

Quarry queries

To the Editor,

Having participated in the achievement of the Ontario Industrial Waste Reduction Award in 1996 with a private corporation and having worked in several countries around the world, I have seen some of the best examples of sustainable development and some of the worst examples of unsustainable development.

The recent information evening about the proposed quarry on Freymond Lumber property was gratifying. The amount of information presented and available was almost overwhelming. Site maps, ground water charts, environmental surveys, etcetera answered questions I hadn't even thought to ask. The information presented was very educational and it was somewhat reassuring to see that significant effort had been expended to predict the impact of the development. I got to ask my own questions and listen in as others asked their questions.

Before we declare that a particular activity is undesirable we need to obtain good data. We might be surprised to find that forestry companies actually have a net positive impact on CO2 levels because reforestation practices replant a greater number of trees than are harvested and trees sequester CO2 for their entire growing life. Operating a quarry is one of the oldest industrial activities we humans have undertaken so we have lots of experience. We know how the ground water and aquifers are affected.

We know how sound waves travel and how to effectively prevent them from negatively impacting neighbours. We know how shock waves travel and how to design explosive charges so that they don't damage property or affect quality of life. One benefit to living in the developed world is that we have comprehensive regulations to protect people and property.

I have personally witnessed Freymond Lumber operating with an extra margin of safety when forestry work was carried out near designated wetlands near my property. When the set back distance was established by the MNRF, Freymond Lumber voluntarily doubled the distance to ensure the wetlands were not negatively affected. They certainly did not take every tree just because they could. I would rather see this development completed by local families that live 'up the road' and 'down wind' of this proposed quarry than a corporation with its headquarters 50 kilometres away.

Let us not be short sighted. There will be some impact from this development. We only have one planet to live on so we must proceed wisely and respectfully. To declare that all development be carried out away from my property or cancelled completely is naive and selfish. To declare that five new jobs is not sufficient benefit is obtuse. Five people working full time and paying taxes benefits every person in the community, especially if those five people are currently receiving EI benefits. To determine if there are benefits to other families in the community all you have to do is turn to page 7 in last week's Bancroft This Week and see a half page ad for aggregate from a local quarry. Even the editor of Bancroft This Week benefits from local, sustainable development and that is the way it should be! This isn't a win/lose opportunity. This is a win/win opportunity.

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