

As you are probably aware, alvars are globally significant habitat. They are found in few areas of the world and Ontario is fortunate to have several examples. Because of their unique environments, alvars support a number of species that are of special value. Unfortunately the Braeside Alvar and its neighbouring habitats have not yet been thoroughly assessed. However, the work to date of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) has identified several significant species.

Those that are Provincially Significant include:

Ram's-head Orchid (*Cypridpedium arietinum*)
Cooper's milk-vetch (*Astragalus neglectus*)
Giant Pinedrops (*Pterospora andromedea*)
Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)

Regionally Significant species found are:

Saskatoon serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia* var. *compacta*)
Arctic brome (*Bromus kalmii*)
Richardson's sedge *Carex richardsonii*
Ground cedar (*Diphasiastrum complanatum*)
Jointleaf Rush (*Juncus articulatus*)
Wiry panic grass (*Panicum flexile*)
Philadelphia panic grass (*Panicum philadelphicum*)
Small skullcap (*Scutellaria parvula*)
(*Solidago asteroides*)- a golden rod
Fluxweed (*Trichostema brachiatum*)
Purslane speedwell (*Veronica peregrine*)
(OMNR, 2006 pers. comm.)

These species are found in few other locations in Ontario. For example, the Rams' head orchid, a delicate lady-slipper like flower, is known from fewer than 20 populations in all of Ontario (OMNR, 2004). By preliminary assessments, Braeside site may contain the highest concentration anywhere.

Milksnakes have been recorded on the alvar. Cracks in the bedrock may provide important habitats for bats, including hibernating sites.

The OMNR states that there is a very good chance that additional species of significant flora and fauna to be found with more field work in the area. The Braeside Alvar undoubtedly elevates the biodiversity of the area.

The conservation of biodiversity is one of the main challenges that face our society. There is no longer any denying that our economic life depends on the quality of our ecosystems. Indeed, as a report on the world's ecosystems prepared by the World Resources Institute, United Nations and The World Bank states, "There are considerable signs that the capacity of ecosystems, the biological engines of the planet to produce many of the goods and services we depend on, is rapidly declining" (Willard, 2005). It is no coincidence that both eco-words spring from the same Greek origin, *oikos* or 'household'. Canada and Ontario are blessed to have the natural endowments, the civil society and the financial means to be able to make wise choices about preserving what has been passed down to us in our nation/home.

In light of this awesome heritage and tremendous responsibility, I request that McNabb Braeside Council consider our more fundamental ecosystem needs over that of a traditional development model.

I propose that:

1. OMNR be permitted sufficient time to finish its ecological assessment of the Braeside Alvar before the project is approved or any site disturbance occurs.
2. Submit the quarry project to a full environmental impact assessment before project approval or site disturbance.
3. Pending the results of these studies, seek alternatives to situating an aggregate quarry on the alvar.
4. Seek partnerships with appropriate agencies including OMNR, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and Ontario Nature for the purchase and sustainable management of the Braeside Alvar. A conservation

easement for the property could also be considered.

5. Seek out alternatives sites and processes for aggregate production.

6. Respond to the address below with a letter describing your proposed course of action and rationale.

Thank you kindly for considering this submission,

Dave Pearce
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References:

OMNR. 2004. Ontario Tree Marking Guide. Version 1.1. Ont. MIN. Nat. Resour. Queen's Printer for Ontario.
Toronto. 252 p.

Willard, Bob. 2005. The Next Sustainability Wave: Building Boardroom Buy-In. New Society Publishers