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ENVIRONMENT

SPLISH, SPLASH

Forest is jewel of region's green space

5,500 hectares on 20 tracts across town

BY DAVID FLEISCHER
dfleischer@yrmg.com

You might expect York Region's ongoing growth would make adding, rather than subtracting green space, nearly impossible. But a new study shows the net forest cover has held steady here since 1999.

Regional forestry manager Ian Buchanan admitted he and his staff didn't know how the numbers would bear out, but they were optimistic their reforestation and greening efforts, along with a 20-year-old tree-protection bylaw, would bear fruit.

Our forest gets its close-up with visiting photographers/ page 3.

"Overall, I think we've got a remarkable balance occurring now," Mr. Buchanan said.

A study, using aerial photos taken last year, was compared to a similar study in 1999 and showed some municipalities have actually seen more hectares added during that period.

Richmond Hill, for example, has 38 more treed hectares now,

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Jamieson Jackson, 2, runs through the fountains followed by her older sister, Alyssa, 11, at the splashpad in the municipal park on Byers Pond Way in southeast Stouffville Monday. The long-range forecast calls for more sunny days through the weekend.

STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Politicians mixed over airport plan

Hargrave, Calandra disagree over need for Pickering

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

Councillor Rob Hargrave was 14 years old and living in the north Markham community of Dickson Hill when a number of properties around his family's home were expropriated by the federal government for use as an airport.

"I wasn't for it back then and I won't support it again," said Mr. Hargrave, whose ward lies in south Stouffville. "No one wants an airport and I don't know there is a need for an airport. I will fight hard against it."

After years of silence on the issue, on Monday the federal government released its latest report, The Pickering Lands Needs Assessment Study 2010, which concluded an airport was needed by as early as 2027 and as late as 2037.

The timing of the commercial airport will be dependent upon traffic forecasts and to what extent the other Pearson International relief airports, John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport and the Region of Waterloo International Airport, are developed and their capacities, according to the report.

"We already suspected that with Buttonville closing, we needed a general aviation airport," said Paul Calandra, MP for Oak Ridge-Markham.

Mr. Calandra, a Stouffville resident, said he favours a general aviation airport the size of Buttonville that is part of a larger plan that

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