



LAFARGE'S REGAN PIT

The Lafarge Regan Pit property is located between Durham Forest and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority properties to the south and the provincially owned Nesbitt property to the north between Concession 6 and 7. It totals about 400 acres and is very strategic to Green Durham's plans to bulk up lands owned and/or managed by conservation authorities in the area. These lands provide habitat for many species of birds, animals and plants and opportunities for the development of recreational nature trails.

Lafarge recently hosted an event at the pit to show the local community the progress they are making in rehabilitating this property to a natural state with forest cover, meadows, a wet land and pond. Lafarge has completed mining the western part of the site and are concentrating rehab efforts in this area. This year they have worked to provide specific habitat for wild turkeys. The results of this year's work and of previous years are impressive as are their plans for the years ahead. Next year for example they are planning to plant 13,000 more trees in an area that will provide a trail link through a mixed forest from the conservation authority properties to the south and the Nesbitt property to the north.

We are fortunate that Lafarge has chosen to make this site the flagship of their rehab work in pits where mining has been completed or is winding down. They are planning to use experience gained on this site to guide them on rehab work in other sites.

We have advised Lafarge that we are convinced this property will be rehabilitated to a high standard and one that is contiguous to surrounding lands. We have also told them our interest is now on what happens to this property when mining and rehabilitation have been completed and they give up their extraction license.

We do not want a repeat of the disaster on Lake Ridge Road when a rehabilitated gravel pit was sold to unscrupulous operators who found a way to set up a commercial fill operation by claiming that they were building a heliport. Airport location and construction are subject to Federal government regulations and therefore allow municipal and provincial government by-laws and zoning regulations to be circumvented. Thousands of truckloads of commercial fill were dumped at this site before protests motivated authorities to shut it down. Testing of the fill material done after the site was shut down showed that some of it was contaminated. As far as we know no attempt has been made to remove the contaminated material from the site. The potential impact on the water quality of the ground water in the area is unknown to date.

Fortunately the Regan pit site is protected by the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan legislation so that the risk of a similar disaster is very unlikely. However, because this property is so important from an environmental point of view we are trying to find a way to have the ownership or at least the bulk of it turned over to the TRCA who own adjacent properties to the south and west. The property is designated "linkage" in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and is surrounded by lands designated as "core" meaning this property has significant environmental features that are important to our natural heritage objectives. If you have any questions with reference to this situation contact Michael Tucker at 905 649 2876 or mtucker@andrewswireless.net.