

ENVIRONMENT: Preventing salt, oil from getting into Musselman's Lake

Grants unused, but group still hopes to tackle problem

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

The Musselman's Lake Residents Association was awarded more than \$60,000 in grants in 2010 to reduce pollutants and phosphorus from entering the Lake Simcoe watershed.

But the project never got off the ground.

"When you're with a volunteer organization you rely on volunteers and it didn't get followed through," said association president Rick Wigmore.

The MLRA's plan was to install plants in eight to 10 spots around Musselman's Lake. The run-off from the road, which includes salt, oil and antifreeze would then be naturally filtered through the plants before entering the lake, Mr. Wigmore said.

In April 2010, the MLRA was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville as well as \$2,500 in-kind, through the Controlling Unwanted Phosphorus and Pollution Entering Lakes (CUPPEL) program outlined in the Lake Simcoe clean-up plan.

In August 2010, the MLRA was awarded a \$57,000 grant from Environment Canada.

"I know the residents were very, very excited when the financing was announced," said Oak Ridges-Markham MP Paul Calandra.

In both cases, the MLRA had to front-end the cost of the project and then submit proof of purchase and work to the town and federal government for reimbursement through the grants.

The MLRA never submitted any receipts. "We didn't actually receive any grant

money," Mr. Wigmore said. "They're not just going to send a cheque for \$57,000 and let you run with the project."

This is the first time, according to Mr. Calandra, a project has not been followed through to completion within the riding since he took office.

This was the first time the MLRA had ever applied for a grant.

'I know the residents were very, very excited when the financing was announced.'

"It's not a reflection of how great an MP I am, but to the quality of the proposals," he said, also noting this does not speak poorly of the proposal.

Although the MLRA was not able to follow through on that particular project, it is not a dead issue. Mr. Wigmore said the group still plans on installing more plants and berms around the lake, but in stages and with the assistance of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

"They've been quite co-operative," Mr. Wigmore said.

The first location the MLRA is looking at is Connor Drive. Work will be paid for with MLRA funds, Mr. Wigmore said, adding he hopes to do the planting in the spring.

"Without having done one, how do you go to corporations and say come and help us out," Mr. Wigmore said.

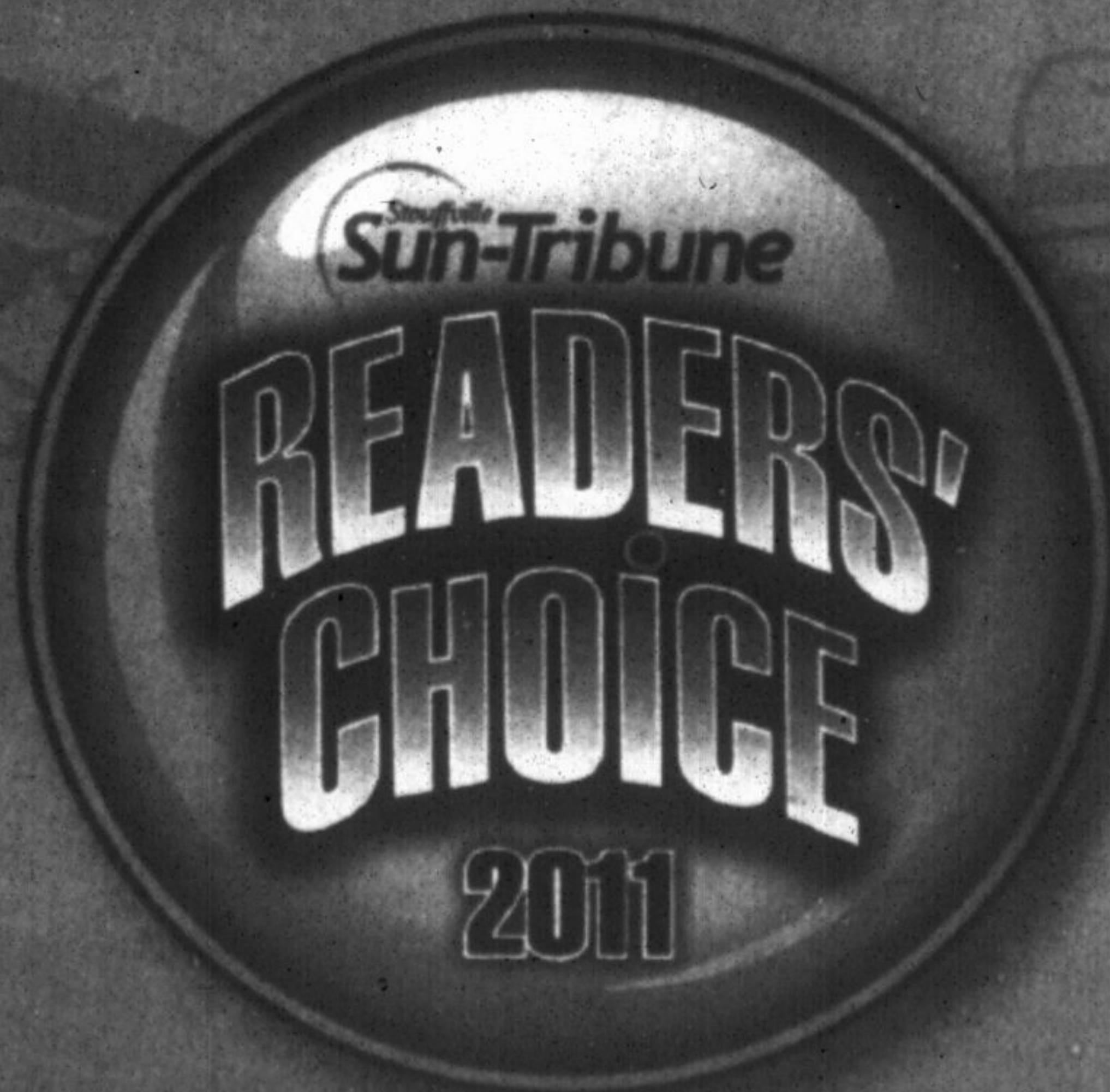


SUN-TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

The Musselman's Lake Residents Association, which was awarded more than \$60,000 in grants in 2010 to reduce pollutants and phosphorus from entering the watershed, still hopes to do plantings at the Ninth Line lake with the help of the conservaton authority.

Your vote matters.

(it could also win you \$250)



Fill out the recurring ballot in your Stouffville Sun-Tribune newspaper or go to www.yorkregion.com and click on the green Readers' Choice logo to begin.