

Environment ministry should govern Niagara Escarpment

On April 4, the Niagara Escarpment was officially declared a world biosphere reserve by UNESCO. The ceremony took place in Milton at the Ontario Agricultural Museum. This ceremony should be considered the end of the first step in Ontario's long journey down the road towards sustainable development and environmental land planning.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan is not perfect. It is a set of ideas and compromises worked out over a number of years. It is a new way of looking at how we should use land. As with all new ideas everyone involved is going to have to help make it work. It is already apparent that in some areas, the plan does not provide sufficient protection for the fragile ecosystems on the escarpment. Other provisions may be too restrictive and deny valid activities that would be compatible with the plan's objectives.

Although the re-evaluation process will be continuous there are some things that could be looked at immediately and implemented in the short term. The first of these changes would be the transfer of responsibility for the plan area from the ministry of municipal affairs to the ministry of the environment. This would be more than a cosmetic change. It would clearly signal to everyone that an 'environment first' policy was in effect on the escarpment. The ministry of the environment would move from simply being a commenting agency to having direct land planning powers with which to implement its ideas and



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philosophy.

Another immediate change that would be of great benefit would be the banning of domestic and industrial landfill sites on escarpment land. The large number of quarries on the escarpment have proved to be an irresistible lure for those who believe that we can bury our waste management problems. Regardless of the economic potential and regardless of the geographic convenience of Escarpment land I think we must state clearly that this area is too significant to allow this type of activity.

The question of quarrying on the Escarpment ridge is always going to be debated. The rights and practices of existing operations are obviously going to be examined much more closely than previously. But without getting into legal questions about the status of current licences it would be possible to declare that no new operations should be

started, in this area, without a full environmental assessment. A quarry is tremendously destructive of the natural environment and something other than convenience is needed as a justification.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan lands would seem to be the ideal starting point for discussing the idea that the best use of land is not always the most economically productive use. Ontario is blessed with vast expanses of land. Unfortunately, this has meant that we do not always worry about what we do with our blessings. The attitude, that 'there's more where that came from' is proving to be a dangerous idea in this day and age.

The Niagara Escarpment is a clearly defined piece of property. When we permit any of it to be blown up, paved over or destroyed in any way we can easily measure the loss. I think now is the time to start weighing everything we lose when we damage the Escarpment against those things that we are supposed to gain from the destruction.

Plowmen's euchre

By KAY WILSON
Herald Special

Halton Plowmen's Euchre had 27 tables on April 3 at the Boyne Community Centre. President Cecil Patterson welcomed all and gave out euchre prizes and lucky draws. Frank Peacock and George and Lillian Readhead helped to convene the evening.

Winners for euchre were Florence McCann, Myrtle Cunningham, Pat Stork, Gerry Carton, Keith Middlebrook and Cliff McDonald.

Lucky draw winners were Prairie Bessey, Janet Durad, Betty Tonelli, Ethel Webb, Sybil Shields, Vivian Shaw, Mary Chamberlain, Jean Cunningham, Bill Brander, Charlie Johnson, Alfred Ford, Peggy Johnson, Dorothy Featherstone, Mary Crozier, Norma Sanderland, Irene Hunter, Charlie Webster, Lloyd Stokes, - Lorne Chamberlain, Vera Durie, Marion Lericke, Birdie Heatley, Kay Shields, Christine Bailey, Donald Douglas, Fred Workman, Evelyn Pickering and Jack Taylor. Lunch finished off a great evening.

Pinegrove euchre

Pinegrove Euchre had six tables on April 1. Winners were

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Garfield McGilvray, Spencer Wilson, Vivian Shaw and Florie Alcott. Lucky draw Elizabeth McMenemy; Lunch committee, Prairie Bessey and Marg Tost.

Annual party

Brampton West Women's Institute annual euchre party will be held at the Huttonville Community School in April 20, 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$2.00. Prizes and lunch will be included.

Back home

Ray and Bernice Whaley, R.R. 2 Norval, have returned from a two-week trip to Dunedin, Florida.

Sales Popping

The U.S. population has increased 17 percent in the last 15 years, but popcorn sales have almost doubled. The average American eats 42 quarts of popcorn a year.

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