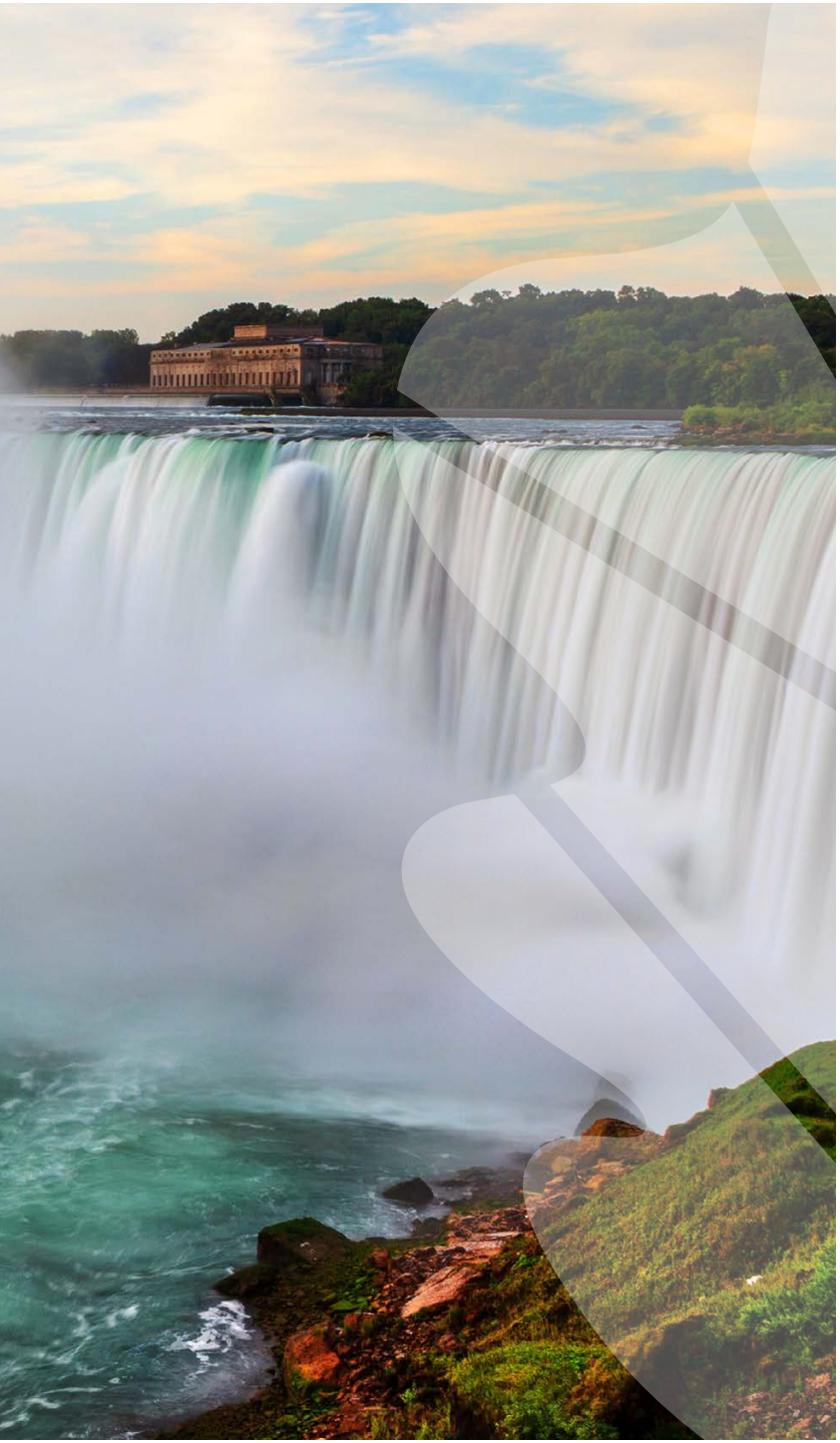
NIAGARA PARKS

Sustainability Report

2025-2026





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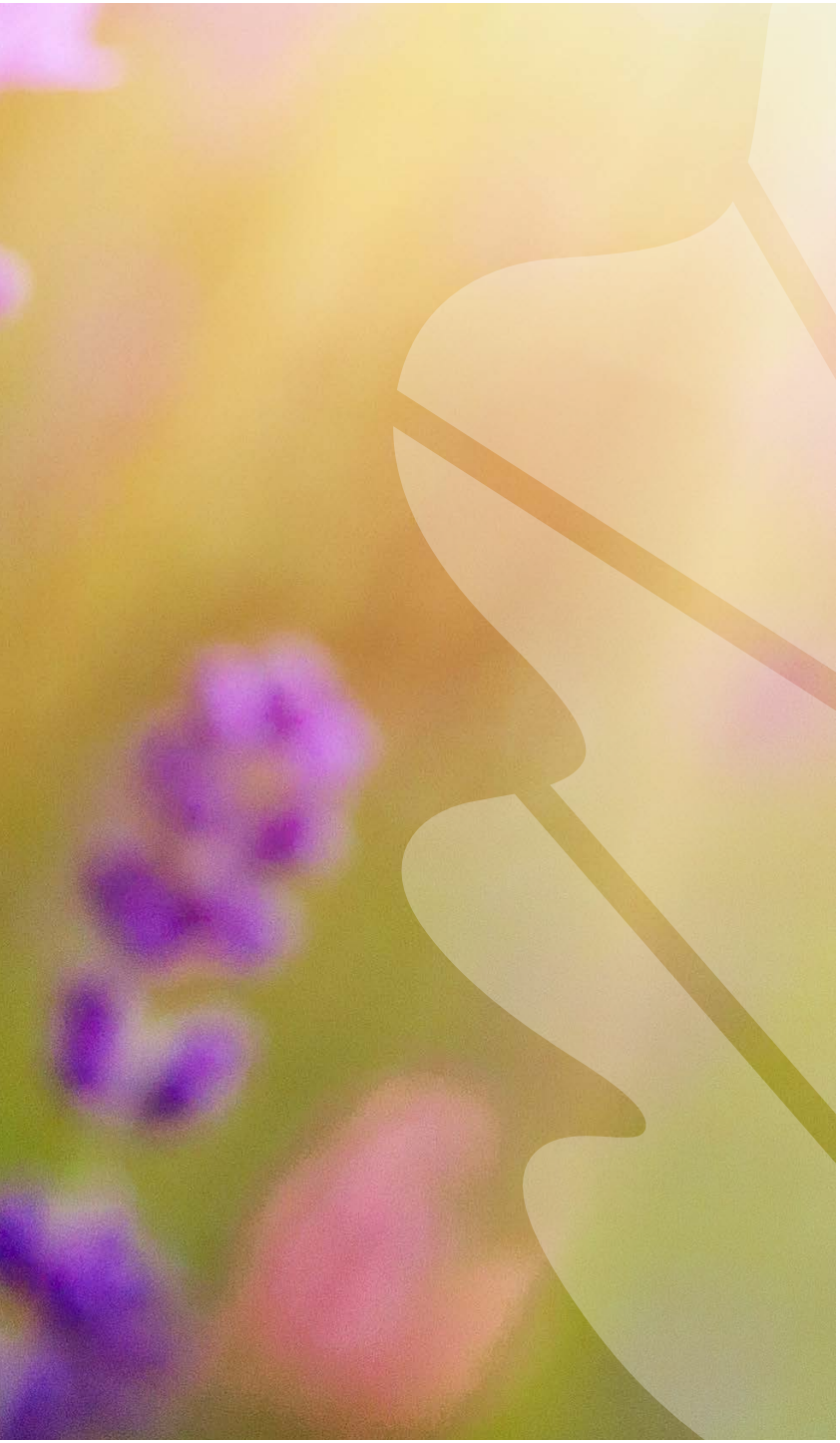


A MESSAGE FROM THE **CHAIR**

TOGETHER, WE ARE BUILDING A STRONGER,
MORE RESILIENT NIAGARA PARKS.

As Chair of the Niagara Parks Commission, it is my pleasure to introduce Niagara Parks' first-ever Sustainability Report.

Niagara Parks has served as the environmental and cultural steward of the Niagara River corridor since our inception by the Province of Ontario in 1885. While the original vision was to establish a Commission to protect and preserve the lands immediately surrounding Niagara Falls, the modern-day Niagara Parks extends for 56 kilometres along the Niagara River from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario - some of the world's most spectacular public parkland. Overtime has our stewardship role grown beyond simply caring for the lands under our responsibility to undertaking strategies and initiatives to protect the long-term resiliency of our environmental features and mitigate the impacts of modern-day threats such as climate change.

