

**SENT VIA EMAIL**

**From:** David Loopstra

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 4, 2018 11:18 AM

**To:** Town Clerk <[townclerk@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:townclerk@thebluemountains.ca)>

**Subject:** Deputation Sept 10

Dear Mayor and members of council.

I writing to express concerns regarding the expansion of the Gibraltar gravel pit. If this proposal is accepted in its current form, it will bring the gravel pit directly to the border of Pretty River Valley Provincial Park, and will drastically alter the character of the park.

Pretty River Provincial Park is used daily by hundreds of nature enthusiasts --- both locals and tourists from out of town.

It is the largest wild natural area between Collingwood and the GTA.

In my opinion, it is to Collingwood what Banff is to Canmore. It should be expanded --- it should not have gravel pits brought to its borders.

Let's be clear: We all need gravel. Our area is growing fast and gravel is needed for roads and driveways, including my own.

But we need to be smart about preserving natural areas, and this gravel pit should not be allowed to expand to the borders of the last true wilderness in our area.

The current proposal includes the cutting-down of a mature maple forest on the southeast side of the property.

In the meeting last April, town planner Denise Whaley mentioned that an environmental study had been completed with regards to the health of the trees in the mature maple forest and it was concluded that the trees were "diseased," and therefore of little value --- a justification for the mass-logging of this stand of forest and replacing it with saplings to act as a buffer between the pit and the park.

When questioned further about the nature of the disease, Ms. Whaley informed council chambers that the authors of the environmental study had found tent caterpillars in some of the trees.

I have a couple questions and comments regarding this:

Questions:

- 1) Who commissioned and paid for the study?
- 2) What was the name of the firm commissioned to do the study?

Comments:

- 1) I visit this mature maple forest regularly. It is a mature stand of maples. It is not diseased. As a matter of fact it contains many endangered species, including the butter nut tree, and Spotted Salamander, among others.
- 2) Mature forests take decades to develop. I find it cavalier to suggest that this forest could be cut down and replaced by small saplings and that that would be acceptable.
- 3) I have had tent caterpillars in a tree on my property in the past. To eradicate them, simply snip off the branch and burn it. You don't need to cut down the whole tree, and you sure as heck don't need to cut down the whole forest.

I am wondering if there is a compromise to be had.

\* Could the gravel pit developer agree to a Monday to Friday 9 - 5 operating schedule to eliminate noise on the weekends?

\* Could the gravel pit developer agree to preserve the forested parcel in the southeast corner of the property? Perhaps they could get it zoned as conservation land in exchange for a tax break. This forest is a pre-existing natural buffer between the Park and the Pit.

\* In addition to the above, could the gravel pit developer agree to a 50-metre buffer in the field between the west boundary of the park and the extent of their operations?

I think if this criteria could be met, all sides could come together and agree.

Finally, I would like to implore of council and the town's planners to initiate a policy wherein areas of significant natural beauty (parks, conservation areas etc) or green space, are granted an automatic buffer zone of 50 to 100 metres between their boundaries and any industry.

This will ensure that, as our area grows, we don't lose an important piece of our quality of life here: our access to true wild natural areas.

Thank you

Dave Loopstra.