

# Aggregate companies putting 'green' first

**□ Pit operators making strong effort to keep industry eco-friendly**

**JOHN ANDREWS**  
Correspondent

Man has had a history of struggling with planet earth and on the Oak Ridges Moraine the struggle will continue as long as the need for gravel is around.

The Oak Ridges Moraine is perhaps the single largest deposit of natural aggregate in the province and it is also one of the most heavily populated areas in all of Canada. This raises the problem of people living on good deposits. And as urban sprawl slowly rolls onto Toronto's hinterland, this will become more of a problem.

However, environmentally, aggregate mining has little effect on surrounding areas despite the pits being an eyesore.

Drew Young from the Ministry of Environment said the effect is minimal. Each mine has site specific problems but actual environmental damage is negligible and mining companies are under extremely strict guidelines laid down by both the government and the industry run Aggregate Producers Association of Ontario.

Young said a company can go to an aggregate rich area, mine to a depth of 200 ft. and have no impact on the environment. He said all a company will do environmentally is lower the surface level.

Ray Pichette oversees all mining on the moraine for the Ministry of the Environment. He said each mining operation on the moraine has to practice what is called 'progressive rehabilitation'. This means that as an area is mined, the company has to rehabilitate

the land that has already been mined so only a certain amount of land is being left open to the elements. The rehabilitated land must be brought back to what the municipality

zoned it for originally. Pichette said in the Niagara region, over 90 per cent of the land mined for aggregates has been returned to prosperous farmland.

A-Timbers Brothers Sand and Gravel Ltd. is a local mining company that has pits on the Westney Road and near Mosport. Co-owner Mary Timbers said to rehabilitate the land, A-Timbers Bros. uses the top soil that was originally removed, to cover over the pit. She said they then seed the area and turn it back to meadow.

Standard Aggregates has two pits in the Stouffville/Uxbridge area totalling 880 acres. Dana Hewson is the property manager for the company and he said Standard Aggregates meets or exceeds government requirements. To rehabilitate land he said they transplant trees and even won a showcase award for their Uxbridge rehabilitation in 1990. This award is only handed out to 10 pits throughout North America. He said they have also returned two pits in Goodwood back to arable farmland.

Perhaps the biggest problem facing aggregate mining on the moraine is the fact that aggregate is like petroleum because the amount is finite.

Young said because of this, the ministry has put quotas on how much aggregate can be mined on a per hectare basis. While experts say the amount mined per hectare depends on demand and that they are no where near the maximum amount, Pichette said during the 1980s and 1988, particularly, the mining companies couldn't



keep up with demand. He said the pits in Niagara will likely be empty within 50 years and Timbers estimated that one pit they have been mining since 1968 will be empty in 10 to 15 years.

However, Pichette said the amount of time it takes to get pit approval is three to eight years because of the studies that need to be done to grant approval. As well, he said there are restrictions as to where a company is allowed to mine. Pichette said woodlots or what he described as 'water critical places' would be protected.

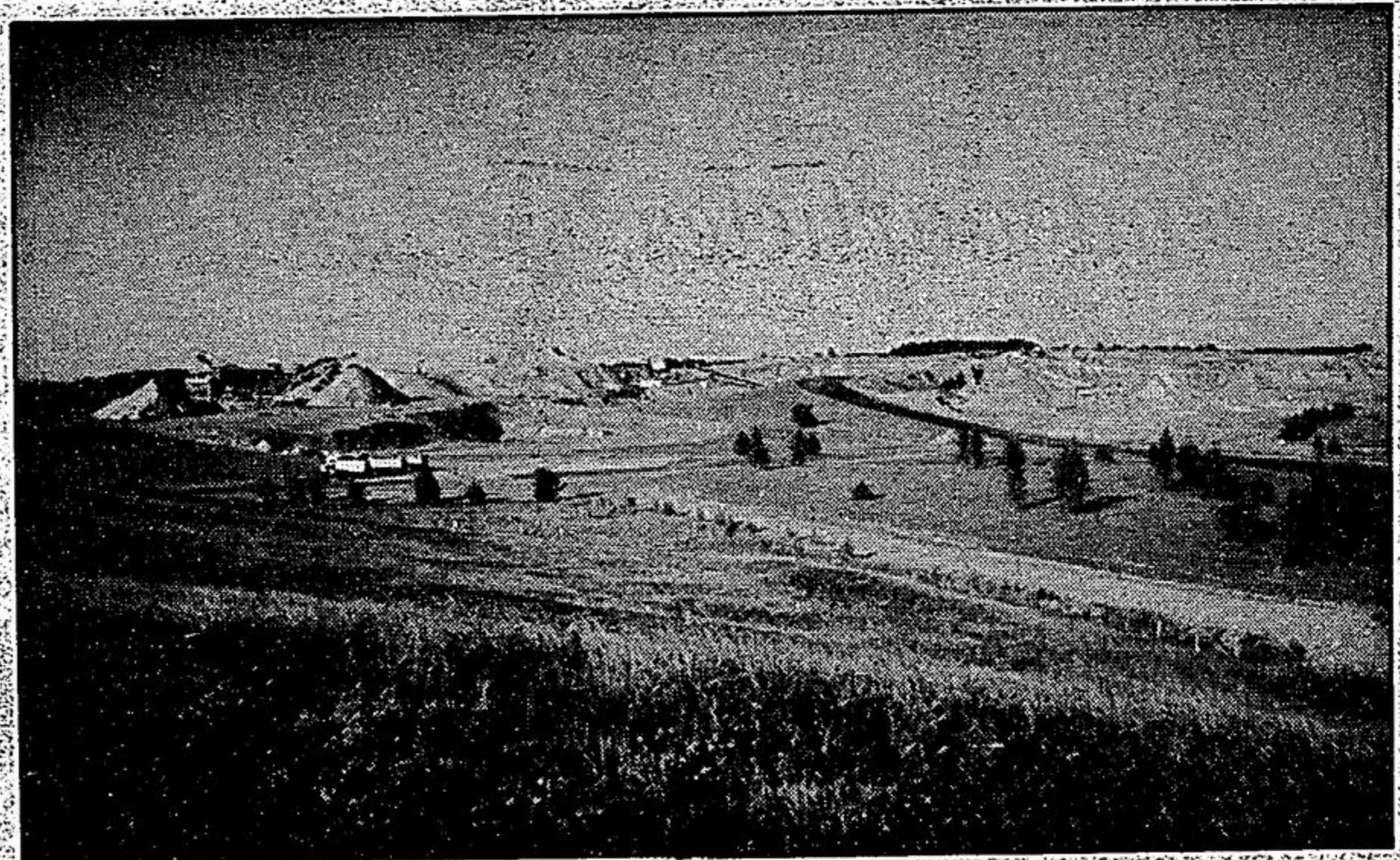
And just because a farmer's fields are on an aggregate source doesn't mean the farmer has to let it be mined. It's up to the land owner. Pichette said the ministry is there to regulate and ration the amount of aggregate available.

