

Special Edition Stepping Stones



THE DUNTROON QUARRY EXPANSION NEWSLETTER

May 31, 2010

Message from Walker Aggregates' Vice-President

We've just completed the fourth week of the Consolidated Hearings Board hearing reviewing Walker's application for an expanded Duntroon Quarry with the conclusion of testimony on hydrogeology and testimony about the natural heritage features of our proposed site.

The details of what's been happening at the hearing since we published our last Special Edition of Stepping Stones two weeks ago are outlined further in this newsletter.

As you have probably noticed, we've been running a series of ads featuring our employees and supporters in the community speaking about Walker as a company, and about our quarry application. We've been getting terrific feedback about these ads and appreciate the enthusiastic involvement of all those people who participated – especially our employees for their outstanding support.

Our company received a very nice honour last week from the Collingwood Chamber of Commerce. Walker Aggregates received the Environmentally Conscious

Business Award at the chamber's Business Excellence Awards. Again, more details of this award are published elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our annual summer Duntroon Quarry tour, blasting demonstration and barbecue will be bigger and better than ever this year. Stay tuned for more details of some special attractions including a visit and autograph signing by members of the Stayner Siskins hockey team. In the meantime, mark your calendars for Friday, July 16 at noon. Walker will be donating \$5 to the local food bank for each person who attends. I look forward to seeing you there!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 705-445-2300, extension 224, or in Niagara at 905-227-4142, or visit our website at <http://www.walkerind.com/walker-aggregates/duntroon-expansion.html>.

Ken Lucyshyn



Ken Lucyshyn (at left) accepts the Environmentally Conscious Business Award from chamber board member Stuart Lessels.

Photo credit: Collingwood Enterprise Bulletin

CHB Board Hears About Karst and the Natural Environment

Week three of the Consolidated Hearings Board (CHB) hearing opened with two experts in the field of karst hydrogeology providing a step-by-step explanation about how karst aquifers are formed in the Niagara Escarpment.

Stephen Worthington and Marcus Buck mapped karst features in and around the existing and proposed expanded Duntroon Quarry – including 127 springs – and identified five karst basins. They explained where the basins were located and how karst features affected water flows in the areas of these basins.

Through a series of charts, maps and photographs, they demonstrated how and where surface water percolates through the soil down to the dolostone aquifer. Mr. Buck also referred to tracer tests he and his associates conducted – whereby fluorescent dyes were added to sinking streams or boreholes above the escarpment to determine how the water travelled through the rock, the relationship between the aquifers in two separate levels of the escarpment, and to understand the volumes and speeds of water emerging as springs further below the escarpment.

Dr. Worthington concluded that karst features found in the area surrounding the proposed expanded Duntroon Quarry are similar to those found in other parts of the province. He said “The karst features on the expansion lands are not exceptional in any manner... to prevent the quarry expansion.” “There's nothing special here,” he added.

During the fourth week of the CHB Hearing, Walker Aggregates' ecology expert said that there will be no net negative impacts to the natural environment if the proposed expanded Duntroon Quarry is licensed to proceed. David Charlton said the quarry has been designed to avoid and provide a buffer to protect nearby wetlands, a regionally significant area of natural and scientific interest, and a large concentration of American Hart's Tongue Ferns. He said that, in addition, the quarry rehabilitation plan and the company's Adaptive Management Plan will result in a net gain to the natural environment. As an example, he specifically spoke of the “intensive and rigorous reforestation of lands Walker owns in the area” to replace the woodlands to be removed for the quarry operations.

“It is my opinion that this application will result in long-term ecological gains in the landscape surrounding the site,” he said.

Mr. Charlton took the board through an overview of the process he and his team of scientists undertook

to study the natural heritage features and functions within a four-kilometre radius from the proposed quarry site. This included collecting existing information and research from agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and academic journals; reviewing provincial, municipal and Niagara Escarpment Commission planning documents; conducting extensive field studies and engaging in consultation with other experts, agencies and members of the public.

