

Controversial McClintock Quarry advancing

Residents can appeal the decision

By Lisa Gervais

Proponents of an expanded aggregate quarry operation near Dorset say all outstanding issues brought forward in an environmental assessment process have now been deemed “addressed to the extent possible” by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF).

Bacher Construction is seeking to expand its now two-hectare pit to approximately 16ha. It is on Crown Land in Algonquin Highlands. They have reduced the size from about 22ha, by moving the south boundary further away from landowners.

They’re after an MNRF permit to take out mostly crushed rock to service Dorset and beyond.

The matter has been before the MNRF since 2017. The McClintock pit is six kilometres northeast of Dorset next to Harvey Lake. A citizen’s group calling itself the No McClintock Quarry has been fighting it ever since Bacher Construction first applied for a permit and they received MNRF notification.

Kathleen Hedley of Bacher Construction released a summary of the Notice of Completion for a Category B Project Evaluation to *The Highlander* last week.

The report said nine mitigation and enhancement actions had been committed to, or addressed.

They include: a surface/groundwater monitoring program and a storm water management plan; a reduction in yearly tonnage to 75,000 tonnes per year, from 285,000, resulting in fewer trucks using municipal roads than originally proposed; reduced hours of operation from 24/7 to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Friday but trucks allowed

during daytime hours Saturday; no blasting during summer; Blanding’s Turtle avoidance to Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) guidelines; using a more environmentally-friendly explosive and implementing all mitigations in the blast and noise impact analyses.

The project evaluation, “identified no significant adverse effects,” the report’s authors, David Villard of Pebble Beach Aggregate and Jeff Schosser, an aggregate officer with the MNRF in Bracebridge, said.

Hedley said, “we’re feeling very optimistic at this point. We’re a little disappointed it’s taken as long as it has to get to this point. There’s quarries all over Ontario. One of the reasons they go through the class EA is the impact of quarries are well known and easy to mitigate before they go into operation.”

She added there were concessions for worried Harvey Lake residents, so, “I think we’ve done as much as we can to address the concerns of the Harvey Lake residents, and other residents, without cancelling the entire quarry.”

She said the goal is to begin next Spring.

The No McClintock Quarry-Save Harvey Lake group issued a statement to *The Highlander* Tuesday. Nicole Court said they were disappointed but it was not the end of the process.

“We should all be concerned about the dangerous precedent this sets - a quarry directly upstream from a pristine Harvey Lake which flows into Kawagama Lake and rock crushing and trucking all summer long a mere 400 metres from family cottages. So loud that Bacher Construction would need to build a three-story berm and

families would still experience the highest allowable noise limits. It will devastate the area’s residents and destroy their property values.”

Nita Acker, president of the Otter Lake Cottagers Association, which has 92 property owners, is also worried about the precedent of the MNRF allowing a quarry 400m from a body of water with cottages.

“Our membership feels that’s outrageous, they’re upset, extremely concerned about this,” she said.

She noted the Algonquin Highlands bylaw stipulates 1000m setbacks, “which the MNRF has chosen to ignore” because it is on Crown land. She said she is also worried about truck traffic on Livingston Lake Road. She said they would appeal.

“We’ve got an uphill battle for sure, but that doesn’t mean that we stand down.”

Algonquin Highlands Mayor Carol Moffatt said, “The Township stood firm in support of its land use requirements because council believes that this operation is too close to the water, but it felt like a bit of a stalemate and ultimately, the province has exercised its authority over its own lands. We will look to the province to ensure effective and protective environmental measures in accordance with legislation.”

People with outstanding concerns about potential environmental impacts can request the MECP to issue a Part II Order, requiring the project be subject to an individual environmental assessment under the Environmental Assessment Act. People have until August 16. To learn more, visit [Ontario.ca/page/class-environmental-assessments-part II- order](http://Ontario.ca/page/class-environmental-assessments-part-II-order).