

St Marys' water tests a huge flop, says FORCE

BY DON REDMOND

The first round of Groundwater Recirculation System (GRS) tests for the proposed St Marys quarry in Flamborough were a flop, said anti-quarry group FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment).

Graham Flint, spokesperson for the group, told the Compass that the testing didn't even come close to the water draw-numbers that St Marys would need to make an accurate assessment of their GRS equipment.

"The Permit To Take Water (PTTW) allowed them to draw 50 litres of water per second," Flint said. "However, they were unable to draw barely 15 litres per second before the water started cavitating. In fact, I think it dropped as low as 10 litres per second."

Cavitating, in this case, simply means that the water draw was insufficient enough that it was mixing with oxygen and then began starting to froth up through the pipes.

No one, said Flint, was more surprised at the turn of events than the St Marys' contractors themselves.

"They didn't want - or expect - the water levels to be so low," he said. "I think this came as a real surprise to them."

The company set up three separate water-drawing wells 15 metres apart to enable their testings but ran into problems from the start when they began their eight days of testing on July 21.

In the end, only one well was used to draw water when the casing broke on one and the third was then designated for monitoring

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Rhonda and Brent MacGrath with their prized racehorse Somebeachsomewhere, who set a record at the Ontario Sires Stakes Gold Final running one mile in 1:49.2 at Mohawk racetrack in Campbellville on August 10.

PHOTO BY ANN KORNUTA

Somebeachsomewhere's winnings surpass \$2 million

BY STUART SERVICE

Somebeachsomewhere is on a bit of a roll. The horse took the \$180,000 Ontario Sires Stakes Gold final in the three-year-old pacing colt class, running one mile in 1:49.2 at Mohawk racetrack in

Campbellville.

The convincing four-and-three-quarters-length win set a new OSS record and now brings the total winnings of the horse from Schooner Stables in Truro, N.S. to more than \$2 million.

"He's been an incredible horse right from day

one," driver Paul MacDonell told the Compass following the victory. "He's head and shoulders above anybody. He's probably the best horse that's come along in 20 years."

Somebeach's perfect record was tainted by an

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purposes.

As a rural resident, Flint wasn't too surprised by the well casing problems. "It does happen even to residents but a company the size of St Marys would certainly have the means to repair it - quickly, I would think."

However, because FORCE views the first rounds of testing to be flawed, in that the GRS equipment never really got a chance to show whether or not it would be effective, Flint is uncertain what, if anything, St Marys can do with the accrued data.

"It's their test results so really, all we can do is wait," said Flint, who noted a FORCE mem-

ber attended the daily test meetings with the hydro-geological professionals hired by St Marys.

"One thing that does bother me quite a bit was the delay in the water samples," he noted. "The first water sample, drawn on the first day of the test, didn't come back until the eighth and final day of the GRS testing."

"With all the resources at their disposal, that's the fastest they could get results from water samples?" he asked incredulously. "I can get blood work tests back faster."

His concern about the water samples comes from the revelation that the St Marys' site has a long list of dumping infractions over the past 20 years, including instances of abandoned barrels of PCBs on the site back in the 1990s.

"Is their GRS testing unearthing prior contaminants and putting them into the groundwater supply? That's the thing - we don't know," he said.

St Marys still has two more rounds of GRS testing to go on their PTTW and Flint indicated the company said that they'd like to get the first two done before the winter and then the third done in the spring.

"That begs the question of the winter itself," he noted. "Why not test their GRS then? I mean, are they going to put a big tarp over the quarry during the winter and resume quarrying in the spring every year?"

"If you truly want to test a GRS, you have to do it in the worst of conditions, not just the best."

As well, Flint noted that the heavy rains the area has experienced this summer might also skew the data.

"With record rainfall throughout June and July and with a significant rainfall of 48.8 millimetres on Sunday the 20th of July just one day before the testing began, the groundwater system became saturated and all the baseline data that had been collected became unrepresentative of the now-changed baseline conditions," Flint noted. "In fact, with the continuing occurrences of significant rainfalls either throughout the site or in the many localized downpours which occurred on site, the baseline condition continued to change throughout the testing."

That in itself had Flint scratching his head over the equipment's inability to draw more than 15 litres per second.

"The Mountsberg Reservoir was over topping for most of the testing period and several of the creeks tributaries were in a flooded state throughout the testing," he said. "As a result several of the monitoring wells showed increasing water levels throughout the pumping test rather than the decreasing levels you would expect as a result of pumping water out of the system."



FORCE spokesperson Graham Flint said the first round of GRS testing by St. Marys was a flop.

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