



## Niagara Parks at a Glance

Niagara Parks is a board-governed operational enterprise of the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. Niagara Parks, operating under the Niagara Parks Act, was founded in 1885 with two principles: that Niagara Parks would never be a financial burden to the taxpayers of Ontario and that as much as possible, the parks would be free for the public to enjoy.

### Mandate

- Niagara Parks seeks to preserve and promote the natural and cultural heritage along the Niagara River corridor. Niagara Parks is also committed to delivering commercially successful products in a way that ensures benefits for everyone (people who travel, the adjacent communities, and the respective natural, social, and cultural environments).

### Operations and Funding

- As a self-funded agency of the Ontario Government, Niagara Parks is reliant on its revenue producing operations in order to cover its expenses and fund its cultural and environmental stewardship initiatives
- Niagara Parks operations include natural attractions, gardens, outdoor recreation facilities, golf courses, restaurants, heritage sites, retail shops and transportation services
- Niagara Parks maintains property and operations spanning the 56kms along the Niagara River, from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Fort Erie
- For fiscal 2019-20, Niagara Parks established continued growth in visitation and revenue, including setting a new record high revenue of \$127 million

### Organizational Economic Impact

- Niagara Parks typically hosts in excess of 4 million unique visitors annually, with an annual economic impact of over \$1.2 billion
- Niagara Parks is one of the largest employers in the Niagara region, with a peak staff of over 1,800 and annual payroll of \$57 million in 2019

### Environmental Stewardship

- Niagara Parks environmental stewardship role is an essential part of its mandate and a primary consideration in many operational decisions

- Niagara Parks has invested in the development and implementation of a comprehensive 10-year action plan to guide its environmental stewardship strategy which includes:
  - Coastal Wetland Restoration Project
  - Niagara River Riparian Restoration
  - Urban Forestry Management Strategy
  - Pollinator Garden Route
  - Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program Certification at Legends on the Niagara
  - Trails Assets and Tourism Initiative in collaboration with Brock University
  - MOU's with Forests Ontario and Canadian Wildlife Federation
  - Chippawa Grassland Bird Habitat Project
  - Annual Prescribed Burn Program
  - Invasive Species Management Strategy

### **Cultural Stewardship**

- Niagara Parks is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the important culture and history of the Niagara River Corridor
- Niagara Parks operates and maintains numerous heritage sites on its property including Old Fort Erie, McFarland House, Laura Secord Homestead and Mackenzie Printery, along with historical plaques and memorials
- Niagara Parks is committed to supporting and collaborating with community partners to facilitate educational opportunities and events with notable examples including Indigenous programming hosted in collaboration with Landscape of Nations 360 as well as the inaugural Black History Symposium in 2020
- Niagara Parks continues to seek new opportunities for online cultural programming, including the recent virtual Coast to Coast: Canadian Women's Literary Series
- Founded in 1936, the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture trains apprentice gardeners over a three-year program centred at the Botanical Gardens site

### **Impacts of COVID-19**

- Niagara Parks' visitation and revenue sources have been significantly impacted by COVID-19, resulting in an unprecedented financial situation for the organization
- As a government agency, Niagara Parks was ineligible for support from the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) funding provided to private businesses in order to minimize layoffs
- On December, 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Ontario Government announced a one-time emergency stabilization grant of \$12.8 million for Niagara Parks

- This grant will assist Niagara Parks in meeting its current financial obligations and continuing to deliver on its mandate and provide a necessary bridge for the organization leading up an eventual recovery phase for tourism in Ontario
- Niagara Parks iconic sites and attractions are key demand drivers for visitation to Niagara, and these funds will ensure the agency is able to maintain to properly maintain its assets during this period of severely reduced revenues and maintain staffing levels based on business needs

### **Niagara Parks – By the Numbers:**

- \$1.2 billion annual economic impact
- \$458 million in tax revenue generated
- 1,800 staff (2019) (1,050 in 2020)
- 56km Niagara Parkway
- 53km Niagara River Recreation Trail
- 1,300 hectares of land
- 7 attractions
- 4 paid admission heritage sites
- 3 championship golf courses
- 6 trail systems
- Over 300,000 annual hiking trail users (2020)
- 5 full-service restaurants