As a self-funded agency, Niagara Parks balances the preservation of the Niagara River corridor's unique environmental features and rich cultural heritage with the delivery of exceptional guest experiences that drive tourism in Niagara and across the province. These two pillars of our mandate are inherently connected. Revenue generated at our world-class attractions, locally sourced restaurants, heritage sites, retail operations, championship golf courses and parking facilities are invested back into our operations, including our vital environmental and cultural stewardship efforts.

Niagara Parks has a dedicated Environmental Stewardship team that oversees these initiatives that have already resulted in numerous, observable benefits. We have seen the return of species such as the Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolink, thriving fish populations in the Niagara River and an increasingly healthy tree canopy as a result of planting a minimum of 5,000 trees each year since 2018. Additionally, sustainability extends right across our entire organization, from our golf courses to our restaurants, parks operations to administration.

There are also fantastic opportunities to create new and meaningful guest experiences for all ages through stewardship, from the beloved Majestic Monarchs tag and release program at the Butterfly Conservatory to guided nature walks through the Niagara Glen.

As a Commission, we are exceptionally proud of the important work that the Niagara Parks' team undertakes in this regard and the progress that has been made. These achievements reflect the dedication of our staff and leadership teams to becoming a global leader in sustainable tourism and environmental conservation.

Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient Niagara Parks that will be enjoyed for generations to come.

Graham Coveney
Chair, Niagara Parks Commission

WHO
WE ARE

ABOUT US

From the very beginning, the Niagara River corridor has been recognized as a special place of reflection, beauty and natural wonder. Niagara Parks is a self-financed agency of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, investing our time, earned revenue, effort and ingenuity in preserving and protecting the vulnerable lands and waters within the Niagara River corridor.

OUR MANDATE

Since 1885, Niagara Parks has served a mandate to protect the natural and cultural heritage along the Niagara River corridor, ensuring its enjoyment for future generations.

LAND **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Niagara Parks respectfully acknowledges and honours 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 Anishiaabek, the Neutral Nation and all who have stewarded these lands for millennia.

WHAT WE DO

Niagara Parks preserves the natural wonders of the Niagara River corridor through a strategic, five-pillar approach built with the future in mind. These dedicated practices support a stronger forest canopy, protect our diverse plant and wildlife populations and help protect our shorelines while fostering sustainable tourism and recreation across the park.

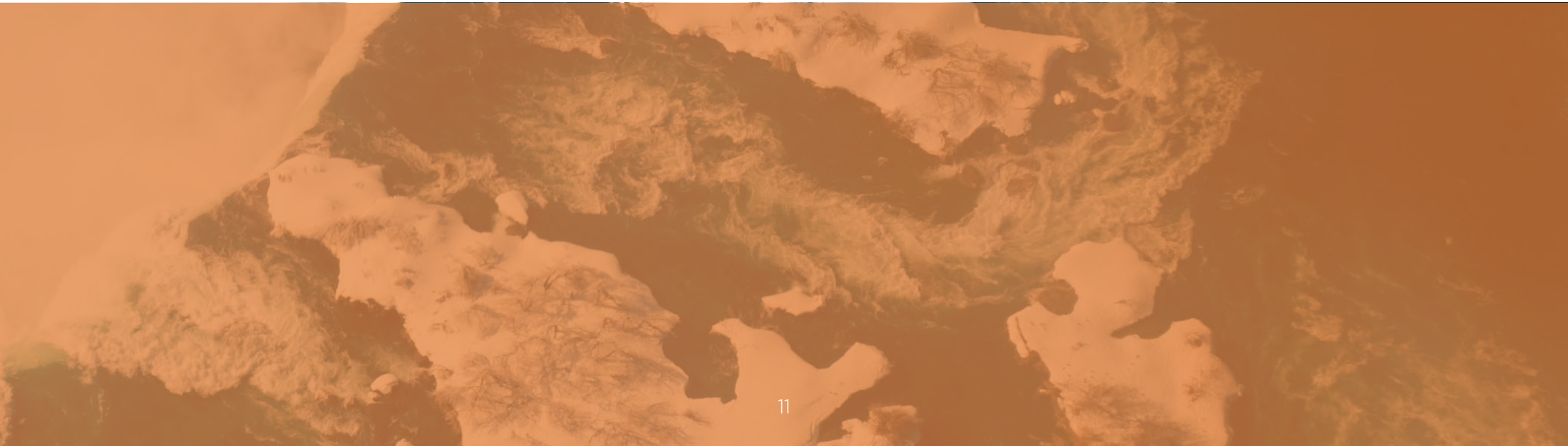
FOREST CANOPY GROWTH

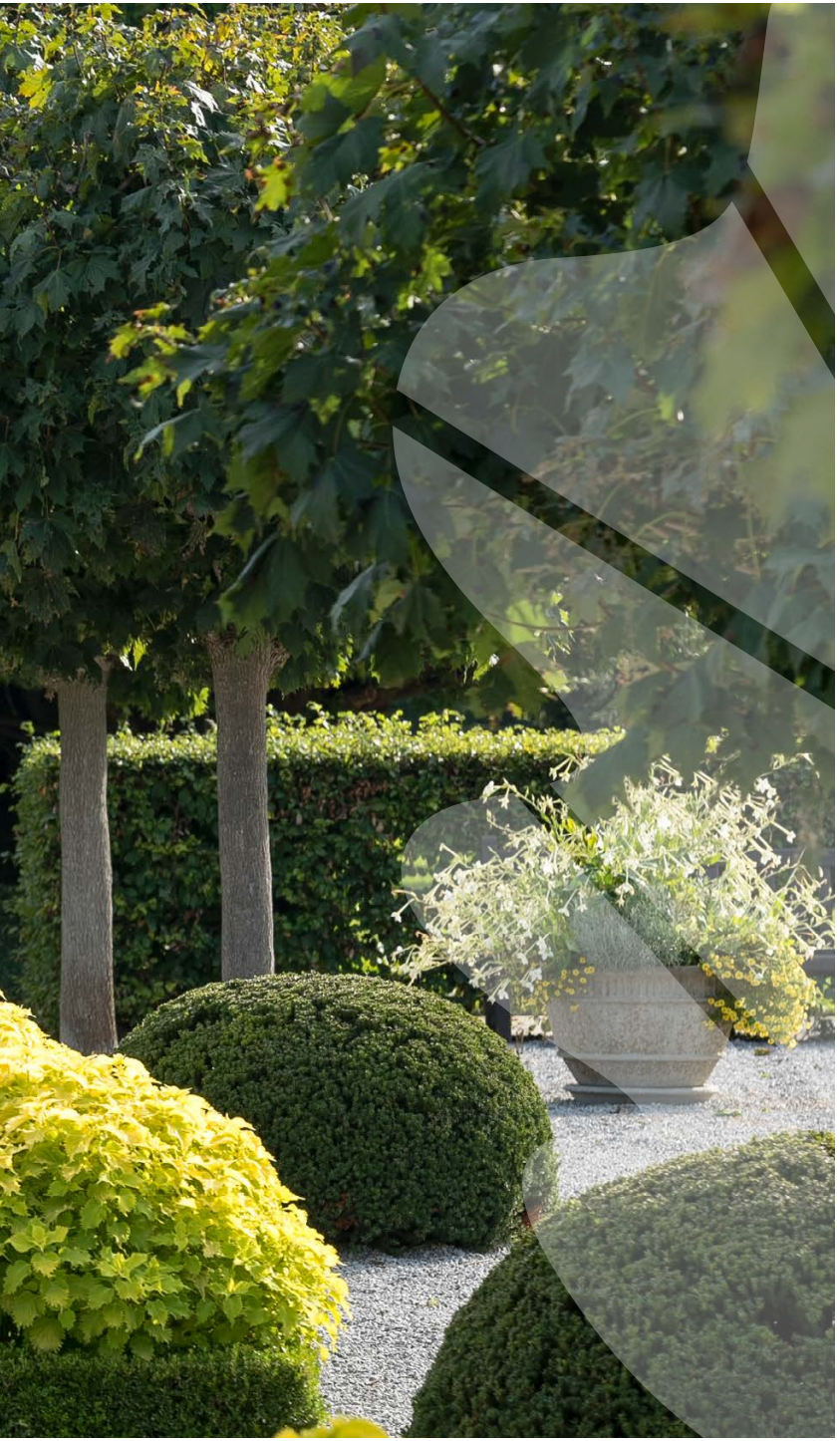
SPECIES DIVERSITY & INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT

OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH





MILESTONES AND **ACHIEVEMENTS**

2025-2026

HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout 2025-26, we advanced both existing and new environmental sustainability initiatives across Niagara Parks.