One alternative to mining fine aggregate is to mine larger rocks and stones and then have them crushed. While this is expensive it does have a purpose in that it will extend the life of the aggregate businesses and fill a void if new aggregate sources are not allowed to be mined.

The only environmental effects from crushing are that crushing can be noisy and dusty. But mining companies can keep both to a minimum by watering dust piles and building sound barriers.

Pichette said the Ministry of the Environment is concerned with protecting the Oak Ridges Moraine and is very careful about issuing licences. He said they try to forecast demand with supply to effectively come to grips with the problems that arise.

**NOTE: This week Standard Aggregates is planting 3,000 seedlings and 20 mature trees in the Stouffville/Uxbridge area. This is in conjunction with their land rehabilitation program.**



Grass and trees are established after gravel extraction to enhance rehabilitation of a local aggregate pit.



Photo: TRACY KIBBLE

## Charged with impaired

A 49-year-old Stouffville man was charged with impaired driving Wednesday. Durham Regional Police said the man was eastbound on Uxbridge Pickering Townline by the Stouffville Christian

School at 11:45 a.m. when he lost control, crossed the road, hit the shoulder, traversed a 15 foot ravine, where his car stopped after hitting a tree. No one was injured in the accident.

## Town threatens to drop recycling

Whitchurch-Stouffville will pull out of the recycling program if the province discontinues funding, officials decided this week.

Mayor Fran Sainsbury told council that York Region and other municipalities will "bail out" of the program because the

Environment Ministry (MOE), which pays two-thirds of recycling costs, may halt funding. Sainsbury said there are many companies who don't contribute to the recycling program, which leaves recycled products unmarketable. "If funding is withdrawn we

should get out of it. We don't have the money or storage facilities for products that have no end market," Sainsbury said. She added the MOE has taken municipalities "down the garden path," by offering initial funding for the program start-up business.

Orchard Park Home & School Association is holding its annual general meeting this coming Tues., April 28 at 7:30 p.m. at Orchard Park Public School library. A new executive will be voted in. Babysitting is available.

**Orchard Park PTA holds meeting**

## Officials must pay own seminar costs: Mayor

"You can't have it both ways."

That's what Mayor Fran Sainsbury told officials this week after Ward 1 councillor Ivanka Bradley and Ward 2 councillor Stephen Bellerby requested to attend a conference next month.

Councillors cannot expect to use taxpayer's money to attend seminars when a zero increase budget has allotted no funding for council perks, Sainsbury said.

She told officials they would have to pay for conferences themselves if they wanted to attend. Both Bradley and Bellerby agreed to pay for the seminar. However, Ward 5 councillor Bob Ancheril said he's "sick and tired" of spending his own money to go to conferences that "bring education" back to the town. He said he refused to spend his own money to attend conferences in the future. "We knew we would have to make some tough decisions (with a zero budget increase), but we have to be prepared to decide to lose a few conventions or increase taxes next year," Sainsbury said. And Ward 3 councillor Nick Tatone echoed the mayor's comments.

"This year we have to be committed to spending no money anywhere - no travelling, no courses, no frills - anything," Tatone said.

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**INSERTS FOR SUN. APRIL 26, 1992**

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