

**A PRESENTATION TO A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF HALTON
REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF NELSON AGGREGATES TO EXTEND THEIR
QUARRY**

Wednesday Sept 15th 2021

Good afternoon, Chair Carr and Councillors. thank you for this opportunity to speak to you about the application by Nelson Aggregates to extend their quarry on Mount Nebo. My name is Mervyn Russell. I am a retired Clergy person and I live in Oakville. I am a member of Halton Advocacy for Climate Emergency Now [HACEN]

It seems strange and counter intuitive, that a large quarry would be situated within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. However, clearly, the quarry was in place before the designation of Mount Nebo as part of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve. That the two projects have operated side by side for some years does give Nelson Aggregates grounds for asking for an extension. The question is, does this extension seriously damage the possibility of the biosphere fulfilling its purpose in this particular location.

Like the vast majority of people, I knew nothing about the establishing, the characteristics and operation of Biosphere Reserves, so I have tried to educate myself by going to the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve website. One of the first things I learnt is that UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are established at the request of a nation's government, in our case, Canada, to the Man and Biosphere International Coordinating Committee of UNESCO. The Mount Nebo section of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere is a matter, therefore, in which the Federal Government has a clear interest.

According to the web site of UNESCO Biosphere, the purpose of a biosphere is, and I quote: '-to research the interaction between humans and the biosphere'. To achieve this purpose the biosphere must operate according to three main functions. Again I quote:

- 1 The conservation of biological and cultural diversity.
2. The involvement in economic development that is socioculturally and environmentally sustainable.
- 3 The provision of logistical support underpinning the reserve through research, monitoring and education.

To enable research into the interaction between humans and the biosphere, biospheres must have three specific zones, and again I quote from the website:

- 1 A Core Area that is strictly protected and that contributes to the conservation of the landscape, ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.

2 A Buffer Zone that is used for activities that have sound ecological practices that can reinforce scientific research, monitoring, education and training.

3 A Transition Zone that must include a residential community which fosters social and economically sustainable human activities.

When these functions and site characteristics are seriously considered it seems impossible to me to see how the extension of the quarry could be anything else but in disagreement with these requirements and destructive to them. However, that is just my non specialist opinion. I strongly suggest four courses of action to involve specialist opinion. These are:

1 The Federal government should be contacted to find out what their interest is in preserving the Mount Nebo section of the Niagara Biosphere Reserve.

2. The last 10 year Periodic Revue of the Representatives of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Committee should be consulted to see what their comments and recommendations were.

3 Contact with the Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association should be made in order to acquaint them with the request being made by Nelson Aggregates and the reactions of the Biosphere staff and Core Burlington and to receive the Association's opinions about the issues involved.

4 Consider what applicability of the Man and Biosphere Global Communications and Strategy Action Plan might have in relation to the Mount Nebo section of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve.

To do less, would to my mind express a discounting of the honor of the Niagara Escarpment being listed amongst some of the most environmentally and scenically significant places on the planet. It would express a dismissal of the importance of the research, training and education carried out at these sites. It would express Halton's s disinterest in preserving one of the most beautiful and ecologically diverse sections of one of the most significant geological and environmental features of Canada. This is an outcome HACEN doesn't want and, on the basis of your vote in 2011, you, the members of Council, won't want either.

Thank you for listening to me this afternoon,

Mervyn Russell

Sept 14th 2021

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