
Memorandum

PWC-C 13-2024

Subject: 2024 Niagara Children's Water Festival Summary Report

Date: November 5, 2024

To: Public Works Committee

From: Amanda Deschenes, Education and Education Coordinator, Water-Wastewater

The purpose of this memo is to provide a summary report for the 2024 Niagara Children's Water Festival (the festival) which is a collaborative event held in partnership with Niagara Region, Brock University, City of St. Catharines, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and Ontario Power Generation. This year marked the 21st anniversary of this annual event.

The festival has been an annual event since 2003, with 2020 to 2022 shifting to a virtual festival as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Steering Committee was excited to be back in-person at Brock University for the second year. This year's festival reached over 3,200 grade four students from throughout the region.

Attendees had the opportunity to participate in 30 unique activity centres that educated students on the importance of our most natural resource - water. Activity centres are hosted by industry experts from our partners and other community organizations and provide a great opportunity to showcase the work they do related to water resources in Niagara. The committee is grateful to the 360 volunteers and 86 high school student volunteers who helped make the event a success.

Feedback received from participants and volunteers was overwhelmingly positive. In post-event surveys, teachers rated satisfaction in various categories at an average of 94% (4.7 out of 5), and volunteers at an average of 94% (4.7 out of 5).

The committee looks forward to the festival in 2025 with the introduction of three new activity centres from Niagara Region, NPCA, and Brock University for an even greater reach within our community.

Please see Appendix 1 2024 Niagara Children's Water Festival Summary Report for details.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Amanda Deschenes
Engagement and Education Coordinator, Water-Wastewater

Appendices

Appendix 1 2024 Niagara Children's Water Festival Summary Report



NIAGARA CHILDREN'S **WATER FESTIVAL**

2024 Summary Report

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1. Introduction

The Niagara Children’s Water Festival (NCWF) is a collaborative event held in partnership between Niagara Region, Brock University, City of St. Catharines, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA), and Ontario Power Generation (OPG). Historically, this annual festival engages grade four students from throughout the Niagara region to learn about water and the environment through a series of fun and interactive activity centres.

The NCWF has been an annual event since 2003, with 2020-2022 shifting to a virtual festival as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A total of 3,206 children, 139 teachers, and an estimated 268 parents/guardians attended for a total attendance of **3,613** people over the four-day event. Volunteers and teachers are invited to complete post-event surveys about several components of their event experience. In overall satisfaction, we received a 4.7/5 from teachers and 4.7/5 from volunteers in 2024.

2. Budget

This year, the NCWF was successful in receiving a commitment from the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) and the Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) to cover 50% of the bussing costs for their respective schools. To ensure the festival remained barrier-free, the NCWF was able to allocate some funds to cover the remaining 50% of bussing costs for schools who self-identified as requiring additional support to pay for bussing.

The following sections discuss the 2024 funding sources and expenditures, and **Appendix B** includes a summary of the 2024 NCWF targeted costs.

Sources of Funding

Sources of funding for the NCWF are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Sources of Funding for the 2024 NCWF

Source	Amount
Niagara Region	\$28,681
City of St. Catharines	\$10,000
Ontario Power Generation	\$5,000

Source	Amount
Sponsors	\$19,303
Associated Engineering - \$250	
City of Niagara Falls - \$1,000	
City of Welland - \$500	
District School Board of Niagara - \$3,622	
GM Blue Plan - \$1,000	
Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority - \$1,000	
Invasive Species Centre - \$999	
Niagara Catholic District School Board - \$4,182	
Niagara Parks Commission - \$500	
OxyVinyl - \$5,000	
RJ Burnside - \$1,000	
WSP Global - \$250	
Grants	\$5,000
Total Funding	\$67,984

Niagara Region supports the majority of the NCWF budget as part of its overall operating budget as approved by council and funded through the Region’s water rate requisition. In addition, the NCWF receives donations from sponsors and our partners, the City of St. Catharines and OPG.

Brock University became a partner in 2020 and has generously donated the use of their facilities (representing an in-kind donation valued at \$37,608.26 plus HST that is not reflected in the budget). The Steering Committee is appreciative to Brock University for this substantial in-kind contribution. **Appendix C** includes a copy of the sponsorship thank you page.

Expenditures

Major festival expenditures each year include transportation, tent rentals and volunteer lunches. The cost for many of the festival service providers and materials has increased over the last few years.

The targeted cost of the 2024 NCWF was \$88,700 and the total cost was \$67,984 (including 1.76% non-recoverable HST). The festival was delivered under target by nearly \$20,716 as a result of not utilizing the site contingency fee and actual costs for transportation, supplies and promotional items being less than budgeted.

3. Activity Centres

In 2024, 30 activity centres (accommodating 35 groups per day) were hosted at the NCWF. Table 3 lists each of the 2024 activity centres along with the partner/sponsor responsible for its delivery and content. Most of these activity centres have been used in the past; there were four new activities added this year. The numbered activity centres are 15 minutes in length and those denoted with two letters are 30 minutes in length. All groups were scheduled to visit at least one 30-minute activity during their visit.

