

New citizen's group fights to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine

A newly formed citizen's group has been formed in opposition to a proposed banquet facility in King, vowing to protect the sensitive Oak Ridges Moraine.

The Stewards of the Moraine Inc., is deeply concerned about a 'Peter and Paul's' proposed banquet facility, on the environmentally sensitive moraine. They contend prime agricultural lands have already been stripped and destroyed.

Truckloads of fill have been brought in, ruining agricultural lands, animal habitats and bird nesting, all without proper government approvals.

'Is this fair? Should anyone be allowed to destroy the Moraine, bulldoze at leisure, and then be rewarded with a commercial development of banquet facilities?' the group asks.

The residents say the proposal will permit up to 1,800 people per weekend to party on the site, use water and create sanitary drainage on a shallow aquifer. The Moraine is both the headwaters for clean waters running north to Lake Simcoe, and south to Toronto.

'If the wells run dry, we have to drill deeper. We may have to go below 300 feet, with the possible consequence of non-potable water. Is this right for our kids, or our horses? We have natural spring fed ponds. Is this justice that our ponds and fish may suffer? Why should huge banquet facilities be allowed to deplete the water supply? What about sanitary runoff?'

Part of the proposal, they say, is the erection of three tents holding up to 200 people each, plus staff. Not to mention live music, and loud speakers. They wonder how nearby residents could tolerate the noise. Studies have shown that township noise guidelines will have to be waived, or routinely ignored or exceeded. 'Three tents, three weekend nights, three DJs, three bands, all competing with each other. How can we enjoy our yards and porches? How can our children sleep? Is it right that we may be forced to move?'

An enormous increase in vehicular traffic, on hilly roads with poor sight lines, may also impact safety. The project will increase traffic dramatically in an agricultural area.

The Stewards of the Moraine have retained experts in planning, traffic and acoustical engineering, and hydrogeology, who along with Township peer reviewers, have raised numerous and serious concerns. The Stewards are thankful that David Donnelly, a well known and respected environmental lawyer, has been retained to represent this important cause to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine. For further background on the Stewards of the Moraine and fairness regarding water resources, and traffic, contact Dr. Maret Aun, 905-727-6125 maun@rogers.com.

For information on the aquifer and noise bylaw, contact George Puccia, 905-713-5555, gpuccia.ca@bellnet.ca.

For the impact and depletion of agricultural lands, contact Anthony Mathias, 905-841-1693 agmat@hotmail.ca.

For environmental and land use issues, as well as OMB positions, contact David Donnelly, 416-572-0464, david@donnellylaw.ca.

The Stewards are also thankful to receive support from Save the Oak Ridges Moraine (STORM). For more, contact info@stormcoalition.org, 905-841-9200.