7,050+
trees planted across Niagara Parks
surpassing the annual target by over 2,000 trees.

100 *of shoreline restored*
METRES

36.6%
waste diversion rate
Increased by 21% since 2018

Worked with
15+
PARTNERS
on the planning and implementation of ecological restoration initiatives

3,129
KILOS
food donated to local food banks *through the Bridge program, representing approximately 10,430 portions*

OVER **45+**
native trees & shrubs species planted

Repurposed
70 DEAD TREES
to create new fish habitats

3+ *new water-filling stations, bringing the* **total to 24.**

Worked with a local farmer to bring in
40 GOATS
to sustainably clear 1 acre
of invasive phragmites at Gonder's Flats

442 *TREES*
TREATED
against the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid

Conducted prescribed burns on **38.5+**
HECTARES OF LAND
to encourage native regrowth.

Since 2020 433,300
plastic water bottles have been saved due to water filling stations

3,000 native trees and shrubs planted over four community tree planting events with
OVER **250**
students and volunteers

FOREST CANOPY GROWTH

At Niagara Parks, we recognize the vital role that forests play in our ecosystem. We are dedicated to maintaining a healthy and sustainable forest canopy. In 2018, Niagara Parks adopted a 10-year Urban Forestry Management Strategy that sets out research-based goals and approaches that help foster healthier, more resilient urban forests. Throughout 2025-26, we focused on three key areas to support the forest canopy: maintaining and increasing canopy cover, enhancing species and habitat biodiversity and building partnerships to mitigate the effects of climate change.

MAINTAIN AND INCREASE CANOPY COVER

Niagara Parks aims to achieve 35% tree canopy cover by 2028, which exceeds the ecological threshold for optimal ecosystems.

To reach this goal, we are committed to planting at least 5,000 trees each year. Since 2018, Niagara Parks has exceeded this by planting over 7,000 trees each year, increasing our forest canopy to over 28% coverage. By increasing our canopy cover, we help mitigate potential impacts of climate change, reduce carbon dioxide emissions, support wildlife habitat, improve air quality and enhance the natural environment for guests and local residents.

INCREASE SPECIES AND HABITAT BIODIVERSITY

To mitigate risks posed by disease, drought and invasive species while promoting a healthy forest canopy, the strategy also emphasizes species diversity. The Strategy adheres to the 5-10-20 guideline: no single tree species comprises more than 5% of the canopy, no genus exceeds 10% and no family surpasses 20%.

This past year, planting included over 45 tree and shrub native species along the 56 km Niagara Parkway, which will support the long-term resiliency of our lands.

SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIPS TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

Niagara Parks has established partnerships with regional experts to strengthen tree health, advance urban forest planning and mitigate the effects of climate change. In collaboration with the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, we assess soil quality at proposed planting locations and implement recommended soil enhancements prior to planting, enabling informed species selection. Additionally, ongoing collaboration with Niagara College's Ecosystem Restoration Program has enabled the initiation of land management plans, beginning with the Chinquapin Oak Savannah habitat adjacent to the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens.

KEY PROJECTS

TREE PLANTING

In 2025, Niagara Parks planted 7,050 trees along the Niagara River corridor. The tree planting was carried out by Niagara Parks staff, as well as volunteers during organized community events. This year, attention was directed toward Legends on the Niagara Golf Complex and the Niagara Glen, which were selected as priority sites for tree planting.

In partnership with the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, soil analyses were completed to identify suitable native tree species based on the soil conditions. As a result, over 45 native species were planted, supporting increased biodiversity and expansion of our tree canopy.

KEY PROJECTS

NIAGARA FALLS **MORAINE MANAGEMENT**

Niagara Parks has identified the Niagara Falls Moraine as a unique geological feature that supports rare and at-risk tree species. However, it is highly susceptible to erosion and ice damage. By replanting native vegetation within the moraine's existing forest canopy, removing invasive species and installing bioengineering, we are actively taking steps to preserve this unique environmental feature.

In 2025, the Niagara Parks Foundation received grant funding from the Niagara Community Foundation to restore up to one hectare of habitat along the Niagara Falls Moraine by removing invasive species and planting over 7,500 native plants. Through the updates and ongoing collaboration with the City of Niagara Falls, we aim to promote increased native plant growth, remove invasive species and minimize erosion.

NIAGARA PARKS **FOOD FORESTS**

The Niagara region is home to an immense diversity of naturally occurring native food-producing plants. To increase biodiversity and expand the forest canopy, Niagara Parks is implementing a fully functioning 'micro' forest using a range of food-producing trees, shrubs, understory plants and fungi.

Through the Niagara Parks Foundation, this project received funding from the Niagara Community Foundation's 2026 Environmental Grant to transform 1.3 acres of underutilized parkland into a biodiverse food forest. In partnership with the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, we have identified two designated sites (Smugglers Cove and Laura Secord Homestead) to host the food forests.

SEED COLLECTION

Sourcing native tree and shrub seeds for planting or propagation can be difficult and is becoming an industry-wide concern. Creating an inventory of Niagara Parks' seed-producing trees is essential for effectively directing collection activities and addressing this industry challenge.

This year, Niagara Parks trained two staff members as certified seed collectors. In addition to collecting seeds internally, we are collaborating with external partners and are a member of the Niagara Native Seed Collaborative, which aims to develop a Niagara Seed Strategy. We will continue the Seed Collection project into 2026 to prepare for the effects of climate change by increasing and cataloguing native seeds along the Niagara River corridor.

KEY PROJECTS

FOREST CANOPY GROWTH

TREE **PRESERVATION**

Since its creation in 1885, Niagara Parks has planted several significant trees that are important natural landmarks for Niagara history. To educate and highlight these trees and ensure their protection, we plan to launch the Tree Preservation and Trees of Significance Program. In partnership with Brock University, the program was developed in 2025-2026, focusing on establishing criteria for identifying significant trees and designing a walking tour to educate and engage guests.

PARADISE GROVE MANAGEMENT

Paradise Grove, located along the north Niagara Parkway in Niagara-on-the-Lake, is collaboratively managed by Niagara Parks and Parks Canada and home to a rare Black Oak Savannah ecosystem. This fire-dependent habitat is characterized by open-canopy Black Oaks positioned above a tallgrass prairie. Despite the abundance of old-growth Black Oaks, their health is deteriorating, resulting in increased tree mortality.

Throughout this year, active management continued at the site, with efforts expanded in partnership with the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. A comprehensive soil health assessment was undertaken to determine whether soil quality was contributing to the decline in Black Oak health and to guide future replanting strategies. These initiatives build upon progress made in 2023 at this location, when we planted over 200 trees with support from Miller Waste Systems through the Niagara Parks Foundation, commenced annual prescribed burns to maintain grassland characteristics and partnered with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to inspect numerous trees for Oak Wilt infection.