Table 3. 2024 Activity Centre Listing

Activities with * were new in 2024

Activity Centre Name	Theme	Partner/Sponsor Responsible
1. Rolling to the River	Watersheds and pollution	NPCA (Presented by MECP)
2. Water Whirl	Water trivia	City of St. Catharines (with help from Township of West Lincoln)
3. To and Fro with H2O	Water distribution	Niagara Region (with help from Associated Engineering)
4. Climate Change	Climate change	NPCA
5. The Power of Water	Hydroelectricity	Ontario Power Generation
6. Yellow Fish Road	Storm drains and water protection	NPCA (with help from RJ Burnside)
7. GEOH2O*	Water quality	Brock University- Geography and Tourism Department
8. Tap Into It	Drinking water treatment and bottled water vs. tap water	Niagara Region (with help from City of Niagara Falls)
9. Swim, Crawl, Fly!*	Benthics	NPCA
10. Sewer Detectives*	Proper wastewater disposal (fats, oils and grease)	Niagara Region (with help from RV Anderson)
11. Water Recreation	Water recreation and safety	NPCA (presented by Niagara Rowing School)
12. Global Water Race	Water in developing countries	Niagara Region
13. Duck Detectives	Bird migration and wetlands	NPCA
14. Rolling to the River	Watersheds and pollution	NPCA

Activity Centre Name	Theme	Partner/Sponsor Responsible
15. Go with the Flow	Wastewater treatment	Niagara Region (with help from WSP)
16. Alien Invasion	Invasive species	NPCA (presented by Invasive Species Centre)
17. Go Fish!	Fishing	NPCA (with help from Niagara Parks Commission)
18. Keep it Clean	Waste sorting	Niagara Region Waste Management
19. Simply Tremendous	Carolinian forest	NPCA (with help from Land Care Niagara)
20. Yellow Fish Road	Storm drains and water protection	NPCA
21. Watermain Break*	Watermains and repairs	Niagara Region (presented by Town of Lincoln)
22. Water Whirl	Water trivia	City of St. Catharines
23. Flush the Kids	Septic systems	NPCA
24. Step4Water	Water in developing countries	Niagara Region (with help from Good Neighbours Canada)
25. Water Recreation	Water recreation and safety	NPCA (presented by Niagara Rowing School)
IV. Indigenous Voices	Indigenous perspectives	Niagara Region Growth Strategy and Economic Development
FF. Fire	Fire safety	St. Catharines Fire Services, Fort Erie Fire Services, Wainfleet Fire Services
MS. Mad Science	Science	Mad Science
NN. Nuts About Nature	Nature hike	NPCA
TB. Things That Bite	Biting insects and water	Niagara Region Public Health

4. Volunteers

Volunteers play an essential role in the successful execution of the NCWF. Each activity centre is presented by volunteers representing a variety of environmental professions.

Their enthusiasm and energy create a positive learning environment for all participants. In addition, most activity centres also had assistance from a local high school volunteer.

In total there were approximately 360 volunteers and 86 high school volunteers. The Steering Committee appreciates the support of each and every NCWF volunteer.

The following organizations provided NCWF volunteers in 2024:

- Associated Engineering
- Brock University
- City of Niagara Falls
- City of St. Catharines
- Fort Erie Fire Services
- Good Neighbours Canada
- Land Care Niagara
- Mad Science
- Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)
- Niagara Parks Commission
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA)
- Niagara Region – Growth Strategy and Economic Development
- Niagara Region – Public Health, Environmental Health Division
- Niagara Region – Public Works, Transportation
- Niagara Region – Public Works, Waste Management Division
- Niagara Region – Public Works, Water and Wastewater Services Division
- Niagara Rowing School
- Ontario Power Generation (OPG)
- R.V. Anderson and Associates
- R.J. Burnside
- St. Catharines Fire Services
- St. John Ambulance
- Town of Lincoln
- Township of West Lincoln
- Water Rangers
- WSP

5. Media Coverage

Coverage of the 2024 NCWF included the following:

- [Media Release](#) issued by Niagara Region on April 29, 2024
(createsend.com/t/t-B214783FC727537C2540EF23F30FEDED)
- [Media Release](#) issued by City of Port Colborne on April 29, 2024

(<https://www.portcolborne.ca/en/news/21st-annual-niagara-children-s-water-festival-ready-to-welcome-3-200-students.aspx>)

- [YourTV](http://yourtv.tv/node/360046?c=Niagara) (yourtv.tv/node/360046?c=Niagara)
- [Pelham Today](http://pelhamtoday.ca/local-news/niagara-childrens-water-festival-starts-today-8670046) issued April 30, 2024
(pelhamtoday.ca/local-news/niagara-childrens-water-festival-starts-today-8670046)
- [Thorold Today](http://thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/niagara-childrens-water-festival-starts-tuesday-8670028) issued April 30, 2024
(thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/niagara-childrens-water-festival-starts-tuesday-8670028)
- Social media coverage ([X.com](https://www.x.com))
 - [NCWF River Sponsors](https://www.x.com/NiagaraRegion/status/1786032980504281144)
(x.com/NiagaraRegion/status/1786032980504281144)
 - [NCWF Water Shed Sponsors](https://www.x.com/NiagaraRegion/status/1785685726555713546)
(x.com/NiagaraRegion/status/1785685726555713546)
 - [NCWF Partners](https://www.x.com/NiagaraRegion/status/1785293118142648734)
(x.com/NiagaraRegion/status/1785293118142648734)
- [Videography by White Birch Productions](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wlyoe31dD2k) (youtube.com/watch?v=Wlyoe31dD2k)

6. Virtual Water Festival

The NCWF Steering Committee held a virtual Water Festival from April 30 to May 31, 2024 using previously acquired assets. In total there were 20 activity centres (17 video-based and 3 web-based). There was no cost associated with running the virtual Water Festival in 2024.

