

Quarry Expansion and Rehabilitation

Conservation Halton's watershed contains a variety of areas of high quality aggregate resources which are often associated with the Niagara Escarpment. As a result, the watershed contains a large number of active quarry operations and abandoned quarry sites. The expansion of existing quarries, new quarry proposals and the rehabilitation of exhausted ones involves careful planning to ensure the protection of the natural environment within our watershed.



Award-winning rehabilitation of the Milton Limestone Quarry

Summary

Conservation Halton's viewpoint on quarry expansion and rehabilitation highlights how a balanced approach can protect the natural environment and promote economically strong communities at the same time. Effective quarry rehabilitation projects have the potential to create critical greenspace for Halton's rapidly expanding communities. Examples of quarry rehabilitation in our watershed are Kerncliff Park in Burlington and Kelso Quarry Park in Milton.

- Conservation Halton’s primary objective and responsibility when reviewing proposals for either new quarries or quarry expansion, is to protect the natural environment with emphasis on protecting the ecological integrity of natural areas and water features such as creeks, wetlands, and groundwater.

- Quarry expansions and new quarries are not permitted in areas identified as Provincially Significant Wetlands and Significant Woodlands and are typically not permitted in Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs) or Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA).

- Conservation Halton works to ensure that aggregate companies avoid or mitigate negative impacts on our natural areas. Conservation Halton also assists with the planning of quarry rehabilitation efforts.

- Conservation Halton encourages and supports the development of comprehensive quarry rehabilitation plans that go beyond the legal requirements and provincial standards of the aggregate industry.

Quarry Rehabilitation

Aggregate extraction is seen as detrimental to existing habitats. Quarry rehabilitation is essential and can assist in the recovery of these areas. Rehabilitation requires careful planning to ensure that the recovered site is functionally integrated and complements the surrounding natural environment. Conservation Halton supports the necessity to conduct progressive rehabilitation in phases, as areas of a quarry are extracted. This shortens the length of time needed to rehabilitate a quarry site.

Ideally, quarry rehabilitation emphasizes the creation of naturalized landscapes that are designed for biodiversity and are compatible with surrounding lands. In Conservation Halton’s watershed there are several excellent examples of rehabilitated quarries that include cliff faces, lakes, wetlands, and forest habitat. These former quarry sites are now attracting

wildlife and providing recreational opportunities for watershed residents and other visitors.

Excellence in Rehabilitation: The Evolution of the Milton Limestone Quarry

The Milton Limestone Quarry, located within Ontario’s Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt, originally opened to provide materials for the construction of Highway 401. It was in operation from 1958 to 2001. After its closure, Conservation Halton was involved in rehabilitation efforts with the owner, Barrick Gold Corporation.

The award-winning rehabilitation program at the Milton Limestone Quarry went well beyond the requirements outlined by the Ministry of Natural Resources under the Aggregates Resources Act. Progressive rehabilitation of the quarry lands had been taking place since the 1970s, during which time thousands of native trees and grasses were planted. More recently, the entire site was naturalized and made compatible with the conservation lands of the adjacent Kelso Conservation Area. Rather than backfilling, the west face of the quarry features an exposed cliff face, similar to the surrounding natural cliff landscape. In addition, a five metre deep lake was built into the quarry floor that features shallow areas and shoals for fish habitat as well as a beach and swimming area for recreational purposes.

In 2006, Barrick Gold donated the rehabilitated quarry, and the adjacent 700 metre swath of natural forest and cliff habitat to Conservation Halton. Plans for the rehabilitated quarry include its eventual incorporation into the Kelso Conservation Area as a public park. In 2006 and 2007, Conservation Halton hosted tree-planting events at the site as part of the Trees for Watershed Health program. While Kelso Quarry Park is not yet open to the public, it does serve to illustrate excellence in environmental rehabilitation as it settles into its future role as a public conservation and recreation area.

Conservation Halton Natural Champion for a Healthy Watershed



Conservation Halton is the community based environmental agency that protects, restores and manages the natural resources in its watershed. Conservation Halton has staff that includes ecologists, land use planners, engineers, foresters and educators, along with a network of volunteers, who are guided by a Board of Directors that includes municipally elected and appointed citizens. Conservation Halton is recognized for its stewardship of creeks, forests and Niagara Escarpment lands through science based programs and services.

For more information on Quarries contact Conservation Halton:

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