

## Bulletin #16 November 2013

### A Brief Primer on Caledon Aggregate Stats

Statistical input to Ontario's [2012 Mineral Aggregates in Ontario Production Statistic](#) is cut-off at the end of 2013. But historically, final figures differ little from those in the July preliminary report.

- In Ontario the municipal levy for aggregate is 11.5 cents per metric tonne: Caledon's share comes to \$255,000. In Quebec it's 50 cents. Compare that to the UK at \$2.
- Since 2005 all aggregate mining in Peel region takes place in Caledon.
- For more than 20 years Caledon has been among the top 10 aggregate producing municipalities.
- Aggregate production in Caledon is in sync with production numbers in Ontario: when Ontario production levels rise or fall, Caledon's numbers follow. This year Caledon's production level rose slightly while Ontario's fell but the differences are negligible.
- We now have a 3830 acre corridor of aggregate production from Erin to Caledon Village, veering north towards Orangeville. This is the area from which most of Caledon's aggregate is extracted.



The Melville pit proposal for 300 acres of property between Porterfield and Willoughby Roads at the Orangeville border has completed its MNR notification/consultation process and the applicant is addressing concerns raised during the 45 day notice period. On December 9th Caledon Council will review the Planning Report.

MNR received the McCormick Pit proposal [Heart Lake Road] last May. The applicant was advised that the application package was incomplete. The applicant has provided no additional information. At this time there are no public information meetings scheduled.

### Who's minding the store?

The Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller is Ontario's independent environmental watchdog. Each year he issues an annual report. [“\*Serving the Public\*”, 2013](#), contains a cautionary tale about the role citizens must be prepared to play to ensure that MOE [Ministry of the Environment] enforces compliance to regulations contained by the EPA [Environmental Protection Act].

In Hamilton concerned citizens had to file an application under the EBR to investigate an alleged violation by a new asphalt blending/storage/shipping company which had started operations without the required Environmental Compliance Approval [ECA] for air emissions. Residents began to notice a foul odour emanating from the plant which should not have been operating.

An ECA is given after environmental controls are judged adequate to prevent negative environmental impacts. Nevertheless the company was allowed to operate illegally for 7 months even though for 5 of these months the MOE was aware that the company was operating without approval. After citizen action the MOE eventually intervened to bring the company into compliance.

If an asphalt recycling facility is allowed on the McCormick Pit as being proposed, will it be up to ordinary Caledon citizens to ensure the company's compliance with the law? Will we have to police the operation of such facilities ourselves? The ECO's second report this fall [“\*Laying Siege to the Last Line of Defence: A Review of Ontario's Weakened Protections for Species at Risk\*”](#) may contain some clues how regulations may be softening for some industries.

## Evaluating Risk: Managing Risk

The ECO warns that a recent regulation created under the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA) has watered down protection for endangered species. Now many industries don't have to obtain permits before they can make changes to landscapes that support such species. Exempted industries include Crown forestry operations, most hydro-electric generating stations and many aggregate pits and quarries. *"By effectively exempting most of the major activities on the landscape that can harm species at risk and their habitats, the regulation thwarts the very purposes of the act, There is little to no opportunity to promote the recovery of species at risk."* Commissioner Gord Miller.

Under the new regulation all that proponents have to do is have a "plan" to "mitigate" risks to the endangered species but they are no longer required to actively protect them by helping them to recover and by improving their situations. Nor do they have to submit documentation to MNR. No one monitors the plan - it is largely a self regulatory process. The MNR is virtually out of the picture.

*"By eliminating the permit process, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has shed its ability to say 'no' to a proposed activity, no matter how harmful it may be to an imperilled species, and since proponents don't have to file any monitoring reports with the ministry, MNR will be blind to the effectiveness of its new rules."* Commissioner Miller.

## Proximity to Aggregate and Property Values - New Study

Supporters have shared their confusion about what degree of impact the proximity to aggregate extraction may have on property values. Some expert opinions claim there is a strong relationship. However any good scientific study has to weigh many variables to come up with useful and valid predictors of lasting loss. Credible studies require sophisticated methodologies and data analysis and must be thoroughly peer reviewed. So far such studies are rare. But that's about to change.

By late next summer Professor Brady Deaton, a well regarded scientist at the University of Guelph is planning to submit a proposal which will examine the relationship between property values and aggregate development in Ontario. Dr Deaton acknowledges there are many variables that may and do affect price variation in property values and definitive conclusions are difficult to achieve. This new study may help turn a corner.

## From the Editor

When the McCormick Pit proposal was resurrected last June at the municipal level, the REDC Board asked me to take the lead on our Strategy Initiative. This has turned out to be a large time commitment and required a shift in the REDC division of labour. I decided to withdraw as President and work with the REDC Strategy and Research Committee to focus our efforts on the best way to meet the McCormick Pit challenge and put the research we have commissioned to good use.



I've agreed to continue with the Bulletin for the time being which may mean fewer issues but eventually we hope to make greater use of short e-blasts to deliver up-to-date alerts as the proposal begins to move forward.

Thank you for your supportive and informative e-mails and updates. On behalf of the Board of REDC our very best wishes for the Festive Season ahead, Christine Shain

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Please be assured your e-mail information or mailing information will not be shared and will be used solely to update you on REDC activities. Thank you for your support of our common interest in our natural heritage and opposition to the McCormick Pit. If you wish to have your name removed from the update list please send your request to [info@peopleforcaledon.com](mailto:info@peopleforcaledon.com)