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NDACT seeks to document crusade against mega-quarry

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As one of its goals for 2020, The North Dufferin Agriculture and Community Taskforce (NDACT) seeks to record its founding and iconic battle to protect North Dufferin from environmental disaster.

?Our project in the New Year,? says NDACT Chair Karren Wallace, ?is to document the story of the Stop the Mega Quarry campaign and we are all very excited.? Already having taken the first steps in the project, she says the organization is ?putting together a promo video to shop around.

?Hopefully we will get someone interested in doing a documentary. It is truly an amazing story with remarkable everyday people who did the impossible.?

Reviewing 2019, Ms. Wallace says 2019 ?has been a very busy year for NDACT.?

?With the change of government in 2018, there has been a rapid pace of legislation that has been introduced with opportunities to provide input. It is almost like playing whack a mole with the various Bills and the pace.?

For example, ?In late 2018 the government introduced Bill 66 ?To restore Ontario's Competitiveness Act'.?

?While NDACT is supportive of the goal of streamlining and reducing red tape for businesses to operate in Ontario the Bill was disturbing in that it proposed to take away the notifications to citizens of specific planning applications. NDACT's submission urged the government to revise the Bill to ensure democratic rights are not stripped and that the legislation in place to protect health food and water was not undermined. To support opposition of this Bill we attended an Environmental Defence working session, a Gravel Watch meeting and we formed a deputation to all lower tier municipalities in Dufferin County.?

Several Provincial policy concerns kept NDACT busy commenting on various Acts as well, including the Aggregate Resources Act, the Provincial Policy Statement review and most recently Bill 132. ?The common theme seems to be less oversight by provincial ministries or regulation and giving more power to developers.? NDACT calls this ?very concerning.?

A grant from the Friends of the Greenbelt in 2018, allowed NDACT to hold two information sessions. ?The first was held in Shelburne with Darren White, Mayor of Melancthon, and Dr. Philip Loring of Guelph University discussing how development impacts municipalities and how the Greenbelt impacts development,? Ms. Wallace said. ?The second was held at the Arboretum in Guelph with speakers Victor Doyle and (Green Party) MPP Mike Schreiner.?

She said the second pillar of the Greenbelt grant ?is to partner with major food and industry sectors to promote preserving and protecting our prime farmland and source water-more details to follow throughout the year. Our greenbelt grant project is an opportunity for those in any of the agriculture sectors to broaden the partnership.?

In addition, 2019 saw NDACT strengthened their partnership with AWARE Simcoe and welcomed a new NDACT Board member, Len Guchardi of Shelburne.

Heading into 2020, ?NDACT anticipates more rapid fire legislation from this government, that, for lack of a better analogy, looks like it was written by developers and industry insiders.?

She reminded NDACT members and all Ontariians that the winning strategy in the battle against the Mega Quarry was ?working with partners and key stakeholders as the key to opposing ill conceived legislation.? This formula is, undoubtedly, the key to success moving forward into new battles for food and source water protection across the country. As NDACT has witnessed, ?There is

strength in numbers,? said Ms.Wallace.