



NVCA February 2025 Board Meeting Highlights

Next Meeting: March 28, 2025, held virtually

For the full meeting agenda, including documents and reports, visit [NVCA's website](#).

Presentation regarding NVCA's Environmental Education program

Naomi Saunders, NVCA's Manager, Environmental Education presented to the Board of Directors regarding the history, successes, challenges, and financial management of the Environmental Education program.

Program Objectives

This program's objectives are to connect watershed residents to nature, inspire sustainability, promote physical and mental health, and increase environmental awareness and understanding of local ecosystems.

Through NVCA's environmental education program, environmental stewardship, community health, and well-being are improved. Residents tend to engage more in their communities, contributing to sustainability and cost savings over the long-term.

Revenue sources

NVCA's Environmental Education Program is a "Category 3" activity and currently receives approximately \$17,000 in municipal levy, averaging to \$0.08 per watershed resident per year.

The majority of program revenues are self-generated, which is directly linked to the number of program participants.

Program challenges

As current revenues only allow for staff to be present for teaching hours, and not for preparation time, program development, or fundraising, it is challenging for the team to develop and maintain current and culturally

sensitive program content. It is also a challenge to be able to expand services to offer programs in all corners of the watershed.

Looking forward, NVCA is investigating opportunities for business expansion to ensure financial sustainability and program increased watershed reach.

During the meeting, the Board of Directors recommended that this presentation be brought to councils for information and that a board committee be formed to assist in finding solutions to the challenges.

Update on NVCA's Planning and Regulations Program

Chris Hibberd, NVCA's Director, Watershed Management Services, updated the Board of Directors on the Planning and Regulations Program.

With a commitment to continuous improvement, NVCA's Planning and Regulations program implemented procedures such as providing courtesy calls, improving timeline tracking, and updating standard operating procedures to streamline the permit review process in 2024. They also continued to encourage pre-consultations for permit applications and began pre-screening applications with technical staff.

Some action items they are currently focused on include:

- Re-examine the use of peer reviewers to fast-track reviews and help address the review backlog
- Prioritize older submissions with an emphasis on risk management

- Launched an e-permitting system to streamline permit application processes and to allow staff to focus on permit reviews rather than manual work

Other actions in 2025, include:

- Modernize NVCA guidelines/procedures
- Enhance communications with municipalities, applicants and stakeholders
- Review of program processes
- Develop a program-specific customer service strategy

Permits Approvals under the CA Act

Between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024 NVCA, staff issued permits on an average of 20 days after technical staff have deemed the application complete. Major permits were issued within 90 days 95% of the time, and minor permits were issued 100% of the time for the same time frame.

Under Conservation Ontario's Best Practices timelines, minor permits were issued within 30 days 83% of the time.

NVCA staff notified applicants of the status of their application within 21 days 98% of the time.

NVCA Climate Change Action Plan 2024 progress report and 2025 goals

NVCA's 2022 – 2025 Climate Change Action Plan emphasizes the importance of responding to climate change, supporting NVCA partners' actions to reduce the impacts of climate change, and strengthening the commitment to face the challenges it poses to NVCA watershed and member municipalities.

There are seven goals and 34 actions listed in the action plan. The goals are:

- Flooding and Erosion
- Monitor
- Communicate and educate
- Natural heritage
- Stewardship
- Partnership

- Corporate practices

At the end of 2024, 11 of the actions were completed, 24 were incomplete, and five are ongoing.

Procedures for the Implementation of Ontario Regulation 41/24 Update

NVCA staff has drafted an update to the Procedures for the Implementation of Ontario Regulation 41/24 document. This update will provide greater clarity for applicants and staff regarding the Administrative Review. The procedure regarding stop orders is also more transparent and clearly laid out.

The draft procedures will be posted on the NVCA website for a 30-day public commenting period. Subsequent to the comment period the draft procedures will be brought back to the Board for approval.

Interim CAO Workplan

NVCA is going through a transformative time with the departure of the previous CAO and the upcoming recruitment of a new CAO. To ensure stability and continuity, the Interim CAO has implemented a focused work plan that addresses current challenges while positioning the organization for success under new leadership.

The four key priorities and commitments include:

- Strengthening municipal relationships
- Restoring and enforcing customer service standards
- Evaluating planning, permitting, and engineering processes
- Developing a backlog reduction strategy for planning, permitting, and engineering

[For more information, download the work plan here.](#)

NVCA Planning and Regulation Guidelines Update

NVCA's Planning and Regulation Guidelines is a core document used by Planning and Regulation

staff to review applications, similar to a municipality's zoning by-law.

The guidelines were last updated in 2009, and the proposed modernizing of the guidelines includes referencing current legislation and provisions that better respond to growing pressures throughout the watershed.

Staff will seek input from our municipalities and stakeholders, and the public will have a 30-day commenting period. The feedback will be incorporated where possible to ensure strong yet responsive policies are enacted for the watershed.

Upcoming Events

March Break Camp Tiffin

Led by NVCA's environmental educators, Camp Tiffin is an outdoor camp designed to enhance your child's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural world and our amazing planet.

Activities may include wilderness survival skills, kick sledding, wildlife discovery and learning how maple syrup is made!

Our staff have been excited to plan some winter camp activities which will be full of outdoor adventures.

Date: March 10 – 14, 2025

Location: Tiffin Centre for Conservation

Spring Tonic Maple Syrup Festival

Hosted in partnership with the Rotary Club of Barrie, the Spring Tonic Maple Syrup Festival at the Tiffin Conservation Area is a tradition spanning more than three decades.

Visitors can explore how maple syrup was made in the past. After that, they will return to current times and see how maple syrup is made today! Ending the tour with a pancake and sausage breakfast with fresh maple syrup. Prices for most activities are included in the admission fee.

Date: April 5 – 6, 2025

Location: Tiffin Centre for Conservation

Tiffin Nature School

At Tiffin Nature School, children aged 2.5 to 10 are invited to explore and connect with the natural world. We nurture their innate curiosity, offering immersive outdoor experiences that inspire discovery and growth.

Dates: Tuesdays & Thursdays until May 29, 2025

Location: Tiffin Centre for Conservation