LOOKING AHEAD

SHORT TERM GOALS

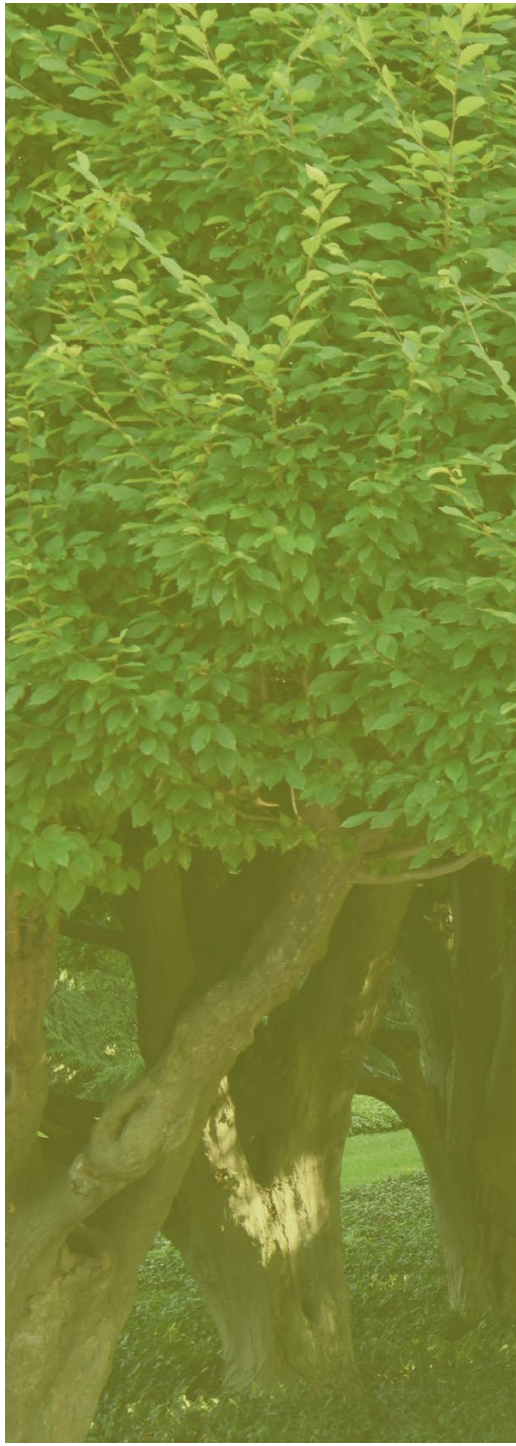
1-3 YEARS

1. By 2028, reach the goal of 35% canopy cover.
2. Working in collaboration with community partners, review and update Niagara Parks' 2028-2038 Urban Forestry Management Strategy.
3. Identify tree-planting areas for the next five years and finalize the soil health analysis in advance of planting.
4. Create a Significant Tree Preservation Strategy and Walking Tour.

LONG TERM GOALS

4+ YEARS

1. Create a forest canopy that is resilient to both current and potential future threats, including climate change and invasive species, by diversifying the forest composition with native species.
2. Establish and expand the Niagara Parks Food Forest program to several areas within Niagara Parks.
3. Develop a comprehensive tree inventory for all trees within manicured parklands.



SPECIES DIVERSITY & INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

The Niagara region is home to a remarkable array of plant and animal species, with some of Ontario's most at-risk flora and fauna. To enhance native biodiversity, Niagara Parks prioritizes species management that promotes native species while controlling invasive ones. Through a three-pronged approach, Niagara Parks has continued innovating species management throughout 2025-26. Through invasive species monitoring, native habitat restoration and biodiversity support, we are creating innovative species-management techniques to protect the Niagara River corridor well into the future.

INVASIVE SPECIES IDENTIFICATION, MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

Invasive species threaten native plants by overtaking habitats and depleting resources. After the emerald ash borer destroyed over 70% of forest canopy in affected areas, managing these species is essential to protecting the Niagara River corridor and reducing risks like flooding and erosion.

In 2025, Niagara Parks focused on several high-risk species, including Japanese stiltgrass, spotted lanternfly and Tree of Heaven, working with partners to monitor and limit their spread.

SUPPORTING NATIVE BIODIVERSITY

Invasive species are among the most serious threats to native wildlife and habitats. Niagara Parks is working to boost native biodiversity, helping local plants adapt and recover from their impacts.

To support this, we follow the 5-10-20 rule—limiting species, genus and family diversity in plantings—and **plant over 5,000 native trees each year, along with thousands of shrubs and other native flora.**

NATIVE HABITAT REHABILITATION

Niagara Parks continues to restore native habitats damaged by decades of human activity—a leading cause of species loss. Using research-driven strategies, we are repairing ecosystems and reintroducing species.

Efforts include prescribed burns that support **the return of bird species such as the Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark and shoreline restoration projects that rebuild aquatic habitats for fish, shorebirds and other wildlife.**

KEY PROJECTS

PRESCRIBED BURNS PROGRAM

Grasslands naturally require fire to support the growth of native vegetation, encourage native plants to spread their seeds and minimize the establishment of invasive species. Since 2008, we have been using prescribed burns to manage several grasslands throughout the Niagara River corridor.

Each spring, we hold annual prescribed burns across multiple sites. Today, Niagara Parks has its own Prescribed Burn team consisting of over 20 staff members from various departments who are RX100 Low Complexity Burn Worker certified. In 2025, we conducted prescribed burns across multiple sites, including the Botanical Gardens – Legacy Garden, Chippawa Battlefield, Paradise Grove, Whirlpool Golf Course and Legends on the Niagara Golf Complex, totaling over 38.5 hectares.

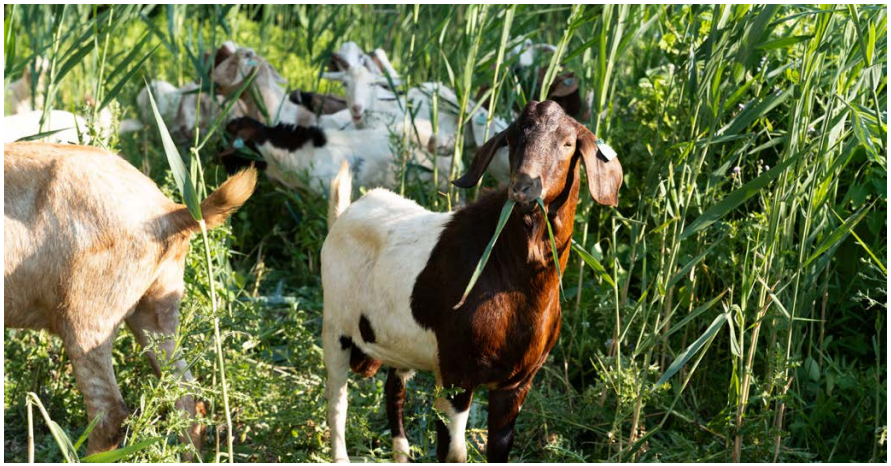
CHIPPAWA GRASSLAND BIRD HABITAT

The Chippawa Grassland site is a 50-hectare parcel of land adjacent to Legends on the Niagara Golf Complex. In 2017, half of the site was restored in support of offsetting requirements for a new GE Canada factory in Welland, Ontario (now INNIO), along with additional funding from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and Climate Change Canada. Since that time, controlled burns have been helping to stimulate native vegetation recovery and reduce invasive species. This work has supported the return of species such as the Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolink, which are now breeding on-site.

KEY PROJECTS

GREEN GRAZERS INITIATIVE

Since 2024, Niagara Parks continues to find new ways to manage invasive species without relying on pesticides. At Gonder's Flats—the largest wetland restoration site in the region—phragmites were overwhelming the native plants. Niagara Parks launched the Green Grazers program, funded by the Niagara Parks Foundation, an ongoing partnership with a local farmer and 40 hungry goats who eat the leaves and stems of the long, pesky grasses to allow air and light back in for the native plants. In 2025, this program significantly reduced regrowth, with approximately one acre of phragmites being eaten by the goats. Niagara Parks is now collaborating with the Niagara Phragmites Working Group to develop management strategies for phragmites throughout the region.



INVASIVE **JAPANESE STILTGRASS** MANAGEMENT

First arriving in Canada in 2019 and only found at five other sites across the country, this highly invasive species was identified at a Niagara Parks site, adjacent to the Journey Behind the Falls attraction. The bamboo-like grass loves water and the conditions in this area pose significant challenges for removal and management.

In 2025, Niagara Parks collaborated with multiple agencies to develop a comprehensive management plan to control or eradicate this species on Niagara Parks' property. The plan is scheduled for implementation in summer/fall of 2026. Given the distinctive conditions involved, this project will also serve as a case study for effective species management.

KEY PROJECTS

HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID MANAGEMENT

The Niagara Glen was ground zero for the arrival of the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid. It is unknown how it arrived in the Niagara region. After identification, it was initially eradicated; however, the invasive species has now reestablished itself within Niagara Parks (and across the region), resulting in the decline of Eastern hemlock trees.

In 2025, we created an inventory of all Eastern hemlock trees within Niagara Parks. Utilizing the new inventory tracker, we are able to track and monitor the 442 trees that were injected with insecticide to protect and reduce the impacts of the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid. These trees will continue to be treated every 1-2 years until eradication.

TREE-OF-HEAVEN MANAGEMENT

The tree-of-heaven, an invasive species known for its rapid growth and instability, has established itself along the gorge near the White Water Walk attraction. This tree also serves as the preferred host for the spotted lanternfly, an invasive and highly destructive insect capable of killing a wide range of tree species and vineyards.

In 2025, Niagara Parks secured funding from the Ontario Invasive Species Centre to address the Tree of Heaven infestation at the White Water Walk attraction. To tackle the challenging terrain of the steep and rocky gorge wall, Niagara Parks had to get creative, building slingshots and hundreds hand-made seed balls composed of native wildflowers and grasses. Several hundred were launched onto the slope, helping to reestablish native vegetation.. The initiative has gained popularity during student outreach, with plans underway to further involve student groups in launching seed balls onto the gorge wall as part of ongoing restoration efforts.

