



# WATERSHED NEWS

John Hix Conservation Administration Centre, Tiffin Conservation Area  
 8195 8<sup>th</sup> Line, Utopia, On. L0M 1T0  
 Telephone: 705.424.1479 Fax: 705.424.2115  
 www.nvca.on.ca

## THE GRADE IS IN FOR NOTTAWASAGA VALLEY

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Low Ropes Course	2
<u>Clean Water Act</u>	2
Mike Flood Watch	2
Gifts to Canadians	3
Planning Numbers Up	3
Staff Recognition	4
New Staff	4

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Watershed Stewardship Recognition Night  
 Tuesday, October 30  
 6:30 p.m.—9 p.m.  
 Tiffin Centre

Healthy Waters Workshop: Protecting Species at Risk  
 Tuesday, November 27  
 7 p.m.  
 Mono Community Centre

Healthy Waters Workshop: Eco-build Night  
 Tuesday, December 4  
 7 p.m.  
 Tiffin Centre

The health status of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority watershed was assessed and recorded this year under the new report card initiative. The evaluation focused on three major criteria: forest conditions, surface water quality and wetland conditions.

The NVCA has a generally healthy forest cover, receiving a grade of B. Environment Canada says a minimum of 30 per cent forest cover is necessary to support a healthy wildlife habitat. NVCA has an overall average of 32.8 per cent. Increasing streamside forest cover, which filters pollutants from entering streams, is an area for improvement.

Surface water quality is the category requiring the most improvement. While two-thirds of the subwatersheds have good surface water quality, the conditions of the Innisfil Creek Subwatershed lower the average overall grade to D. Streams that drain urbanized and agricultural areas are prone to runoff and less likely to encounter new sources of water while moving through forests and wetlands. Despite this, the Nottawasaga River watershed does have the largest population of migratory trout in Southern Ontario.

Finally, wetland conditions are generally good, receiving a grade of B. Wetlands are crucial in providing natural flood control and filtering pollutants before they enter streams. Environment Canada indicates that a minimum of 10 per cent wetland cover is healthy. NVCA has 12 per cent.

The report cards will help the NVCA communicate the watershed's health status to residents, municipalities and other parties. The Chair, Vice Chair and CAO/Secretary-Treasurer visited each of the 18 municipalities to present the findings.

The report cards are managed by dividing the NVCA into 10 subwatersheds. Two subwatersheds will be monitored in detail each year. Report card updates will be provided annually.



Watershed Monitoring Specialist Katherine Watson assessing stream health.

Subwatershed	Forest Conditions	Surface Water Quality	Wetland Conditions
Upper Nottawasaga River	B	A	B
Mid Nottawasaga River	C	C	B
Lower Nottawasaga River	C	D	B
Boyne River	D	B	C
Innisfil Creek	D	F	C
Pine River	A	B	C
Willow Creek	A	B	B
Blue Mountains	C	B	D
Mad River	B	B	B
Severn Sound Headwaters	A	B	B
<b>NVCA OVERALL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>B</b>

Full report cards can be read on our website under Our Programs and Services.

## LOW ROPES COURSE NOW OPEN

**P**roblem solving has never been so much fun.

The new low ropes course at the Tiffin Centre for Conservation is a fun activity to encourage team work. The course leads groups through a series of stations, each one impossible to complete without a team effort.

The philosophy behind the course, which has existed for more than 30 years, aims to have individuals realize the following:

- Persons have more resources and are more capable than they think they are.
- A team has the resources within it to successfully cope

*In this event, the group must hoist a tire and place it at the base of a post without touching the post. This gets increasingly difficult as the height of the post increases and the group is forced to "grow" together.*



with significant physical and mental challenges.

