

Making a difference

Carpet Barn Carpet One installers Jamie Watt (left) and David Parks roll out some new carpet at Stewarttown School as they made over the school's resource centre Monday. The carpet replaced the original carpet that was installed when the resource centre was created in 1986, by converting the then school gymnasium. The carpet was installed through the "Make a Difference Day," a national promotion sponsored by Carpet One stores. Last summer, Carpet Barn customers were invited to nominate the elementary school that they would like to see receive a makeover in its library, media centre or other room.

Photo by Ted Brown

Chudleigh's land purchase motion endorsed in Ontario Legislature

A motion by Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh calling for a program to extend permanent funding for environmental land purchases in Ontario was passed in the Legislature Thursday.

"I'm calling on MPPs of every political stripe to support this motion, to reach out to the future, and help ensure environmentally sensitive and significant lands are purchased for public use by generations of Ontarians yet to be born," said Chudleigh. "Our service to Ontarians will be judged by the legacy we leave them. Let us leave them a commitment to environmental protection. Let us leave them public access to Ontario's finest and most beautiful open spaces."

The motion isn't binding on the government but Chudleigh said it is a powerful suggestion that legislation should be forthcoming to deal with the expressed wish of the Legislature.

In the last several years there has been a patchwork of programs used to finance purchases of environmentally significant land including The Natural Areas Protection Program (NAPP), the Ontario Parks Legacy (OPL), the Community Conservancy Program (CCP) and the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV).

The current Ecological Land Acquisition Program (ELAP) was conceived as an enhancement to existing land acquisition programs in keeping with the goals of Ontario's Living Legacy, a natural heritage program announced in November.

Chudleigh said ELAP has been extended from its expected end date of March 31, 2004 only to cover current projects underway in the Rouge River Valley and Lynde Marsh.

"The Government of Ontario needs to demonstrate a commitment to public ownership of these lands," said Chudleigh. "By making those purchases through partner organizations we ensure the land is managed properly, acquisition plans are in place for future purchases, and roles and responsibilities for those involved are clearly spelled out."

Conservation Halton chair Jean Williams supports the motion.

"It will be difficult if not impossible to acquire new properties without the help of the province. Conservation Halton strongly supports Chudleigh's motion that a land acquisition program be introduced to ensure that these sensitive lands can be purchased to fulfill the objectives of the Niagara Escarpment Plan," said Williams.

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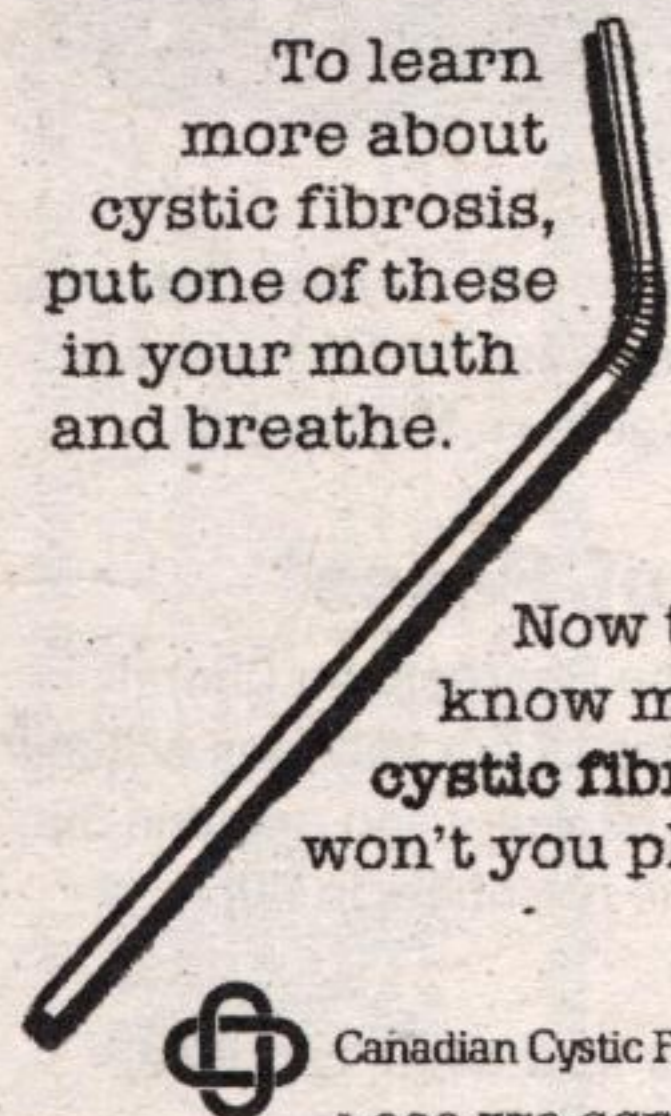
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