

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NVCA celebrates 50 years of conservation

UTOPIA, Ontario, April 26, 2010 – If you plant a tree seedling, you know the benefits are not going to be realized immediately. It takes time and care for the tree to grow large enough to provide shade and wildlife habitat and to protect against soil erosion, flooding and drought. But you do it anyway because you know it will enhance your property and environment and be something to leave behind for the next generation.

On May 5th, 1960, the idea of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority was like that tree seedling. Forward-thinking representatives from the watershed's municipalities knew that if they took that first step to form a conservation authority, then natural resource management and protection would follow for everyone's benefit.

Fifty years later, the NVCA can see the long-term results of its conservation efforts as it marks its anniversary with a community celebration and tree planting on May 1st.

"Our focus has been to implement local conservation projects in a proactive manner to benefit our watershed municipalities and residents," says Wayne Wilson, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer.

A watershed is an area of land that is drained by a river and its tributaries. These in turn empty into a larger body of water such as the Great Lakes. The NVCA watershed is approximately 3,700 square kilometres and spans through 18 municipalities in the counties of Simcoe, Dufferin and Grey.

"We've made a large difference in improving river and stream health and protecting residents from natural hazards," says Wilson. "Our board members and staff are proud of the NVCA's accomplishments throughout the past 50 years."

The conservation authority has coordinated the planting of about 2.5 million trees since 1964.

Thousands of stewardship projects have been completed such as riverbank stabilization to reduce erosion; removing dams to



Before (above), after (below): In the 1980s, the NVCA and the County of Dufferin repaired the riverbank along a stretch of Hockley Road that had been eroded by the river.



Member Municipalities

Adjala-Tosorontio

Amaranth

Barrie

The Blue Mountains

Bradford-West Gwillimbury

Clearview

Collingwood

Essa

Grey Highlands

Innisfil

Melancthon

Mono

Mulmur

New Tecumseth

Oro-Medonte

Shelburne

Springwater

Wasaga Beach

Watershed Counties

Dufferin

Grey

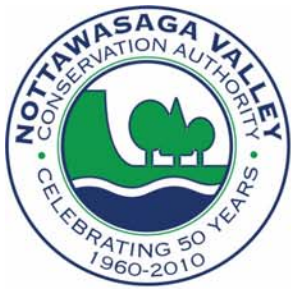
Simcoe

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encourage fast-flowing, well-oxygenated water channels; decommissioning abandoned wells and upgrading septic systems to reduce the risk of contamination; and creating buffers between land and water.

In 1962, the NVCA acquired its first tract of conservation land, which was a four hectare site now known as Edenvale Conservation Area. The NVCA now owns and manages about 4,850 hectares of land. It is managed in a way that protects wetlands, floodplains, ground water and wildlife habitat, but also allows for public recreation and education.

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“In 1985, on the occasion of our 25th anniversary, then Chair, Jim Arnold, said that ‘our success will depend largely on our conservation education program...Our job is to promote sound conservation ethics, for we cannot do it alone,’ and we’ve embraced that sentiment ever since,” says Walter Benotto, NVCA Chair.

In 1992, the Tiffin Centre for Conservation opened the doors to its education centre and program, which thousands of students have passed through each year since.

In 2007, the conservation authority issued its first set of watershed report cards which assign grades to forest, stream and wetland health. Watershed-wide, forest and wetland conditions received a grade of B. Water quality received a D.

“The NVCA continues to monitor conditions on an annual basis and uses the data to set priorities to protect healthy habitat and restore degraded areas,” says Wilson.

The report cards will be updated every five years.

In addition to these projects that provide immediate and visible results, the NVCA continues to carry out its mandate to protect people and property from damage caused by flooding and erosion.

To mark its 50th anniversary, the NVCA is celebrating at a site that encompasses all of these conservation programs.

The Black Ash Creek Floodway in the Town of Collingwood is the largest project ever undertaken by the NVCA. It was designed to prevent flooding in the west end of town.



Before (above), after (below): In the 1990s, the NVCA and the City of Barrie removed a dam on Bear Creek and restored 42 metres of free-flowing stream to improve water quality and fish habitat.

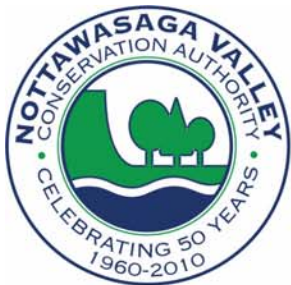


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NVCA staff worked with a team from the town and the province to establish an efficient flood control structure capable of handling a regional storm like Hurricane Hazel.

The channel design also included protection for fisheries habitat, inclusion of local recreational trails and a re-vegetation plan that is still being carried out today with tree plantings by students from local schools and volunteers from environmental groups.

“The major construction of the floodway is complete, but like a tree seedling, if we continue to care for and protect the site, it will grow into an environmental legacy we can all be proud of,” says Wilson.

Join the NVCA along the banks of the Black Ash Creek, at the footbridge behind the Blue Mountain Mall at 55 Mountain Road, on Saturday May 1st starting at 11 a.m. Plant a tree seedling, take a guided hike and learn what the NVCA does to protect your watershed. Visit www.nvca.on.ca for more information.

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About the NVCA

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is your public agency dedicated to the preservation of a healthy environment. As your partner, the NVCA provides the expertise to help protect our water, our land and our future.

For more information, please contact:

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