

## Natural Environment Study Highlights

One of the studied elements of the proposed Shantz Station Pit was the local natural environment. The resulting consultant's report is more than 600 pages long – including attachments – and is the culmination of nearly two years of investigation of the ecosystem on and surrounding the site

Field workers recorded 137 plant species, seven amphibian species, 53 bird species, six mammal species, two reptile species and two invertebrate species. Most of these species were found outside the proposed pit extraction area, which is now primarily farm crop land.

In addition to recording the species they could identify as being in the study area, the ecologists also took into account habitat for species not recorded but which could be present.

The natural environment study paid particular attention to the following ecological features on or within 120 metres of the site:

- Significant wetlands
- The habitat of endangered and threatened species
- Significant areas of natural and scientific interest
- Significant woodlands
- Significant valleylands
- Significant wildlife habitat
- Fish habitat

None of these features are located in the proposed extraction area since it has been used as agricultural land.



**The consultant recommends that trees be planted and turtle ponds created to develop a wildlife corridor along the banks of Hopewell Creek and across the northern edge of the pit site.**

For a pit application to be approved, it must comply with local, provincial and federal legislation designed to protect significant features of the natural environment.

The legislation includes:

- The Region of Waterloo and Woolwich Township Official Plans
- The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- Provincial Aggregate Resources Act
- Provincial Policy Statement
- Provincial Endangered Species Act
- Federal Species at Risk Act
- Federal Fisheries Act and federal Migratory Birds Convention Act

To protect environmentally sensitive features around the site of the proposed pit, the consultant's report included dozens of recommendations. Some key recommendations are:

- Establishing setbacks of at least 30 metres from the extraction area of significant wetlands and woodlands, except for portions of the haul road.
- Specialized barrier fencing be erected for reptiles and amphibians near wetlands.
- Culverts be placed under the access route through a woodland from Shantz Station Road to the pit, to allow for connection between the wetland components on each side of the route and for the movement of turtles, frogs and toads.
- Trees not be removed during bird breeding and bat roosting timeframes.

Some trees will need to be cut down to upgrade and extend the existing truck route through the woodland which had been used by a previous gravel pit operation. The consultant recommends a compensation plan (greater than a 6:1 ratio) to provide a continuous wildlife corridor from Hopewell Creek across the northern edge of the site. The corridor will include tree planting areas and the creation of turtle ponds

Once the pit operations have concluded, Capital would reforest the areas of the woodland needed for the haul road.

Based on the findings of the natural environment study, the consultant has determined that by following the recommendations in the report, the proposed pit application can proceed without compromising the ecological values of the area. The recommendations have been incorporated into the proposed site plan.