

# A FORCE to be reckoned with | FlamboroughReview.com

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March 14, 2013

From the moment the community was alerted to St Marys Cement's plans to build a 158-hectare quarry on the 11th Concession Road East and Milborough Line, Carlisle and area residents rallied to fight the proposal.

On the Victoria Day long weekend in 2004, homeowners residing adjacent to the proposed limestone pit site got together to formulate a game plan. All were concerned about the development's impacts on Carlisle's municipal water supply and vehemently believed that a quarry would "starve" local wells of water.

A few weeks after the informal gathering, FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment), a grassroots advocacy group, was born. And over the course of several years, this group has proved to be a force to be reckoned with. Its commitment to fight the proposal to the very end was unwavering.

On March 8, plans for the Flamborough Quarry died with the provincial Liberal government striking a \$15-million deal with the landowner. The announcement is a huge victory for the Flamborough community that, for nearly a decade, has invested countless resources to effectively fight the proposed development.

For every step St Marys Cement took to move its project along, FORCE took two, successfully campaigning for action from city hall as well as decision-makers in neighbouring jurisdictions, hiring topnotch specialists, including lawyers and hydrogeologists, to counter the company's claims.

Kudos to FORCE and its supporters for taking a professional, yet strong-handed approach, to fighting this plan, and for taking the appropriate steps towards saving environmentally-sensitive green space from what would have been the eighth largest quarry in Canada.

While the grassroots group led the way, we would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale MPP Ted McMeekin for his work on the file. McMeekin worked hard behind the scenes to fight this proposal. His Liberal partners at Queen's Park took unprecedented action, first invoking a Ministerial Zoning Order on the property and then issuing a letter of provincial interest, to come out on top at the end.

Local politicians, too, should be congratulated on their efforts, particularly former Ward 15 councillor Margaret McCarthy, a vocal and dynamic opponent of the development.

Last Friday's announcement by the Grits included a \$15-million payment to SMC, which has agreed to withdraw all legal actions, as well as the implementation of a conservation easement on the property, effectively prohibiting the current and future development of a quarry. But it would be wise to postpone any celebrations until details of the provision are released, just to ensure that this fight is actually over.