



NIAGARA CHILDREN'S **WATER** FESTIVAL

2019 Summary Report

June 2019

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Budget	3
3. Name the Mascot Contest	4
4. Activity Centres	4
5. Registration.....	5
6. Volunteers.....	6
7. Student Transportation	9
8. Risk Management.....	9
9. Media Coverage	10
10. Continuous Improvement.....	10
11. Concluding Remarks.....	13
Appendix A. 2019 NCWF Budget.....	14
Appendix B. 2019 NCWF Map	15

1. Introduction

The Niagara Children's Water Festival (NCWF) is a collaborative event held in partnership between Niagara Region, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA), City of St. Catharines, and Ontario Power Generation (OPG). The annual, four-day festival engages over 3,500 grade three and four students from throughout the Niagara region to learn about water and the environment.

This report includes a summary of the 2019 NCWF, running from May 7 to 10, including information about:

- Budget
- Activity Centres
- Registration
- Volunteers
- Student Transportation
- Risk Management
- Media Coverage
- Continuous Improvement

2. Budget

The NCWF, including student transportation, continues to be provided free of charge to all participants. The following sections discuss 2019 funding sources and expenditures. **Appendix A** includes a summary of the 2019 NCWF Budget.

Sources of Funding

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 our partners, the City of St. Catharines and Ontario Power Generation (OPG).

The NCWF sponsorship program was re-developed for the 2019 festival which resulted in additional funding. Water-themed sponsorship levels were designated and a variety of sponsor benefits were provided. Local area municipalities, contractors, consultants, past supporters and grant programs were solicited for sponsorship. A total of \$22,750 was received for the 2019 NCWF.

Furthermore, two grant applications were submitted for additional funding. The festival was successful in obtaining a \$5,000 grant from TD Friends of the Environment Fund.

As a result, funding for the NCWF totalled \$112,750. Actual expenditures totaled \$93,435, resulting in a surplus of \$19,315.

A sponsor recognition event was also held prior to the festival on May 7, 2019 to formally recognize our sponsors (Appendix C) and the winning class of the mascot naming contest. Those invited include delegates from (including in-kind sponsors), Niagara Region's Chair, CAO and Commissioner of Public Works, NPCA's board chair, Town of Lincoln Mayor, and City of St. Catharines Mayor and CAO.

Niagara Region's Chair, NPCA's board Chair and Town of Lincoln Mayor all addressed the crowd and all sponsors participated in a photo with the winning class.

Expenditures

The total NCWF budget for the 2019 NCWF was \$95,900. Actual expenditures totalled \$93,435 (Appendix A).

3. Name the Mascot Contest

A 'Name the Mascot' contest was hosted as part of this year's festival. Classes who were registered to attend the festival were invited to submit one name for the newly acquired water drop mascot who would represent the Niagara Children's Water Festival and Niagara Region's Water and Wastewater department as a whole. Submissions were judged on creativity, uniqueness, and suitability and relevance to the NCWF and the work carried out by the Niagara Region Water and Wastewater department. A total of 48 submissions were received and a panel of judges, consisting of select members from the NCWF Steering Committee and management from Niagara Region's Water and Wastewater department, selected 'H2jO' as the winning mascot name. As winners of the contest, Assumption Catholic School in St. Catharines was awarded with a NCWF branded t-shirt and water bottle for each student, a City of St. Catharines branded reusable straw for each student, a pizza party, a free NPCA educational program experience at Ball's Falls (including bussing) and special recognition at the sponsor recognition event.

The contest was well received by teachers and students and the mascot was a great addition to the festival. H2jO was on site during the 2019 NCWF to greet the students and visited the classes during lunch time for pictures and high-fives.

4. Activity Centres

In 2019, 43 activity centres (accommodating 46 groups per day) were hosted at the NCWF. Activities were distributed amongst three distinct sections known as the red, green and blue sections; school groups stayed within their designated colour section

during their visit. Scheduling groups in this way allowed them to remain close to their designated lunch tent and minimize road crossings. The distribution of activity centres in each section is shown on the map in **Appendix B**.

Table 1 lists each of the 2019 activity centres. 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.

Know Your Niagara, Aboriginal Voices and *Save Silly Sal* were new activity centres added to this year's festival that were hosted by external agencies. *Tap into It!* replaced the *Great Niagara Taste Test* to reduce the amount of waste generated from that activity but contains the same messaging. The activity centre known as *Beachy Clean* was changed to *Things that Bite* to better align with the content of that activity centre.

