

June 13, 2013

Aldo Salis, Planner
Wellington County, Planning and Development Department,
74 Woolwich St.
Guelph, Ont N1H 3T9

Re: Hidden Quarry (Rockwood) Site Meeting, June 7

At the County's request, I reviewed the documentation sent and other materials regarding the Hidden Quarry proposal near Rockwood and attended a site meeting. The material was mainly technical reports from the proponents and material in my files regarding forests and natural areas in the vicinity.

On June 7, 2013, I attended a site meeting and tour hosted by the proponent and their consulting team. Representatives from the Grand River Conservation Authority and Ministry of Natural Resources were also in attendance. My understanding is that the County wanted my presence at the site meeting to review/confirm that the woodland boundaries were satisfactorily represented in the proponent's assessment and to report on other aspects of the woodland evaluation conducted by the proponent.

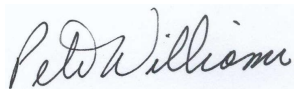
I reviewed the technical reports regarding the vegetation and wildlife on the site and found that the survey and inventory work was professionally done and represents the existing conditions of the subject property. While not all of the woodlands on the property are currently mapped as Core Greenlands or Greenlands in the County Official Plan, in my opinion the woodlands appear to meet the size requirements of the Official Plan policies, contribute to local forest cover, provide linkage to neighbouring woodlands, and provide important ecological connection to the nearby natural areas (i.e. Eramosa/ Blue Springs Creek corridors).

In my view, the technical reports provide inadequate discussion as to the importance of the woodlands on the property relative to nearby natural areas, and incorrectly suggested negligible linkages to the Blue Springs Creek to the south. They justify the lack of connectivity because the property is cut off by Highway 7, and limited linkages to other woodlands to the north and west. I disagree with this assessment and suggest that with the exception of the proximity of urban areas associated with Rockwood, the complex of natural areas and agricultural land is well-connected. The natural areas between the Eramosa River and Blue Springs Creek channels become more important closer to their confluence around Rockwood and Eden Mills. With the high proportion of natural areas between the subject property and the confluence of two waterways, I believe that the woodlands on the subject property provide important connectivity to surrounding natural areas.

Notwithstanding the preceding discussion, it is my opinion that the proposed project would have limited negative impacts on the functions discussed above. While these woodland functions would be temporarily affected by the project, I believe that the basic linkages can be maintained by the vegetative corridors on the north and east side of the property and stream channel as proposed. The affects on connectivity can be further mitigated through other operational considerations such as retaining the current vegetation until just prior to extraction, expeditious restoration back to natural cover and enhancing tree/natural vegetation along the 6th Line would help maintain these connections.

I trust that this information is helpful. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

Peter A. Williams, M.Sc., R.P.F.
Consulting Forester/Arborist

