

Dufferin Aggregates working on closing quarry gap

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Dufferin Aggregates is trying to figure out the best way to improve the appearance of the legendary 'gap' it created in the Niagara Escarpment several decades ago.

The company turned to local residents for their input on the situation at a public meeting held Tuesday evening at the Holiday Inn.

About a dozen citizens came out for the event to learn about the options being proposed to screen the gap that's located at the entrance to the operating area of Dufferin's Milton quarry.

A plan to deal with the gap is required as a condition of the recent quarry expansion approval.

Land use planner James Parkin told the small group of residents that in the short term, Dufferin is going to make sure there are as many trees as possible in the gap area to screen its appearance. Planting and rehabilitation work has been going on around the gap for some time.

He also said in the long term, meaning after the quarry has ceased operations in 15 to 25 years, four options for the gap are being considered.

They include:

- Building a new landform out of fill behind the gap
- Creating a tunnel in the gap with fill on top
- Partially filling the gap with a planting terrace
- Fully filling the gap to recreate a continuous escarpment.

"This (the last option) is probably the closest you could get to turning back to clock," Parkin said, but noted it some ways it puts up a barrier for the animals that currently use the opening to move through.

One man asked how much the various options would cost, but Parkin said that's something that still has to be worked out.

"The movement of large amounts of fill is very expensive," he pointed out.

Drunk driving case in court

A young Milton man charged with drunk driving in a collision that killed an Orangeville man will return to court early next month.

Alvaro Diaz, 21, has been charged with impaired driving causing death, dangerous driving causing death, having over the legal limit of alcohol in his blood, driving with alcohol above zero with a G2 licence and using unauthorized licence plates. His next appearance is slated for June 5 at Ontario Court of Justice in Milton on Steeles Avenue. The return court date was set May 15 at the Milton courthouse.

The fatal two-vehicle collision took place February 2 on Regional Road 25, south of No. 5 Sideroad, killing a 48-year-old motorist just before 3 a.m.

Campbellville resident Gary Williams questioned if it's possible to implement the tunnel option before the quarry closes down. "We build bridges over the 401 all the time without closing the road off."

Andrea Bourrie, Dufferin's property and resource manager, explained that currently there's not a lot of extra room in the gap for the trucks to move through, so creating a tunnel now would limit the full operation of the quarry.

After the meeting, Williams told the *Champion* he would like to see the tunnel option implemented down the road.

"It maintains access but blocks off the visual aspects of the gap," he said.

The gap was created in 1962 and it's widely thought that its existence led to the Niagara Escarpment Commission being formed to prevent similar situations from happening again.

"In that way, it (the gap) has had a positive impact," said

Bourrie. "The gap means different things to different people."

For No. 15 Sideroad resident Marion McMeeken, the gap doesn't conjure up positive thoughts.

"I don't like the gap," she said. "I think it shows they felt they didn't have to answer to anybody."

While McMeeken doesn't yet have one option she completely favours, she did share her thoughts on the alternatives presented.

"It's a bit unrealistic to try and create what was there before," she said. "If they can do something without moving half of Ontario to fill the gap, that would be good."

A committee, which includes citizen representatives from Milton and Halton Hills, has been formed to look further at the gap issue.

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