Table 1. 2019 Activity Centre Listing

Red Section	Green Section	Blue Section
1. Yellow Fish Road	13. Flush the Kids	24. Rolling to the River
2. To and Fro with H2O	14. Incredible Journey	25. Save Silly Sal
3. World Water Monitoring	15. Duck Detectives	26. Tap into It!
4. The Power of Water	16. Rolling to the River	27. Yellow Fish Road
5. Treat it Right	17. Water Whirl	28. Water Whirl
6. Flush the Kids	18. Puddle Pictures	29. Climate Change
7. Great Lakes	19. The Power of Water	30. Incredible Journey
8. Agent H2O	20. Water Recreation	31. Alien Invasion
9. Keep it Clean	21. Keep It Clean	32. Great Lakes
10. Know Your Niagara	22. Global Water Race	33. Go With The Flow
11. Save Silly Sal	23. Go Fish!	34. Global Water Race
12. Alien Invasion	AV–Aboriginal Voices	TB – Things That Bite
E1 – Earth First	ML – Down at the Mill	NN – Nuts About Nature Hike
FF – Fire (2 groups)	ST – Simply Treemendous	SS – Scientists in School (2 groups)
MS – Mad Science (2 groups)	--	--
Red Total = 17 groups	Green Total = 14 groups	Blue Total = 15 groups

5. Registration

Online registration was launched in early January. Invitations advertising the NCWF and how to register were distributed to all District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) and Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) schools. In addition, emails were sent to French schools, a home educators' association, as well as private and Christian

schools that had previously attended the festival. The registration was also advertised via Niagara Region's Twitter and Facebook feeds.

All 184 NCWF openings were filled by February 22, 2019. Once full, the website was updated to reflect that teachers could register to be on the wait list. A small number of school groups were on the wait list but no openings became available for those classes to attend. This year replies to registration were automated for improved efficiency. Unfortunately, through this automated process, a couple registrations were not forwarded to the water festival email account and were missed as a result. Accommodation was made for these groups where possible, and these groups have been given priority registration for the 2020 festival.

There were two last minute cancellations, one due to a scheduling conflict and one due to the weather. These cancellations were made too close to the festival to make accommodations.

A total of 3,624 children with 179 teachers and approximately 399 parents/guardians attended for a total attendance of approximately **4,202** people over the four-day NCWF.

The breakdown of participants per day is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of Participants Per Day

Date	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Number of Parents *	Total Participants
May 7, 2019	873	45	96	1,014
May 8, 2019	981	48	101	1,130
May 9, 2019	905	44	104	1,053
May 10, 2019	865	42	98	1,005
	3,624	179	399	4,202

** The number of parents was estimated when teachers registered. In many cases these numbers may have fluctuated up or down. Teachers were asked to provide at least one adult supervisor for every 10 students.*

6. 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.

Festival Volunteers

Festival volunteers are recruited from partner organizations as well as several other supporting organizations. The 2019 NCWF included a mix of longstanding volunteers as well as many new faces, including some from our sponsor organizations. Volunteers assist in nearly every aspect of the festival, including:

- Running activity centres
- Providing information to festival registrants and volunteers
- Coordinating transportation and traffic control
- Ensuring student safety
- Maintaining activity centres and delivering power and water
- Serving food
- Lunch tent coordination
- Festival set up and tear down
- High school volunteer coordination
- Parent and volunteer parking assistants

The following organizations provided NCWF volunteers:

- Niagara Region – Water and Wastewater Services Division
- Niagara Region – Public Health Department
- Niagara Region – Waste Management Division
- Niagara Region – Long Term Care
- City of St. Catharines
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
- Ontario Power Generation
- Associated Engineering
- Bass Pro Shop
- Brock University
- City of Niagara Falls
- City of Welland
- City of Thorold
- Geospatial Niagara
- HJS Solutions
- Land Care Niagara
- Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
- Niagara College
- Niagara Drowning Prevention Coalition
- Niagara Restoration Council
- Niagara River Remedial Action Plan
- R.V. Anderson

- Town of Lincoln Fire Department
- Town of Lincoln
- Town of Pelham
- Walker Industries
- Various Community Volunteers

Table 3. Number of Festival Volunteers Per Day

Date	Approximate Number of Festival Volunteers*
Tuesday, May 7, 2019	106
Wednesday, May 8, 2019	106
Thursday, May 9, 2019	107
Friday, May 10, 2019	112
	431

** This does not include high school volunteers.*

In total there were **431** volunteers. The Steering Committee appreciates the support of each and every NCWF volunteer.