- One learns more when presented with problems rather than solutions.
- Significant, long-lasting learning can be achieved through an intensive short-term experience

The low ropes course is available to organizations for team-building events. The course is guided by Fred Tustin, who is a certified instructor by the Association for Challenge Course Technology. For information on booking the course, please contact Fred at (705)424-1485 or [tiffin@beyondthehorizon.on.ca](mailto:tiffin@beyondthehorizon.on.ca). A link to their site is also provided at [www.nvca.on.ca](http://www.nvca.on.ca).



*In this event, the group must get from point A to point B with limited resources. The group must literally support one another and balance control to get to the other side.*

## ENGINEERING & TECHNICAL SERVICES

### CLEAN WATER ACT TOOK EFFECT JULY 3, 2007

**T**he Act marks the first time that communities across entire watersheds will work together in public consultation to protect existing and future sources of drinking water. In its attempt to implement recommendations from the Walkerton Inquiry, the Act requires municipalities and Conservation Authorities to:

- map the sources of municipal drinking water supplies, current and future, to prevent the supply from being depleted or contaminated.
- direct local communities to monitor any activity that could potentially threaten water quality or quantity and take action to reduce or remove that threat.

Protecting the sources of drinking water is the first step in a multi-barrier plan to achieve safe drinking water. The other steps are water treatment, secure distribution systems, monitoring programs and responding to adverse test results.

The NVCA is one of four areas that make up the South Georgian Bay-Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region under the Clean Water Act. The Lake Simcoe Region has been assigned the lead Source Protection Authority. The NVCA will be a main contributor of staff, resources and expertise.

### MIKE FLOOD WATCH ALLOWS FOR REAL-TIME FORECASTING

**T**he NVCA has acquired a new tool to help with forecasting during extreme weather conditions. Mike Flood Watch interprets real-time data, including stream flows, water levels and weather data, to:

- Provide flood forecasts and warnings
- aide with decision support and scenario analysis
- optimize conditions in dams, reservoirs and structures
- disseminate data via various mediums, including email, fax and web

In addition to Mike Flood Watch, the NVCA also has Mike 11. This model is designed to simulate flow, water quality and sediment transport in surface water bodies.

The need for monitoring and forecasting flood conditions is of a growing concern given climate changes. While flooding occurs mostly in March and April due to melting snow, since 1973 floods have been recorded in every month except August and September in the NVCA watershed. The major areas that experience flooding are Angus, Mad River and Innisfil Township.

The goal of Mike Flood Watch is to reduce the risk of loss of life and property damage in the watershed. Currently there are 5,780 people who live in the flood plain and the estimated value of property structures is more than \$586 million.

# LAND & WATER STEWARDSHIP

## MINESING WETLANDS ONE OF 10 GIFTS TO CANADIANS

Each year around Canada Day, the Nature Conservancy of Canada announces 10 natural heritage sites that it vows to protect, with the help of its partners, for future generations of Canadians to enjoy.

This year the Minesing Wetlands were the gift for Ontario. Each province receives one of the gifts. The gifts are made possible through the support of concerned individuals, corporations, foundations and other conservation organizations.

The Minesing Wetlands were celebrated on June 21st at the Edenvale Conservation Area. Speeches were given by Martin Abell, Chair of NCC Ontario; Fred Nix, Chair of Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority; Julie Cayley from Ducks Unlimited/ Ontario Eastern Habitat Joint Venture; Mark Shoreman from the Ministry of Natural Resources; and Donna Stewart, Regional Vice President of NCC Ontario.

After the opening ceremonies guests took a guided canoe trip through the wetlands to view the biodiversity of this internationally significant natural habitat.

The NCC has protected more than 1.9 million acres since it was created in 1962.



NVCA Chair Fred Nix addressing the crowd.

## PLANNING

### PLANNING NUMBERS UP

As a result of the new Generic Regulations which expanded the regulated area under NVCA jurisdiction in 2006, the planning department has received **30 per cent** more permit applications.

Maps showing the new regulation areas are available at local municipal offices, the NVCA office or on the NVCA website.

Please refer to the maps before starting any construction projects.