He said that over the past eight years, the studies his team undertook ranged from examining tree and plant species, to conducting owl and other bird studies, an investigation of possible salamander populations, amphibian studies, fish studies, a deer survey and even a search for Massasauga rattlesnakes. Many of those studies were repeated over successive years. Charlton said the information his team gathered was “as good as you could hope to have over all seasons and many years.”

He told the board he has been involved in some 20 aggregate applications in his career and not all are suitable from an environmental point of view.

Late in the week, Mr. Charlton detailed the inventory of plant and animal life he and his team of scientists have identified over the years on the Walker lands on and around the proposed expanded Duntroon Quarry. He said his team's investigations found 204 species of vascular (non-mossy) plants, 145 of them considered native to the area. They also inventoried 73 species of birds, 13 species of mammals, one species of reptiles and 10 species of amphibians. They found no species of fish on the site intended for quarrying.

Of the species the team found, Mr. Charlton said “Everything is common, widespread and secure,” except for the American Hart's Tongue Fern and butternut trees.

The butternut tree is considered endangered in the province of Ontario and the American Hart's Tongue Fern is considered a species of concern. Mr. Charlton said that the expanded quarry would be designed in a way to protect these two species, adding that if a permit was granted or the status of the butternut trees changed, then new and possibly more resilient butternut trees would be planted in an area away from the proposed extraction area.

Mr. Charlton also demonstrated to the board how areas around the quarry would be reforested with native trees to replace those removed by quarrying and to enhance wildlife corridors.

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In its work to inventory plant and animal life on and around the proposed expanded quarry, he says his team walked the site, noting species of plants and animals. They often identified bird species by their songs – rather than by sight – during the spring breeding season and played tapes of owl calls in the early morning hours during the owls' February breeding season to elicit vocal responses by owls that might be in the vicinity.

Mr. Charlton concluded the week's testimony by telling the board that the three important wetland features adjacent to an expanded Duntroon Quarry proposed by Walker Aggregates will be protected if the quarry is allowed to proceed.

He spoke in considerable detail about water and wildlife features in and around the provincially significant Rob Roy cluster of wetlands, as well as the two Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) wetlands. These details included water flow to and from – and water levels below – the wetlands; plant and animal life in each of the wetlands; and how the quarry operations would affect each of the wetlands during operations, and once the quarry is mined out and rehabilitated to become a lake.

He explained how, during the quarry operations, water would be pumped from the quarry into the wetlands to compensate for reduced levels of water as a result of those operations. He said the procedure would be "like watering a flower pot."

Once the quarry is mined out and becomes a lake, he said water would overflow during the spring to supply the wetlands with the water required to maintain its ecology. He also spoke about how Walker's reforestation plans around the wetlands would create an enhanced environment for wildlife because it would result in better connected woodlot corridors.

Mr. Charlton pointed to Walker's existing quarry operations and the water that is pumped to supply the Rob Roy 6 wetlands as evidence of the success of such mitigation plans. He said these wetlands "are healthy and functioning well... It's a good, productive swamp environment."

For each of the three wetlands, he stressed that with mitigation there would be no significant impact as a result of the expanded quarry operations.

Walker Wins Environmental Business Award

Walker Aggregates' was honoured by the Collingwood Chamber of Commerce as a recipient of a Business Excellence Award at a dinner last week. Walker won the Environmentally Conscious Business Award for 2010. This award is presented to an outstanding business that has effectively lessened its impact on the environment.

"We are delighted to receive this honour," said Walker vice-president Ken Lucyshyn. "It's nice to be recognized for the ongoing work we do to lessen our impact on the environment."

In addition to the award from the chamber, Walker received special letters of commendation from Simcoe-

Grey MP Helena Geurgis and MPP Jim Wilson.

In his letter, Mr. Wilson said "I am pleased to extend to you my most heartfelt congratulations on being recognized by the Collingwood Chamber of Commerce with the Environmentally Conscious Business Award. This distinguished award demonstrates your commitment to proving that environmental management is paramount. Your willingness to develop programs that protect our land clearly shows your strong business character. Our community is fortunate to receive your initiative and dedication."

The Duntroon Quarry is operated by Walker Aggregates Inc., a division of Walker Industries.

www.walkerind.com