

THE NEW DRILL:



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Cramahe farmer gets first "exception" to tree bylaw

by TOM PHILP
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A Cramahe Township farmer will be able to clear four acres of trees after Northumberland County Council granted him the first "exception" under a new forest bylaw on January 23.

Pierre Benedetti received a "minor exception" to clear trees from four acres of his Castleton-area farm to install field drainage tiles. Council approved the exception because it will allow Benedetti to improve agricultural production.

Northumberland's new forest conservation bylaw officer, James Rogers, told

council he had visited the site with Benedetti. Drainage would improve the viability of farm fields, and improve agricultural productivity, he said.

Rogers said he discussed alternative methods of drainage with Benedetti to save some of the trees, but agreed that clearing the small parcel of land was the only practical way to improve the situation. An exception to the bylaw should be considered by council, he said.

Provincial guidelines for forest use, and acceptable situations and conditions under which a person can "destroy trees," will help

him assist woodlot owners and credible timber harvesters, and rid the county of cutters who indiscriminately "butcher" trees, he said.

In a presentation to council, Rogers said he has been "quite busy" since being hired in December. He has conducted numerous site visits, stopped some illegal logging in the county, and continues to actively seek out "rogue logging operations."

Rogers said he is working with the Northumberland Stewardship Council, and various conservation authorities, to develop education and awareness programs.

Former County Warden, and Mayor of Alnwick-Haldimand Township, Bill Finley asked Rogers if he (Finley) would be eligible for an exception under the bylaw if he cut cedar trees on his property for fence posts.

"That wouldn't be a problem if you are using all the trees for your own use," Rogers said.

Special Projects Manager Judy Collar said she and Rogers plan to make presentations to all seven municipal councils this year, to discuss the regulations, and "clear up some of the confusion" surrounding the tree-cutting bylaw.