The link was also provided to the DSNB and NCDSB to share with their grade three and four teachers. Teachers who attended the in-person festival were also sent the link following their visit to the in-person festival.

The [Niagara Children's Water Festival site](http://niagararegion.ca/waterfestival) (niagararegion.ca/waterfestival) received 107 page views in March, 504 page views in April and 347 page views in May. There were 96 unique visitors in March, 456 unique visitors in April and 277 unique visitors in May.

The [Niagara Children's Water Festival Virtual site](http://niagararegion.ca/waterfestival/virtual/activities/default.aspx) (niagararegion.ca/waterfestival/virtual/activities/default.aspx) received 81 visits in April and 135 in May. There were 103 views in April and 177 views in May.

7. Concluding Remarks

Niagara Region successfully hosted the 21st annual NCWF with ongoing support from the Steering Committee partners.


The 2024 NCWF:

- Successfully **taught over 3,200 children about the importance of water** and the environment.
- Was **delivered under targeted cost**.
- Was **well received with excellent feedback** from teachers and volunteers.
- Continues to be a **preferred educational field trip** for teachers and students in the Niagara region.
- Was a **great opportunity for Niagara Region** and other NCWF partners to showcase the work they do related to water resources in Niagara.

The NCWF would not be possible without the support of everyone involved. The Steering Committee would like to extend its appreciation to all festival volunteers, high school volunteers, partners, supporting organizations, teachers, parents and students.


We look forward to hosting another successful event in and hope to expand to reach even more Niagara students in 2025!

Appendix A. 2024 NCWF Map



2024 ACTIVITY CENTRE MAP

***Please note it takes approximately 5 minutes to travel to the outdoor activity centres from the lunch area**



Legend

Bus Zones	School Registration
Info	Washroom
First Aid	Water Wagon
No Parking	Volunteer Registration
Parent/Volunteer Parking Zone 3B	

Indoor Activity Centres

South Block

1. Rolling to the River
2. Water Whirl

MS. Mad Science

3. To and Fro with H2O
4. Climate Change
5. Power of Water

TB. Things that Bite

Ian Beddis Gym

Festival Office and Volunteer Lunch Area
School Lunch Area

Outdoor Activity Centres

Parking Lot Activity Centres

- FF. Fire
6. Yellow Fish Road
7. GEOH2O
8. Tap Into It

Field Activity Centres

- IV. Indigenous Voices
- NN. Nuts About Nature Hike
9. Swim, Crawl, Fly!
10. Sewer Detectives
11. Water Recreation

12. Global Water Race

13. Duck Detectives

14. Rolling to the River

15. Go with the Flow

16. Alien Invasion

17. Go Fish!

18. Keep it Clean

19. Simply Tremendous

20. Yellow Fish Road

21. Watermain Break

22. Water Whirl

23. Flush the Kids

24. Step4Water

25. Water Recreation

Watershed Sponsors



niagararegion.ca/waterfestival

Appendix B. 2024 NCWF Budget Summary



2024 Niagara Children's Water Festival Budget - Summary

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Item	2024 Budget		2024 Actual	
Regional Municipality of Niagara	\$	53,700	\$	28,681
City of St. Catharines Donation	\$	10,000	\$	10,000
OPG Donation	\$	5,000	\$	5,000
Other Sponsors	\$	20,000	\$	19,303
Grants	\$	-	\$	5,000
	\$	88,700	\$	67,984

EXPENDITURES

Item	2024 Budget		2024 Actual	
Service Providers	\$	4,000	\$	2,500
Equipment & Supplies	\$	12,700	\$	4,855
Rentals	\$	5,500	\$	4,540
Promotions and Marketing	\$	9,900	\$	7,348
Tents	\$	15,000	\$	13,151
Transportation	\$	15,000	\$	17,141
Food and Hospitality	\$	15,100	\$	13,701
Health & Safety	\$	3,000	\$	2,653
Staff Expenses	\$	200	\$	19
Miscellaneous	\$	500	\$	-
Site Fees - Custodial	\$	2,800	\$	2,035
Site Fees - Contingency	\$	5,000	\$	-
	\$	88,700	\$	67,943

Actual amounts include 1.76% net HST.

Appendix C. 2024 Sponsors



THANK YOU

TO OUR 2024 PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

WATERSHED



TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

RIVER



CREEK



OUR PARTNERS