Secondary School Volunteers

A special thank you to secondary school students from E.L. Crossley, Denis Morris, Sir Winston Churchill, Blessed Trinity, Beamsville Secondary School and Notre Dame who offered their time to assist with the execution of the 2019 NCWF.

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the number of secondary students volunteering at the festival each day.

Table 4. Number of Secondary School Volunteers Per Day

Date	Number of Student Volunteers
Tuesday, May 8, 2019	30
Wednesday, May 9, 2019	29
Thursday, May 10, 2019	38
Friday, May 11, 2019	44
	141

In total there were **141** secondary school volunteers.

7. Student Transportation

School bus transportation was provided by DanNel Coach Lines Company and Student Transportation of Canada (STC). Both vendors have provided excellent service to the NCWF for several years and bookings were divided approximately equally between the two companies.

Table 5 indicates the number of buses required each day of the festival to transport students to and from Ball's Falls Conservation Area.

Table 5. Number of Busses Per Day

Date	Number of Participant Busses	Number of Secondary School Busses	Number of Schools
Tuesday, May 8, 2019	27	1	22
Wednesday, May 9, 2019	30	1	20
Thursday, May 10, 2019	25	2	17
Friday, May 11, 2019	28	2	19
Total	110	6	78

Once again, two bus drop-off/pick-up zones were utilized; the Red/Green Bus Zone located off Sixth Avenue just west of Glen Road and the Blue Bus Zone at the Centre for Conservation. Schools with accessible busses were unloaded and loaded at the main barn. Festival transportation coordinators as well as staff from STC helped ensure the safe and efficient loading and unloading of busses in each bus zone.

Upon arrival at the NCWF, the transportation coordinators directed teachers to a "welcome station" where they were greeted and provided copies of their schedule and a festival map.

8. Risk Management

The committee reviewed and updated the Risk Management Plan that was created in 2018 as appropriate. Due to potential severe weather during one of the festival days, the committee was able to execute the severe weather procedure and identify gaps to be updated in the plan.

The Steering Committee will review and update the Risk Management Plan in preparation for the 2020 NCWF, including new site considerations for the new festival location.

9. Media Coverage

Coverage of the 2019 NCWF included:

- A [Media Release](#) issued by Niagara Region on May 7, 2019
- Media coverage of the [Sponsor Recognition Event](#)
- [Pictures](#) in local paper
- [YourTV feature](#)
- Social media coverage ([Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#))
- Photographers and videographers from Niagara Region

10. Continuous Improvement

The Steering Committee is committed to continuously improving the NCWF to ensure its ongoing success and relevance. The following sections discuss some of the processes utilized to help with continuous improvement.

Steering Committee Debrief

The Steering Committee held a meeting on May 22, 2019. Debrief notes are recorded in the meeting minutes and some of the highlights include:

- The 2019 NCWF was another great success.
- The activity centre list should be reviewed and activity centres should be retired, updated and/or added to ensure new ideas and messaging are included.
- Lunch time for students should be shortened
- Provide further education for volunteers on encouraging parent/teacher involvement
- Update Risk Management Plan based on experience from threat of severe weather

All action items and debrief notes from this meeting will be considered by the Steering Committee as they plan the 2020 NCWF.

Teacher Feedback Surveys

In an effort to continually improve the NCWF, all teachers (179) who attended the festival were invited to complete an online survey following the festival. The Steering Committee appreciates their time and feedback as it is helpful in continuously improving the NCWF. In total, there were 48 respondents and the results are summarized below.

Table 6 presents average scores when teachers were asked to rate various components of the NCWF on scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

Table 6. Teacher Survey – Average Ratings on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)

	Average Rating Out of 5
Age appropriateness of activity content	4.6
Relevance of activity content to Grade 3/4 curriculum	4.3
Festival communication	4.8
Helpfulness of staff/volunteers	4.8
Organization of transportation/bussing	5.0
Overall festival organization	4.7

- 75% of respondents had attended the NCWF before.
- 98% indicated they read the Festival Guide prior to attending.
- Some of the favourite activities noted include:
 - Flush the Kids
 - Fire
 - Global Water Race
 - Mad Science
- Several respondents indicated that they believe their students retained key messaging. Some examples include:
 - Students created a poster outlining the importance of water and the many ways people impact water sources.
 - Rolling to the River was an eye opening station for the students as they could visually see the impact of items making their way into our waters. They really liked that station and spoke about it quite a bit afterward.
 - Water safety is definitely something that they learned more about. They will think twice about putting on what they think might be a life jacket and will no doubt inform adults at home if wrong choices are being made.
 - Many of the activities fit directly into both science and social studies curriculums and their experiences were reflected in classroom discussions and activities following our visit to the festival.
- Examples of some additional comments from respondents include:
 - It was a fabulous experience learning through play. My students and I really enjoyed the day. It was very well organized.
 - It was very well organized. The time and effort that went into each centre was amazing. The festival guide allowed me to prepare my students for

what to expect. Staff were well informed and very well prepared for the day.