### HUNTING PASSES

Passes now allow access to both the Minesing and Osprey Wetlands, unlike in 2006 when each wetland required a separate pass.



#### Did you Know....

In 2007, the NVCA planted **68,950 trees** in three weeks, from late April to early May.

The NVCA has offered tree planting services to landowners throughout the watershed since 1964. Each spring staff meet with landowners to determine the best tree species to plant. Seedlings are then planted at subsidized rates.

Forests help deter drought and flooding. They also reduce soil erosion, provide habitat for wildlife and are economically valuable.

## IN BRIEF

### PESTICIDE MONITORING PILOT

The NVCA is currently participating in two pesticide studies. The first is with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. It will focus on two points – Innisfil Creek and Lamont/McIntyre at County Road 10—and will determine the concentrations of pesticides in these waters. Data will be collected under different conditions, including low-flows and stormflows.

A second study with Environment Canada will monitor four specific pesticides (atrazine, metolachlor, 2,4-D and glyphosate) in the Pretty River, Upper Nottawasaga River, Boyne River and Willow Creek.

This is an exciting opportunity for the NVCA given it has very little pesticide monitoring data for its watercourses.

### ALGAE STUDIES IN NOTTAWASAGA RIVER

During the summer of 2007, staff continued its investigation of reports of bright green algae in the Nottawasaga River. The results indicate that the type of algae present (*Rhizoclonium*) forms large crops and attaches itself to aquatic vegetation.

This is a relatively new condition in the Nottawasaga River, given that during the '80s and '90s, the water levels were much higher, preventing sunlight from penetrating to the river bottom to produce vegetation for algae to attach itself to.

Results suggest that while the algae and vegetation changes the river aesthetics, the river ecology has not been affected at this time.

## 13 staff recognized for combined 110 years at NVCA

At the annual summer barbeque on Friday August 24th, staff who have served the NVCA for five, 10 or 15 years were celebrated. CAO/Secretary Treasurer, Wayne Wilson, and Chair, Fred Nix, thanked these individuals for their dedication.



### 15 year Recipients

Wayne Wilson, Fred Dobbs, Tim Salkeld and Byron Wesson, with Fred Nix (right)



### 10 year Recipient

Rick Grillmayer with Wayne Wilson and Fred Nix



### 5 Year Recipients

Greg Bray, Barb Perreault, Henry Pelley, Kimberly Winder, Susan Richards, Susan Whitters and Glenn Switzer, with Wayne Wilson and Fred Nix  
Absent: Bob Law

## Farewell to Some and Welcome to Others

One can expect to see many new faces around the NVCA. Over the past seven months the NVCA has welcomed the following additions:

Marilyn Eger—Director of Planning  
Chris Hibberd—Senior Planner  
Patti Young—Senior Planner  
Kim Garraway—Communications and Public Relations Assistant

The following familiar faces have also joined the NVCA on a full-time basis:

Steve Green—Land & Reforestation Assistant  
Darcia Fraser—Water Resource Engineer  
Tom Reeve—Water Resource Engineer

The NVCA also bids farewell to two employees— former Director of Planning Charles Burgess and former Manager of Planning Policy & Regulation Beverly Booth. Both Charles and Beverly have left to pursue positions with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

## TRUST FUND FOR FIRE RELIEF

On September 21, Byron Wesson's home was destroyed by fire.

A trust fund has been established to provide an opportunity for NVCA staff, as well as friends and members of the public who may wish to contribute funds, to assist Byron and his family. The account is at Scotiabank under the name *Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority in trust for Byron and Joanna Wesson*. The account number is 60152 01552 17.

CONTACTS	(705)424-1479	EXT
Wayne Wilson CAO/Secretary-Treasurer		225
Marilyn Eger Director of Planning		229
Glenn Switzer Director Engineering & Technical Services		232
Byron Wesson Director of Lands & Water Stewardship		224
Susan Richards Manager Administration & Human Resources		228