LOOKING AHEAD

SHORT TERM GOALS

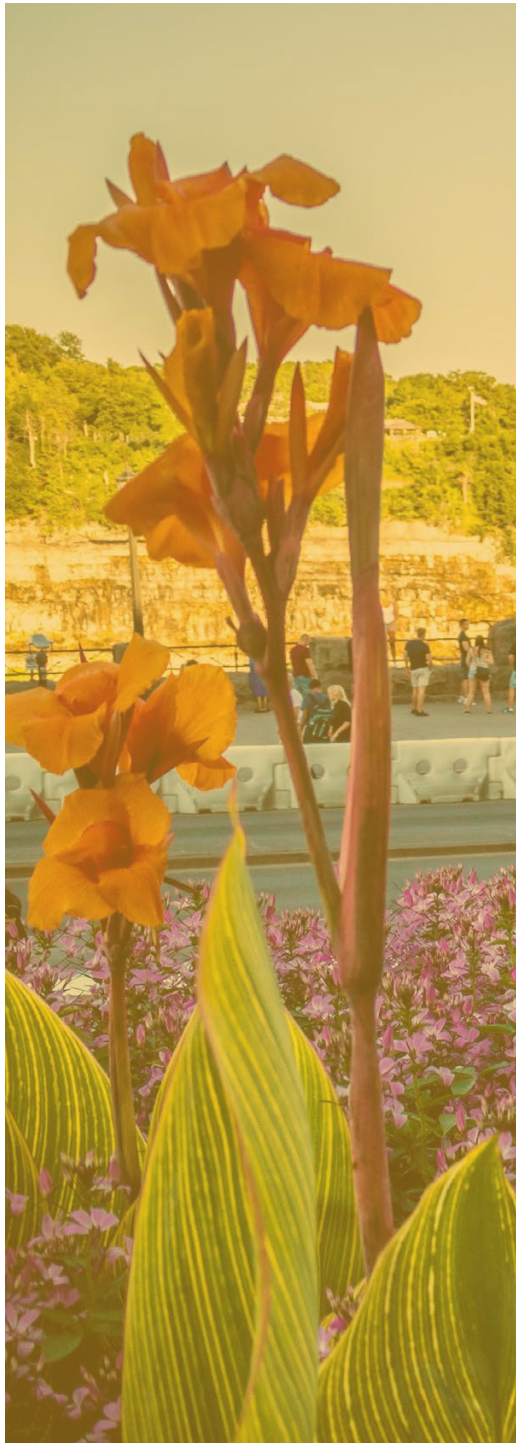
1-3 YEARS

1. Continue to monitor new and emerging threats.
2. Ongoing management of existing invasive species using best management practices.
3. Eradicate Japanese stiltgrass from Niagara Parks property.
4. Map and prioritize all existing invasive species populations.
5. Create work-integrated learning opportunities for local postsecondary students by having them participate in annual seed ball plantings.

LONG TERM GOALS

4+ YEARS

1. Diversify natural areas to reduce the impacts of incoming invasive species.
2. Encourage citizen science initiatives to support invasive species identification and monitoring, including by holding additional bioblitzes, promoting the use of iNaturalist and installing ‘photo stands’ at select restoration project areas



SHORELINE MANAGEMENT

With over 56 kilometres of shoreline to manage, Niagara Parks is extremely susceptible to shoreline erosion and effects from the Great Lakes. To address this, we are actively assessing and monitoring water quality, offshore habitats and shoreline stability to identify potential negative impacts from climate change, extreme weather events and human activity. Through this integrated shoreline management strategy, we help prevent shoreline erosion, create essential wildlife habitat and contribute to improved water quality.

PREVENT SHORELINE EROSION

To prevent shoreline erosion, Niagara Parks is committed to increasing the coverage of native vegetation along the shoreline. **This effort includes the systematic removal of invasive species and replanting of native vegetation across up to eight kilometres of shoreline each year.**

As part of this ongoing initiative, Niagara Parks has introduced pilot no-mow zones along the shoreline. These shoreline buffers are designed to establish and maintain a minimum five-metre-wide vegetated buffer between mown areas and the water's edge, reducing shoreline erosion, creating habitats and aiding in filtering pollutants.

SUPPORT WILDLIFE HABITAT

Niagara Parks addresses shoreline management through onshore and offshore initiatives to enhance wildlife habitat. In 2014, the Ministry of Natural Resources identified that the Canadian side of the Niagara River had lost over 75% of its near-shore vegetation, leading to a decrease in fish population and diversity.

Since then, **Niagara Parks has been anchoring dead ash trees, caused by the emerald ash borer, into the riverbed to establish critical fish habitat.** Combined with the pilot no-mow zones, we have been able to increase the populations of native plants and wildlife along the Niagara River corridor.

IMPROVE WATER QUALITY THROUGH SHORELINE VEGETATION

The Niagara River shoreline is vulnerable to erosion and invasive species, while also offering valued public views. To balance protection and aesthetics, **Niagara Parks aims to restore 75% of the shoreline with native vegetation, removing invasives and using low-growing native plants to preserve sightlines.**

Riparian vegetation is key to water quality, filtering runoff, nutrients, road salt and pollutants before they reach the river. Native plants are especially effective due to their deep fibrous roots, helping to reduce erosion and sediment entering into the water.

KEY PROJECTS

COASTAL **WETLAND RESTORATION** PROGRAM

In 2014, the Ministry of Natural Resources identified that the Canadian side of the Niagara River had lost over 75% of its near-shore vegetation, which is a critical fish habitat for eggs and juvenile fish, resulting in a decline of fish populations and diversity. In 2015, the Ministry of Natural Resources hired a consultant to develop concept designs for the creation of near-shore habitat structures to establish coastal wetland habitats at seven sites along the upper Niagara River. The habitats would use dead ash trees that were removed due to the emerald ash borer and recycle them into fish habitat.

Niagara Parks has been installing new coastal wetland habitats since 2016. To date, 1.64 kilometres of habitat structure have been installed in the Upper Niagara River. In the summer of 2025, additional structures were installed at the mouths of both Black Creek and Boyer's Creek. This included the installation of 70 sweepers (trees/logs) and over 360 tonnes of boulders to create approximately 240 metres of new coastal wetland habitat. These efforts have already resulted in increased fish and shorebird populations and diversity, as well as improved water quality at these sites.

KEY PROJECTS

GONDER'S FLATS **WETLAND RESTORATION**

Gonder's Flats is the largest wetland restoration area in the Niagara region, situated adjacent to the Niagara River in Fort Erie. Following comprehensive restoration efforts of approximately four acres of wetland habitat, the wetland has begun to function as intended and now supports a diverse array of wildlife, including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

Funding partners: Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Land Care Niagara and Niagara Community Foundation, along with support from both Federal and Provincial governments.

Also supported by the Town of Fort Erie, Birds Canada, Bert Miller Nature Club and Niagara Falls Nature Club.

Looking ahead to 2026, Niagara Parks will build upon the success of the Gonder's Flats wetland restoration project with continued investment to enhance educational and interpretive opportunities. Planned initiatives include the installation of interpretive signage and the hosting of student groups to facilitate exploration of wetland diversity. Further plantings of both terrestrial and aquatic vegetation are also scheduled to be completed to promote increased biodiversity.

FORT ERIE **SHORELINE PROTECTION**

Shoreline protection is crucial to slowing the erosion of parkland. The increase in extreme weather events resulting from climate change has affected the shoreline and break wall in Fort Erie, causing significant damage and requiring substantial, costly ongoing repairs. To protect the shore wall and the adjacent recreation trail, a coastal engineer was engaged and in 2025 the first phase of shoreline protection was installed. This work included the bioengineering of large boulders and rocks to replace more than 250 metres of eroding shoreline.

To date, the installed shoreline protection has been effective in mitigating wave impacts to the adjacent wall and park lands.

KEY PROJECTS

DUFFERIN ISLANDS **SHORELINE RESTORATION**

The flow of water throughout Dufferin Islands is highly controlled. Constant changes in direction, combined with aging infrastructure, have caused significant erosion that is degrading wildlife habitats and reducing recreational opportunities for visitors. With financial support from TD Canada Bank through the Niagara Parks Foundation, Niagara Parks completed numerous shoreline erosion mitigation projects within Dufferin Islands in 2024 and 2025 as part of the three-year Dufferin Islands Visitor Experience and Ecological Enhancement Initiative.

