

February 28, 2024

**Town of Pelham
Regional Municipality of Niagara**

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Report No. FA-05-24 RE: Completed Acquisition – Lathrop Parcel

At the Board of Directors meeting held on February 16, 2024, the Board passed the following recommendation:

Resolution No. FA-08-24

THAT Report No. FA-05-24 RE: Completed Acquisition – Lathrop Parcel BE RECEIVED; AND THAT the Town of Pelham and Regional Municipality of Niagara BE INFORMED.

A copy of Report No. FA-05-24 has been enclosed for your reference.

Sincerely,



Melanie Davis
Manager, Office of the CAO & Board
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

cc: Eric Baldin, Manager, Land Planning
Leilani Lee-Yates, Director, Planning & Development, A/Director Watershed Strategies & Climate Change

Report To: Board of Directors

Subject: Completed Acquisition – Lathrop Parcel

Report No: FA-05-24

Date: February 16, 2024

Recommendation:

THAT Report No. FA-05-24 RE: Completed Acquisition – Lathrop Parcel **BE RECEIVED;**

AND THAT the Town of Pelham and Regional Municipality of Niagara **BE INFORMED.**

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update the Board of Directors on the completed acquisition of the Lathrop Parcel located at 130 Luffman Drive, Part Lot 3 Concession 4, Town of Pelham, Regional Municipality of Niagara. The report further recommends that NPCA's local and regional municipality, within which the property is located, be informed of this acquisition.

Background:

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Board of Directors approved the Land Securement Strategy (LSS) in December 2022 via Resolution No. FA-128-2022. Approval of the LSS was a significant achievement for NPCA and supports Goal 1.4 of NPCA's 2021-2031 Strategic Plan – Managing NPCA lands to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover. The NPCA has adopted a minimum of 180 hectares by 2031.

Through two separate Resolutions in 2023 (No. FA-59-2023 and No. FA-95-2023), the NPCA Board of Directors directed staff to pursue and negotiate the acquisition of 8 parcels throughout the watershed based on an estimated value for each property and an overall upset limit for all priority parcels. One potential acquisition, the Lathrop successfully negotiated in 2023, with final transfer on January 12, 2024.

Discussion:

The Lathrop Parcel is 26 hectares (64 acres) that includes a mix of natural features, agricultural land, and residential improvements. The landowner is from the same family that sold the original Lathrop Conservation Area to NPCA in 2011. NPCA was interested in a roughly 18 hectare (44 acre) portion of the property that included most of the natural features, while the landowner would retain 8 hectares (20 acres) that included their residence and other property improvements.

The parcel is located within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area and designated Escarpment Natural and Escarpment Protection. The parcel is also part of the Effingham Forest Life Science ANSI. It provides cold water fish habitat and has presence of one Species at Risk (American Chestnut) on the north part of the parcel. Informal trails already exist and may be ideal to connect to adjacent NPCA properties with additional acquisitions. This property is also within one of the six landowner outreach focus areas (St. Johns/Shorthills) as identified in the LSS.

The landowner connected with NPCA staff in late 2022 and expressed interest in selling a portion of their escarpment property. After an appraisal was completed to determine fair market value, NPCA staff were able to negotiate a per acre purchase price within market value. With verbal agreement on the per acre value, NPCA staff completed several due diligence studies including a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and legal survey. After the property survey was completed the final property size to be purchased by NPCA was assessed at 17.8 hectares or 43.96 acres.

There are no immediate plans to open the property for public access. Future uses will be determined through a management plan process. Land Care staff will ensure property boundaries are marked with NPCA signage as needed to limit risk and liability.

The landowner intends to work with NPCA and Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation (NPCF) staff to share their story and connection to the watershed. This story will be one part of support materials used by staff and Board members from NPCA and NPCF to secure additional acquisition opportunities and solicit private donations in support of NPCA's Land Securement Strategy and the NPCF Nature For All campaign.

Financial Implications:

Funding to support this project was leveraged between two funding sources – the 2023 Niagara Region land acquisition support of \$234,000 and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Canada (MOECCC).

With support from Conservation Ontario, the MOECCC is providing acquisition funding through the Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund (NSCSF). The NSCSF is a funding

program implemented to help achieve several Federal targets for habitat enhancement, restoration, stewardship, protection, and others. This includes Canada's 30x30 targets to protect 30% of lands and waters by 2030. The Lathrop parcel will further enhance NPCA's existing contribution of over 1600 hectares to the 30x30 initiative.

Links to Strategic Plan:

Securement of the Lathrop Property supports the NPCA strategic plan that led to the development and implementation of a LSS to achieve Goal 1.4: "*Manage lands to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover*". Implementing the LSS through securement of properties also directly supports achieving Goal 3.1 "*Create equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people*" as well as several other NPCA strategic goals and performance measures related to natural hazard protection, ecosystem improvements, and building relationships with partners, stakeholders, and Indigenous peoples.

Related Reports and Appendices:

None.

Authored by:

Original Signed by:

Eric Baldin
Manager, Land Planning

Submitted by:

Original Signed by:

Chandra Sharma MCIP RPP
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer