



# FLH - April 2024

# NEWSLETTER

## **Burnt Lands Alvar - Mississippi Mills**

The unique biodiversity and sensitive wetlands of the Barbers Lake and Long Sault Creek Watershed are not the only areas under threat from the Eastern Ontario aggregate sector. Thomas Cavanagh Construction Ltd. (TCCL) has recently renewed its intention to expand its March Road Quarry onto the Burnt Lands Alvar in Mississippi Mills. Their application to enlarge the existing quarry typifies the insatiable expansion of the extractive industries into sensitive areas. The encroachment is in defiance of designations made in previous decades, identifying Ontario's Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI). In Mississippi Mills, the sensitive area is one of Ontario's few remaining alvars.



*Alvars are defined by exposed limestone or dolostone, shallow soil and patchy tree cover, so they can appear desolate to the uninformed eye. "It's a harsh environment with unusual plants you don't find elsewhere, along with an unusual suite of invertebrate species to go with those plants," says Corina Brdar, who surveyed the area in her previous role as an Ontario Parks ecologist. "It's a little hot spot of oddities that are an important part of Ontario's biodiversity."*

For nearly 5 decades, John Blais has watched a steady tide of quarry expansions and new homes encroach on the Burnt Lands Alvar. Now Blais is battling the proposed expansion that would obliterate 18 hectares of the alvar to a depth of almost 40 metres. The TCCL March Rd Quarry expansion may next proceed to a hearing at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Read more about the threat to this unique area in the live links

[Ontario Nature Magazine](#)

[Ottawa Citizen - John Blais](#)

## **Ontario Weakens Watershed Protections (again)!**

For nearly 80 years, the conservation authorities have overseen and protected the province's southern watersheds, in part by ensuring development occurs sustainably. Ontario's minister of natural resources will soon have the power to overrule — or bypass — environmental oversight bodies to greenlight development.

For more information, please click on the live link

[The Narwhal - by Fatima Syed](#)

## **What a Year!**

Just over a year ago, we packed the Township Hall in opposition to Cavanagh Construction's application to open a huge pit on Highland Line. Although, the pit proposal hasn't gone away, a number of lessons have been learned, on both sides of the issue. Those supporting the pit have realized that we won't simply roll over, but will organize, research, lobby and oppose irresponsible and potentially dangerous development. Those of us who see the proposed pit as potentially disastrous take some satisfaction in the shared concerns we have discovered amongst our neighbours. We also realize that this will be a long process, one that often seems to be stacked against us. Stick together, share information and ideas, learn all you can - those are the lessons from our first year. Thank you for your support!

## **UPCOMING FLH EVENTS**

**INFORMATION SESSION - Potluck - Fri. April 19th  
McDonalds Corners Agricultural Hall @ 6:30 pm**

Up to date info will be presented by the FLH.  
Come join us for snacks & desserts, tea/coffee  
Please bring a finger food or dessert to share.

**EARTHFEST - April 20th, 2024 - 11:00 am till 3:00 pm**

FLH will have a table and be handing out information  
Carleton Place, ON Market Square 7 Beckwith St

## **Memberships and Donations**

Should you wish to become a member or donate to the Friends of Lanark Highlands, please send us an email. All monies raised go towards studies, experts, advice and the long battle ahead of us.

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