In 2025, Niagara Parks introduced bioengineering techniques to restore and reclaim eroding shoreline areas throughout the islands. This year, over 100 metres have been restored using various techniques, including root wads, logs, coir logs and plantings of native riparian vegetation.

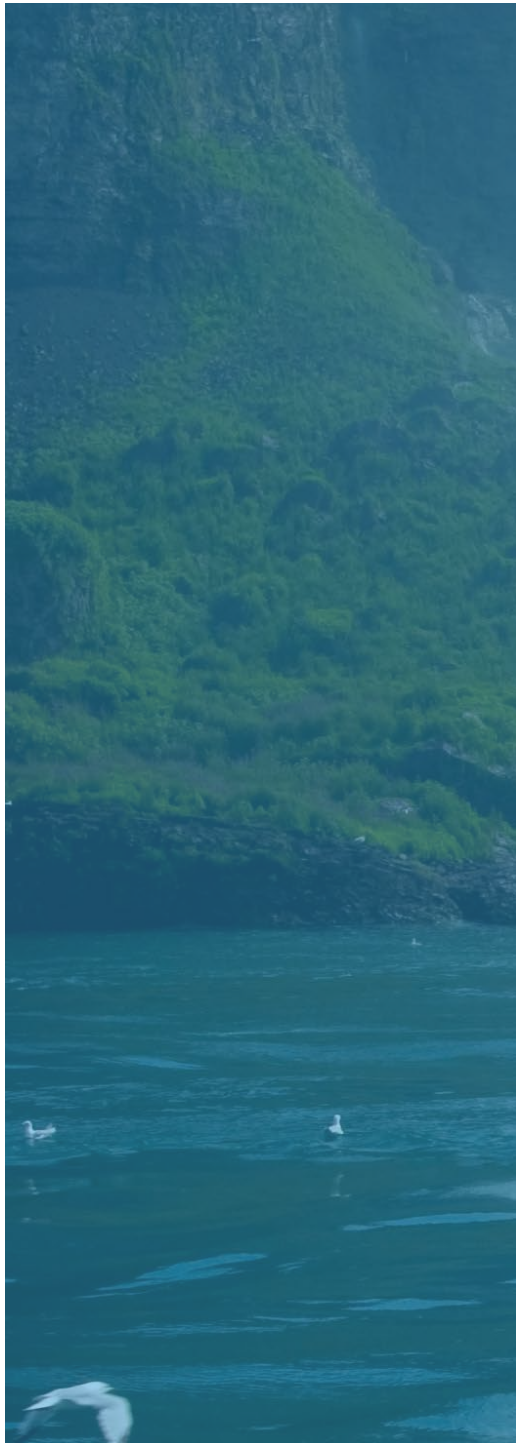
LOOKING AHEAD

SHORT TERM GOALS *1-3 YEARS*

1. Continue removing and replacing invasive species with low-growing native vegetation to reach the goal of 75% coverage.
2. Educate Niagara Parkway adjacent residents about the benefits of shoreline vegetation, while deterring vegetation removal and illegal dumping.

LONG TERM GOALS *4+ YEARS*

1. Continue to maintain the shoreline so that 75% remains covered with native vegetation.
2. Continue to monitor and address erosion issues along the Niagara River.
3. Continue to anchor individual fallen trees into the riverbed to support fish habitat.



OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Engineering and Parks Operations department at Niagara Parks focuses on the day-to-day operations and management of our land, facilities and systems. In addition to year-round maintenance of the 56-kilometre Niagara Parkway and 53-kilometre Niagara River Recreation Trail, Niagara Parks is responsible for an estimated $360 million in depreciable assets.

Niagara Parks actively considers its mission and mandate when making operational decisions to pursue sustainable, green options across its day-to-day and long-term operations. Areas where we are actively investing in sustainability and retrofitting for more environmentally friendly options include energy-efficient infrastructure, waste reduction and diversion systems and supporting clean mobility.

ENERGY EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Niagara Parks **invests in energy-efficient infrastructure upgrades to reduce energy consumption, lower greenhouse gas emissions and improve operational performance across its facilities.** These investments focus on retrofitting existing assets and integrating more efficient technologies into capital projects, supporting both environmental outcomes and enhanced guest experiences.

WASTE REDUCTION AND DIVERSION SYSTEMS

Waste reduction and diversion are central to Niagara Parks' operational sustainability efforts. Through improved waste separation systems, upgraded infrastructure and expanded diversion programs, we work to minimize landfill waste while supporting responsible resource use across our lands, facilities and visitor destinations.

SUPPORTING CLEAN MOBILITY

Niagara Parks supports clean mobility initiatives that reduce emissions associated with transportation and equipment use. This includes investment in electric machinery and vehicles, as well as infrastructure that enables cleaner transportation options across the park. **These efforts contribute to improved air quality and reduced environmental impacts while maintaining efficient park operations.**

KEY PROJECTS

WASTE **DIVERSION**

Niagara Parks' waste diversion performance has evolved significantly over the past eight years. In 2018, diversion stood at approximately 15%, reflecting limited recycling infrastructure and minimal organics recovery.

By 2025, our waste diversion rate reached 36.6%, surpassing the 2024 target of 35.7%. This achievement was driven by expanding blue box collection using a dual-stream packer and growing the organics diversion program. Key contributing factors include cardboard diversion, recycling partnerships and robust organics programs.

Cardboard was the largest category diverted, with about 159 tonnes collected and baled for processing. Unique streams included 32.7 tonnes of low-density polyethylene ponchos from visitor services and 90.3 tonnes of mixed recycling (fibers and containers). Additionally, there was significant waste diversion through specialty recycling programs for paper shredding (16.2 tonnes) and beverage container returns (3.2 tonnes), which further increased overall diversion rates.

KEY PROJECTS

LIGHTING **UPGRADES**

Over the past five years, Niagara Parks has prioritized enhancing energy efficiency throughout its facilities. There have been significant investments in retrofitting lighting with LED bulbs to reduce our overall energy consumption. In addition to retrofitting lighting, we have installed new solar panel lighting across the Niagara Parkway to help lower utility costs and support the organization's sustainability goals.

WATER FILLING STATIONS

To minimize single-use plastic waste, Niagara Parks installed three new water-filling stations in 2025, bringing the total to 24 across the Park. Since 2020, these water filling stations have helped save approximately 433,000 plastic water bottles.

BATTERY-POWERED EQUIPMENT

To reduce fuel consumption and emissions, Niagara Parks has invested significantly in acquiring battery-powered vehicles and equipment. A large battery-powered delivery vehicle was purchased for the Niagara Parks distribution center, cutting down on fossil fuel use for operational deliveries along the parkway. Additionally, Niagara Parks has acquired four battery-operated Toros, grass mowers, to reduce our use of fossil fuels. Further, adoption of electric vehicles has increased across multiple operations, including parking shuttles and golf operations with the adoption of electric golf carts.

Beyond electric operational vehicles, we have made a conscious shift towards purchasing battery-powered equipment, such as line trimmers and blowers, to reduce our dependency on fossil fuel in our horticulture department.

KEY PROJECTS

REPURPOSED ARTIFACTS
AT NIAGARA TAKES FLIGHT

This year, Niagara Parks introduced a new attraction, Niagara Takes Flight. Utilizing an adaptive reuse strategy, Niagara Parks integrated authentic artifacts and décor into the experience, successfully diverting these items from landfill. Notable features repurposed from the Toronto Power Generating Station include light fixtures, electrical currency gauges, metal railings and metal rods—all transformed through adaptive reuse rather than being discarded.

KEY PROJECTS

EV CHARGING STATIONS

Niagara Parks currently has 26 EV charging stations at ten different sites across its properties, which are all free of charge to the public. Niagara Parks was selected to receive funding through the EV ChargeON grant program in collaboration with the City of Niagara Falls, for a cost-sharing opportunity to install eight new EV chargers, including four level 3 fast chargers (the first level 3 chargers in the Park). The planned locations for the new EV chargers are four new level 2 chargers at the Niagara Glen Nature Centre and four new level 3 fast chargers at the Butterfly Conservatory.

ORGANIC **WASTE REDUCTION**

Organics diversion efforts, such as composting, have also become a critical component of Niagara Parks' sustainability strategy, with substantial commitment across our food service operations. Organic diversion can reduce landfill waste by up to 40%, highlighting the sustainability benefits of scaling programs.

Table Rock House Restaurant led organics diversion in 2025, with 67.3 tonnes composted, followed by Queen Victoria Place (15.7 tonnes) and Legends on the Niagara (12.9 tonnes). Success in these programs is attributed to standardized, low-maintenance collection systems, staff training and strong partnerships with organic processing companies.

