



NVCA February 2022 Board Meeting Highlights

Next Meeting: March 25, 2022, held virtually

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

Presentation on Natural Heritage

Ryan Post, Manager of Watershed Science and Dave Featherstone, Senior Ecologist gave a presentation on NVCA's Natural Heritage Program.

This program is part of NVCA's strategic and business plans, and covered within Categories 1 and 3 of the recently updated *Conservation Authorities Act*. There are five roles and responsibilities within the Natural Heritage Program:

Natural Heritage Systems

NVCA is looking to develop a watershed wide natural heritage system to protect interconnected natural heritage features and functions at a watershed level.

Natural Heritage Systems are made up of natural heritage features and areas that are linked by natural corridors. These systems can include lands that have been restored, and areas that have the potential to be restored.

This work supports NVCA's watershed management objectives and plan review responsibilities.

Wetland regulations mapping and field verification

Conservation authorities across Ontario were prescribed by the *Conservation Authorities Act* to regulate wetlands. NVCA developed wetland mapping to support this updated legislation.

Watershed Science staff are responsible for keeping this map up to date, and they do this by using satellite imagery, as well as verifying wetland boundaries by site visits and using GPS units.

Conservation Land Inventories

Staff completes ecological surveys on NVCA properties, such as Tiffin Conservation Area, Nottawasaga Bluffs Conservation Area, Minesing Wetlands and most recently Boyne Valley Springs (Oliver Property).

Natural Heritage Monitoring

NVCA has been involved in invasive species management in various areas across the watershed. NVCA has partnered with Georgian Bay Forever, the Town of Collingwood, Blue Mountain Watershed Trust and various condominiums to manage Phragmites along Collingwood shoreline.

Some other monitoring efforts include species at risk and forest and marsh bird monitoring.

Program Communications and Outreach

NVCA publishes Watershed Health Checks every five years to provide results of data analysis member municipalities, partner organizations and interested members of the public.

Employee Handbook Update

The Board of Directors approved two changes to NVCA's employee handbook: updates to the Remote Work Policy, and the addition of the Right to Disconnect policy.

Remote Work Policy

Depending on the eligibility of the position, and upon approval, staff may establish a remote work agreement with NVCA. This policy was created by a committee formed of Human Resources Managers at six different conservation authorities, is being implemented at many of the CAs in the Province. It ensures that all legal and liability issues are addressed

while allowing staff who are eligible to enjoy some flexibility.

Right to Disconnect Policy

Due to work-related pressures, the current landscape of work, or an employee's work environment or location, employees may feel obligated or choose to continue to perform their job duties outside their normal working hours.

With this new policy, staff are encouraged to set clear boundaries between work and their personal lives.

Inventory of Programs and Services for Submission to MECP

The *Conservation Authorities Act* required conservation authorities to prepare Transition Plans outlining steps and timelines for the preparation of an Inventory of Program and Services and for the development and execution of funding agreements with participating municipalities.

Staff created this inventory and completed a 5-year average of financials for each along with the appropriate category they will go under (1, 2, or 3 as per the CA Act). This inventory will be part of the discussions with our municipal partners and for the creation of MOU's relating to category 2 and 3 items requiring municipal levy.

[Download NVCA's inventory of Programs and Services here.](#)