- Superbly organized. Outstanding volunteers. Fantastic information conveyed.
- My students and I had a great time. We all came home with new knowledge. The workshops were well planned and very informative.
- Covering the busing fees made this event happen for our school
- We thought it was a great hands-on way for our students to learn about water. Everyone was very knowledgeable, friendly and great with the students.

Volunteer Feedback Surveys

In an effort to continually improve the NCWF, all volunteers were invited to complete an online survey following the festival. The Steering Committee appreciates their time and feedback as it is helpful in continuously improving the NCWF. In total, there were 38 respondents and the results are summarized below.

Table 7 presents average scores when volunteers were asked to rate various components of the NCWF on scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

Table 7. Volunteer Survey – Average Ratings on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)

	Average Rating Out of 5
Festival communication	4.7
Helpfulness of other staff/volunteers	4.7
Food	4.7
Scheduling	4.7
Overall festival organization	4.8

- 66% of respondents had volunteered in the past
- More than 65% of respondents volunteered as activity centre presenters
- Examples of some of the additional comments from volunteers included:
 - It is a great day. Thank you to all the volunteers who work so hard to make it happen. I had a great time!
 - Thank you for the opportunity to participate, it was an engaging day and I think the children really enjoyed it and learned from the many booths that day.

- As always, it's such a fun, rewarding time for me to serve others and see old friends. The kids have a great time, much laughter coming from the events as I took time to go out into the park. I consider myself fortunate to be a part of the Niagara Children's Water Festival for so many years, and now retired, and still to be needed, does my heart good.

11. Concluding Remarks

Niagara Region successfully hosted the 16th annual NCWF with ongoing support from the Steering Committee partners.

The 2019 NCWF:

- Successfully **taught over 3,600 children about the importance of water** and the environment.
- Was **delivered on budget**.
- 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 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 2020 at our new location- Brock University!

Appendix A. 2019 NCWF Budget



2019 Niagara Children's Water Festival Budget - Summary

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Item	2019 Budget		2019 Actual	
Regional Municipality of Niagara	\$	85,000	\$	85,000
City of St. Catharines Donation	\$	5,000	\$	6,000
OPG Donation	\$	4,000	\$	5,000
Other Sponsors	\$	-	\$	11,750
Grants	\$	5,000	\$	5,000
	\$	99,000	\$	112,750

EXPENDITURES

Item	2019 Budget		2019 Actual	
Service Providers	\$	2,000	\$	2,018
Equipment & Supplies	\$	7,000	\$	4,582
Rentals	\$	5,700	\$	4,990
Promotions and Marketing	\$	5,500	\$	6,018
Tents	\$	25,400	\$	21,938
Transportation	\$	25,000	\$	24,901
Food and Hospitality	\$	7,000	\$	7,263
Health & Safety	\$	1,000	\$	900
Staff Expenses	\$	1,800	\$	473
Miscellaneous	\$	500	\$	-
Site Rental	\$	15,000	\$	20,352
	\$	95,900	\$	93,435
Net Difference	\$	3,100	\$	19,315

Actual amounts include 1.76% net HST.

Appendix B. 2019 NCWF Map



Appendix C. 2019 Sponsors



THANK YOU!

WATERSHED



TD Friends of the
Environment Foundation

RIVER



walker
industries



CREEK

Alfred Beam Excavating
Bass Pro Shops
Brock University
City of Welland
City of Niagara Falls
Conservation and Parks
Environmental Infrastructure Solutions Inc.
HJS Solutions
Land Care Niagara

Mad Science
Ministry of the Environment
Niagara College
Niagara Drowning Prevention Coalition
Ohnia-kara Aspiring Geopark
(Geospatial Niagara)
Scientists in School
Town of Lincoln
Town of Pelham

ACTIVITY CENTRE SPONSOR

R.V. Anderson

Associated Engineering Ltd.

OUR PARTNERS