THE **BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP**

Niagara Parks has partnered with the Bridge, a Niagara Falls-based food recovery organization, to redirect unused produce and prepared food that would otherwise go to waste. Food donated through this program is safely preserved and distributed to local food banks across Niagara, helping address food insecurity while reducing our environmental impact.

In 2025, through the Bridge program, Niagara Parks donated 3,129 kilograms of food, representing approximately 10,430 portions.

KEY PROJECTS

AUDUBON CERTIFICATION

Niagara Parks is committed to enhancing sustainability throughout all aspects of its operations, including its four golf courses. In 2014, the Legends on the Niagara achieved designation as a “Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary” through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses and we are actively pursuing the same designation for Whirlpool Golf Course.

To obtain certification, the courses at Legends went through multiple stages of enhancement to optimize environmental stewardship. This can be seen through high roughs planted with native milkweed, pollinator gardens, designated “no spray” zones and a minimal use of chemicals and fertilizers around the course.

To remain certified, the team conducts weekly visual inspections of ponds and drainage areas to watch for changes in water colour, algae, erosion, wildlife activity and other signs of ecosystem stress. These regular check-ins help to identify and respond to any unusual conditions.

Several times a year, physical water testing is performed, measuring pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, nutrients and other indicators of water quality. Samples are analyzed on-site, with occasional laboratory testing for a more detailed assessment of water leaving the property. Long-term data allows us to track trends and ensure our operations are not negatively affecting the creek. We also monitor the biological health through benthic macroinvertebrate surveys—an effective way to understand how well a waterbody supports aquatic life. Our results show that water quality generally improves as the creek flows through the Legends on the Niagara property, suggesting our environmental practices improve Niagara’s water quality.


Niagara Parks
POWER STATION
VISIT NIAGARAPARKS.COM/POWER
NOW OPEN
CURRENTS
COMING SEPTEMBER 2021

CASE STUDY

Construction of the original Canadian Niagara Power Station began in 1901 and it operated for over a century, generating hydroelectricity to power communities on both sides of the border. The site has since been restored by Niagara Parks and now operates as a heritage-based attraction, introducing guests to the fascinating history of hydroelectricity in Niagara Falls.

The site also uses sustainable systems like river-water cooling and LED lighting to reduce its environmental impact.

ADAPTIVE REUSE OF THE NIAGARA PARKS POWER STATION

In 2021, Niagara Parks reopened the century-old building as a dynamic new guest experience, following extensive adaptive reuse construction which prioritized heritage preservation as the top consideration. **True to Niagara Parks' mandate of environmental and cultural heritage preservation, the impressive interior was kept intact as much as possible and remaining equipment, artifacts and machinery were lovingly restored and repurposed.** Through interactive exhibits, guided and self-guided tours, a nighttime sound and light show and the Tunnel experience, guests learn about Niagara's fascinating industrial heritage and how the power of Niagara Falls has been harnessed for hydroelectric power generation.

Niagara Parks furthers the site's legacy of green energy through innovative solutions such as environmentally friendly heating and cooling practices. Leveraging its location along the upper Niagara River, the building is cooled from a chilling system using river water. Sustainable features such as in-floor radiant heating, LED lighting and a nitrogen generator for its fire protection system, minimize environmental impact while ensuring the facility remains functional for public use.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Our commitment to sustainability extends beyond our own operations, into community outreach and environmental education. Through increased awareness, public engagement activities and outreach, we proactively address the long-term effects of climate change while empowering the community to protect and preserve the land.

INCREASE AWARENESS AND PROMOTE STEWARDSHIP THROUGH SIGNAGE

Niagara Parks consistently updates interpretive panels and signage in high-visibility areas to educate the public on best practices about wildlife interaction, sustainability initiatives and respectful, sustainable engagement with natural habitats.

In 2025, Niagara Parks planned interpretive signage across many areas within its natural sites, including Gonder's Flats, Locust Grove, Niagara Glen, Queenston Heights Park and Dufferin Islands. **We plan to install the planned signage in 2026, engaging millions of visitors to learn more about sustainability and how to respectfully interact with the land** they are on.

ENGAGE THE VISITING PUBLIC THROUGH EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

This year, Niagara Parks delivered environmental engagement initiatives including nature walks, wildlife talks and workshops connecting communities with conservation and stewardship.

In 2025, **we hosted four community tree planting events, 16 sustainability presentations and engagement sessions and eight stewardship events, including Wilderness Weekends and the Majestic Monarchs butterfly tag and release program,** offering hands-on conservation experiences.

FOSTER SUPPORT FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

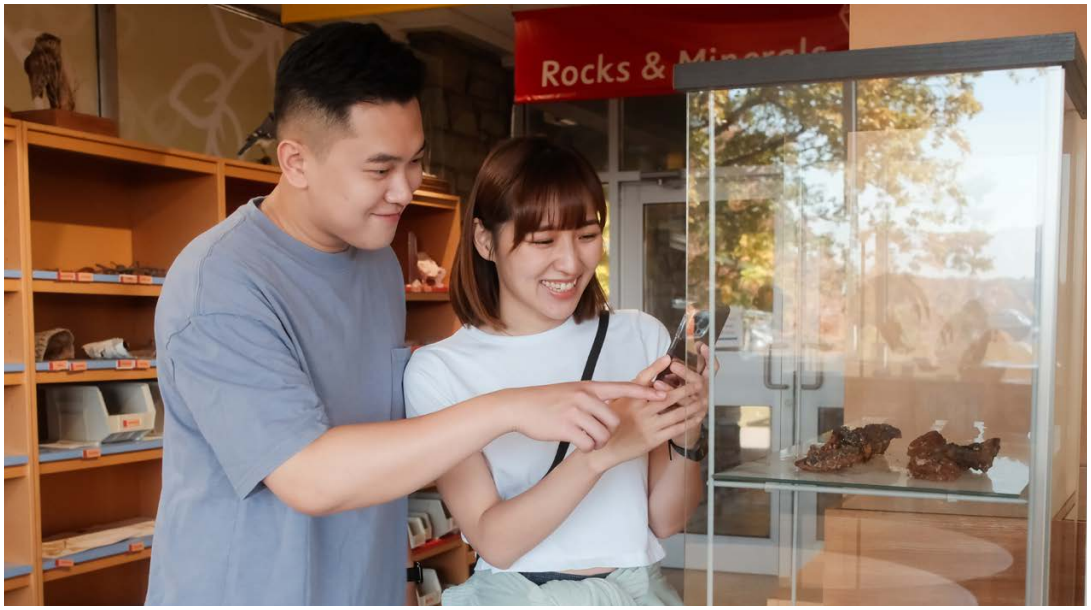
Local residents along the Niagara River have a strong connection to Niagara Parks lands. Community education and outreach are central to protecting the river corridor, with resident participation key to advancing sustainability efforts.

This year, **we held public sessions, shared door hangers and engaged in conversations along the Niagara Parkway to raise awareness of habitat protection** and balanced recreational use, helping ensure the corridor is preserved for future generations.

KEY PROJECTS

NIAGARA GLEN **NATURE CENTRE**

The sensitive environment within the Niagara Glen, one of Niagara Parks' most popular hiking areas, presents unique challenges and opportunities for visitor engagement. In 2025, Niagara Parks created a plan to improve how visitors interact with the site, including more programming at the Niagara Glen Nature Centre to educate guests before hikes. Planning includes expanding the interactive Nature Exchange program, which allows visitors to exchange unique findings from the nature trails.



DUFFERIN ISLANDS **INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

Dufferin Islands is a unique naturalized urban park located just north of the Canadian Horseshoe Falls, within the high-traffic Queen Victoria Park tourist area. As part of the three-year Dufferin Islands Visitor Experience and Ecological Enhancement initiative, funded through a $400,000 grant from TD Bank Group through the Niagara Parks Foundation, the site was identified as a prime location for public education and improved visitor experiences. In addition to the substantial ecological improvements, this year we began the creation of 10 proposed interpretive panels along with the development of accompanying educational programming. The completion is planned for 2026.

KEY PROJECTS

BIOBLITZ EVENTS USING INATURALIST

Given the size of Niagara Parks, it is nearly impossible to catalogue all of its flora and fauna. To support this inventory work, we engaged community scientists and utilized innovative AI tools through iNaturalist. These tools help track species growth and decline, identify invasive species and inform the development of necessary work plans.

