

Consultation launched on draft Responsible Aggregate Standards

Cornerstone Standards Council (CSC) is releasing its draft standards for responsible aggregate extraction in Ontario. The draft, which proposes actions that pits and quarries would voluntarily undertake in order to be certified, is posted online at www.cornerstonestandards.ca and are also available by request to comments@cornerstonestandards.ca. CSC will be hosting a public information meeting Feb. 12 at Victoria Parks Community Centre in Mono Mills. CSC Director of Outreach Nicholas Schulz reported it will provide information on draft standards for a voluntary certification system for pits and quarries in Ontario.

He added this certification system proposes a new, more collaborative approach to the siting, planning, operation and rehabilitation of aggregate sites.

The Feb. 12 session will run from 4 to 9 p.m., with 20-minute presentations at 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 p.m.

CSC is reaching out to individuals and groups interested in the role voluntary certification can play in the aggregate sector. The council is seeking feedback on the draft standards, wanting to know if they accurately reflect achievable expectations for progressive pits and quarries.

Reducing the social and environmental impact of pits and quarries and recognizing companies that go the extra mile is an important step in sustainable construction, commented Peter Kendall of Schad Foundation and chair of CSC's Board of Directors.

Aggregates are an important resource and CSC sets a benchmark for how our province can ensure it is sourced in an environmentally responsible way.

The draft standards propose voluntary requirements for pits and quarries that meet communities' growing expectations for social and environmental rigour by:

- Protecting Ontario's most important natural areas;
- identifying and address potentially adverse environmental impacts;
- meaningfully engaging with local communities and Aboriginal groups before extraction is licensed and throughout the lifecycle of operations;
- communicating progress toward final extraction with the community; and
- developing final rehabilitation plans that incorporate communities' interests.

During the 60-day consultation period, CSC will reach out to individuals and organizations concerned with aggregate extraction. Formal comments may be submitted to CSC until March 6. To submit comments, they must be attributed (name, affiliation and contact information must be included), in writing and sent by email to comments@cornerstonestandards.ca or by mail to Cornerstone Standards Council, 285 McLeod St. Ottawa, K2P 1A1.

Following consultation all comments, and who they are attributed to, will be posted on the CSC website at www.cornerstonestandards.ca