In 2025, Niagara Parks hosted an official BioBlitz event at Whirlpool Golf Course, which helped increase the identification of species at this site. Additionally, this year, there was a total of 5,561 observations documented using the iNaturalist platform from guests visiting Niagara Parks. Of the observations, 1,201 species were observed by 562 individual users.

In 2026, we plan to increase the number of BioBlitz events and promote the general use of iNaturalist to continue to build our flora and fauna databases.

PARKWAY NEWSLETTER

In 2025, Niagara Parks strengthened stewardship education with local residents through a dedicated online newsletter, distributed quarterly to more than 115 subscribers. This direct communication channel supports awareness and stewardship by sharing timely information on key initiatives, including no-mow zones to reduce shoreline erosion, invasive species to monitor and broader sustainability initiatives across Niagara Parks.

By maintaining regular, targeted communication with local residents, Niagara Parks reinforces shared responsibility for protecting natural landscapes while supporting long-term environmental sustainability along the Parkway.

KEY PROJECTS

WILDERNESS **WEEKENDS**

Across multiple weekends in 2025, Niagara Parks hosted Wilderness Weekends, programming focused on protecting native ecosystems through hands-on community action. Stewardship themed activities ranged from wildlife photography workshops to guided hikes within the Niagara Glen, combining environmental education with direct conservation efforts.

Participants joined Niagara Parks staff to clean up litter, control invasive species and learn to identify native and invasive plants, gaining insight into the ecological importance of protected areas.

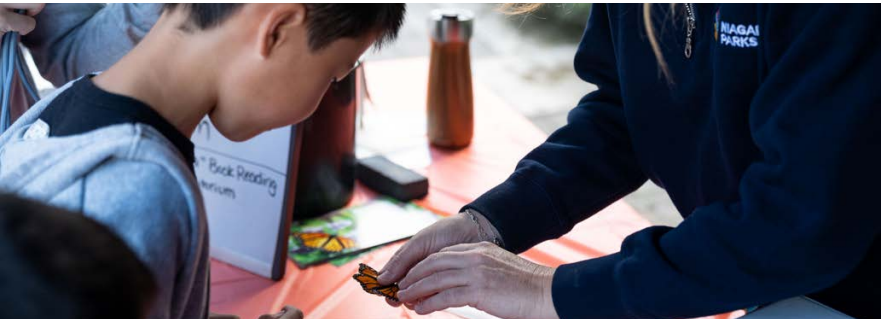
BI-NATIONAL **TRAIL CONNECTION**

In 2025, Niagara Parks worked in collaboration with the Peace Bridge Authority, the Town of Fort Erie and the Niagara Greenway Commission to develop a unique bi-national trail-crossing logo for wayfinding signs to aid trail users in navigating to and from the Peace Bridge in Fort Erie.

This project is planned to continue into 2026 with the completion and installation of new wayfinding signs on the Peace Bridge, leading to the Niagara River Recreation Trail, to support increased trail usage and awareness on both sides of the border.

MAJESTIC **MONARCHS**

In September 2025, Niagara Parks hosted the Majestic Monarchs tag and release event outside the Butterfly Conservatory. Approximately 300 monarch butterflies were tagged during the free community event. These butterflies were then released, assisting researchers in monitoring migration paths and studying behavioural trends among monarchs.



LOOKING AHEAD

SHORT TERM GOALS

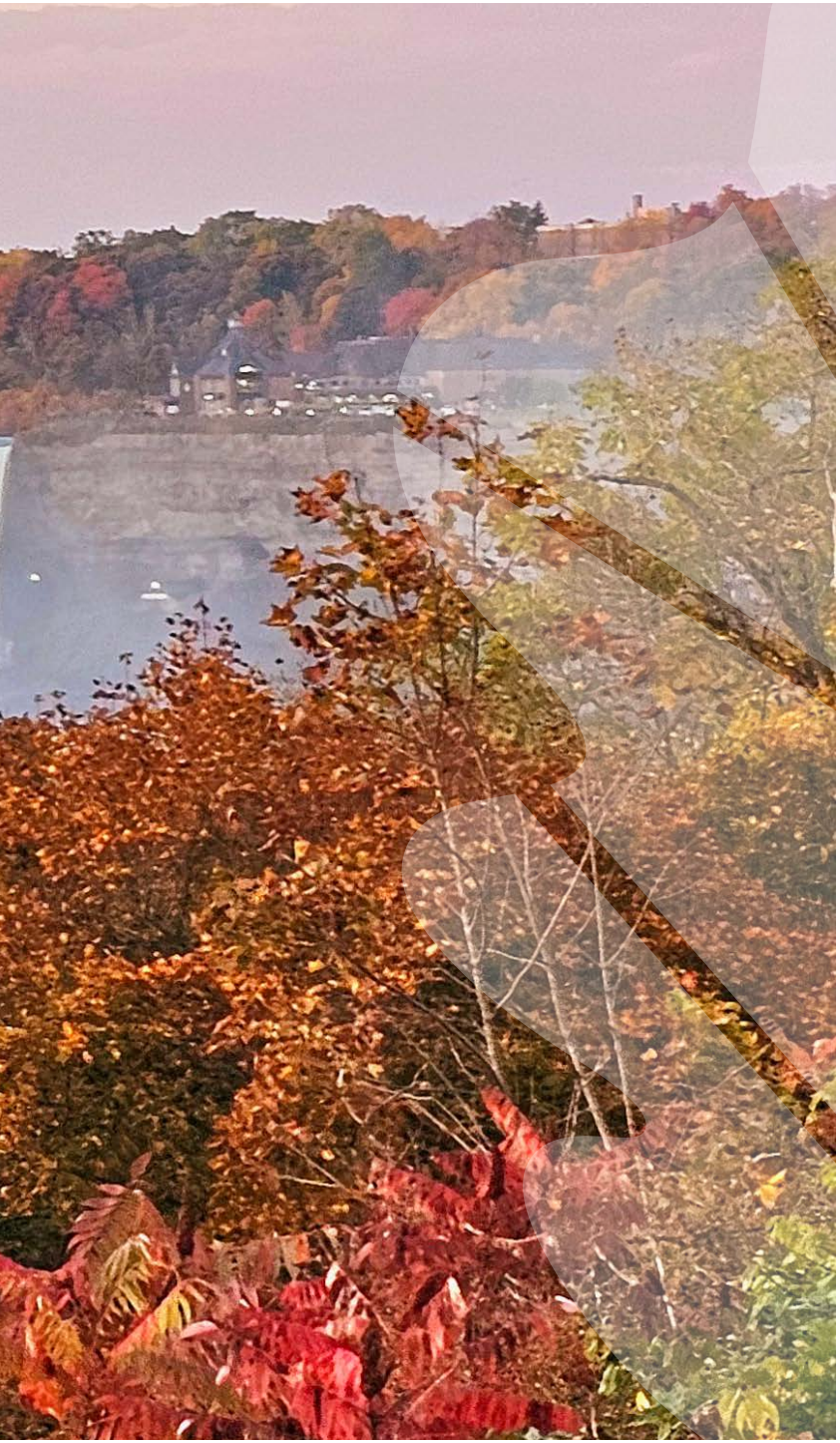
1-3 YEARS

1. Complete and implement a Niagara Glen Interpretive Plan.
2. Promote the ongoing use of iNaturalist to collect flora and fauna data across Niagara Parks.
3. Install the Chippawa Battlefield Grassland Habitat Lookout.
4. Install new interpretive signage at Gonder's Flats and Dufferin Islands.
5. Install bi-national trail crossing signs at the Peace Bridge.

LONG TERM GOALS

4+ YEARS

1. Develop a citizen science program to enhance Niagara Parks data collection throughout its natural areas.
2. Develop a new exhibit for the Niagara Glen Nature Centre.
3. Expand bi-national trail route opportunities and events.



OUR **PARTNERS**

NIAGARA PARKS PARTNERS

Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Spaces System Network

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Niagara River Remedial Action Plan

Parks Canada

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Ministry of Natural Resources

Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks

Ontario Invasive Species Centre

Brock University

Niagara College

Vineland Research and Innovation Centre & Greening the Landscape Research Consortium

Land Care Niagara

Bruce Trail Conservancy

Science North

Ontario Power Generation

Ontario Alliance of Climbers

Town of Fort Erie

City of Niagara Falls

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

ASSOCIATED NATURE CLUBS

Niagara Falls Nature Club

Bert Miller Nature Club

Peninsula Field Naturalists

TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS

Trans Canada Trail

Waterfront Regeneration Trust

Greater Niagara Circle Route

Ontario Trails Council

Niagara Greenway Commission

NIAGARA PARKS