

DEFEND YOUR COMMUNITY FROM GRAVEL MINING: AN ORIENTATION



**Prepared by:
Reform Gravel Mining Coalition**

October 2023

www.reformgravelmining.ca



TABLE OF CONTENTS

◆ ●	Introduction.....	1
◆ 1	The Aggregate Application Process	2
◆ 2	Community Action to Stop Pits & Quarries	5
◆ 3	Working with RGMC to Defend Your Community.....	7



INTRODUCTION

Gravel mining destroys the environment and tears apart the fabric of communities. Residents who come together to oppose the many potential negative impacts of aggregate extraction face enormous challenges. Most local groups fighting a pit or quarry must start organizing from scratch, whereas companies and their consultants have years of experience, well-developed tactics, and disproportionate resources to intimidate, exhaust, and outspend communities and Councillors. The playing field is not level; in fact, it is heavily biased in favour of the gravel mining industry.

Despite these many challenges, residents continue to work together to defend their communities from unnecessary gravel mining. People join forces to persuade their municipal Councils to oppose rezoning applications; to participate at the Ontario Land Tribunal; to request provincial Environmental Assessments on controversial projects; and to demand the provincial government impose a moratorium on all new applications for gravel mining.

The Reform Gravel Mining Coalition (RGMC) formed to support communities to build the grass roots power necessary to win these demands. RGMC supports residents' groups to defend their communities from harmful and unnecessary gravel mining, with the long-term goal of winning regulatory and legislative reforms that safeguard health, water, and nature, guarantee community participation, and honour treaties and obligations with First Nations.

You Are Not Alone

We know first-hand how scary and overwhelming it can be to face a pit or quarry application in your community. If you are in this situation, you and your neighbours are likely worried about threats to your health, drinking water, quality of life, and other factors unique to your area. But you are not alone.

RGMC offers a supportive community, along with the collective knowledge and experience we have developed through many years of fighting pits and quarries. During this time, we have learned that while it is by no means easy, it is absolutely worth it to defend your community. The pit or quarry proposed in your area is NOT a done deal, even when the company or your Councillors may try to convince you that it is!

As a growing coalition of a dozen directly impacted groups, we have also learned that when we work together as a coalition, we have a far better chance of winning our demands than when each group acts alone. In addition, elevating our advocacy and organizing to the provincial level has been essential to achieving important wins.

This booklet draws on the collective knowledge and experience of community opposition to gravel mining, with the aim of providing an orientation to residents' groups that are fighting pits or quarries for the first time.

This booklet is designed to help you:

1. Get an overview of the gravel mining application process.
2. Learn about the steps involved in creating a plan to defend your community.
3. Learn how to work with RGMC to get the support you need.

1. THE GRAVEL MINING APPLICATION PROCESS: WHAT TO EXPECT

An application to open a gravel mining operation in Ontario consists of two coordinated processes: an application for a license under the Aggregate Resource Act (ARA), which is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), a provincial body; and a Municipal rezoning application, which is considered by your Municipal Council and may also be accompanied by an application for an amendment to the Official Plan. During these processes, there are generally three opportunities for public input:

1. Letter writing to the Ministry opposing the license application under the Aggregate Resources Act (ARA).
2. Outreach, written submissions and deputations to your Municipal Council asking them to refuse the applications for rezoning and Official Plan amendments.
3. Filing an appeal of the rezoning decision at the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), a legal process.

RGMC helps to guide groups through each of these steps, which usually take place over the course of several years.

The process chart on page 4 provides an overview of the phases of the gravel mining application process, from the time a company submits an application, to the moment your municipality decides whether or not to rezone the land to permit aggregate extraction, to possible hearings at the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). The exact timeline for these activities differs for each group and will be determined in conjunction with your lawyer. For groups that are just beginning the process, it can be helpful to have an overview of how it proceeds. For groups that are already engaged in opposing a pit or quarry, it can be helpful to locate your position on the chart and evaluate whether you are taking the most effective actions at this stage.



1 Please note that the following chart reflects the process for an Aggregate License. An Aggregate License is required to operate a pit or quarry on private land in designated areas, and is issued under the Aggregate Resources Act (ARA). In contrast, on Crown Land and for all extraction from land under natural bodies of water, an Aggregate Permit is required.

THE GRAVEL MINING APPLICATION PROCESS

**P
H
A
S
E**

Planning Act

Official Plan & Zoning
Bylaw Amendment

Aggregate Resources Act

License application
through MNRF

Duty to Consult First Nations

1

Proponent pre-consults with municipality & provides a list of studies to be conducted

Application deemed complete

Submit application
(Municipal/Agency review)

Statutory Public Meeting

Application

Public notice to residents
within 120 metres

Objection comment period
(60 days)

Proponents' response to
residents (up to 2 years)

Proponent
must initiate
consultation
with First
Nations

2

Municipal Council decision or
non-decision

Objection forms

Minister referral to OLT

3

File appeal or register as
party to appeal (within 20
days)

Case Management Conference

Consolidation of OLT proceedings

Consultation
with First
Nations
continues
throughout the
gravel mining
application
process

4

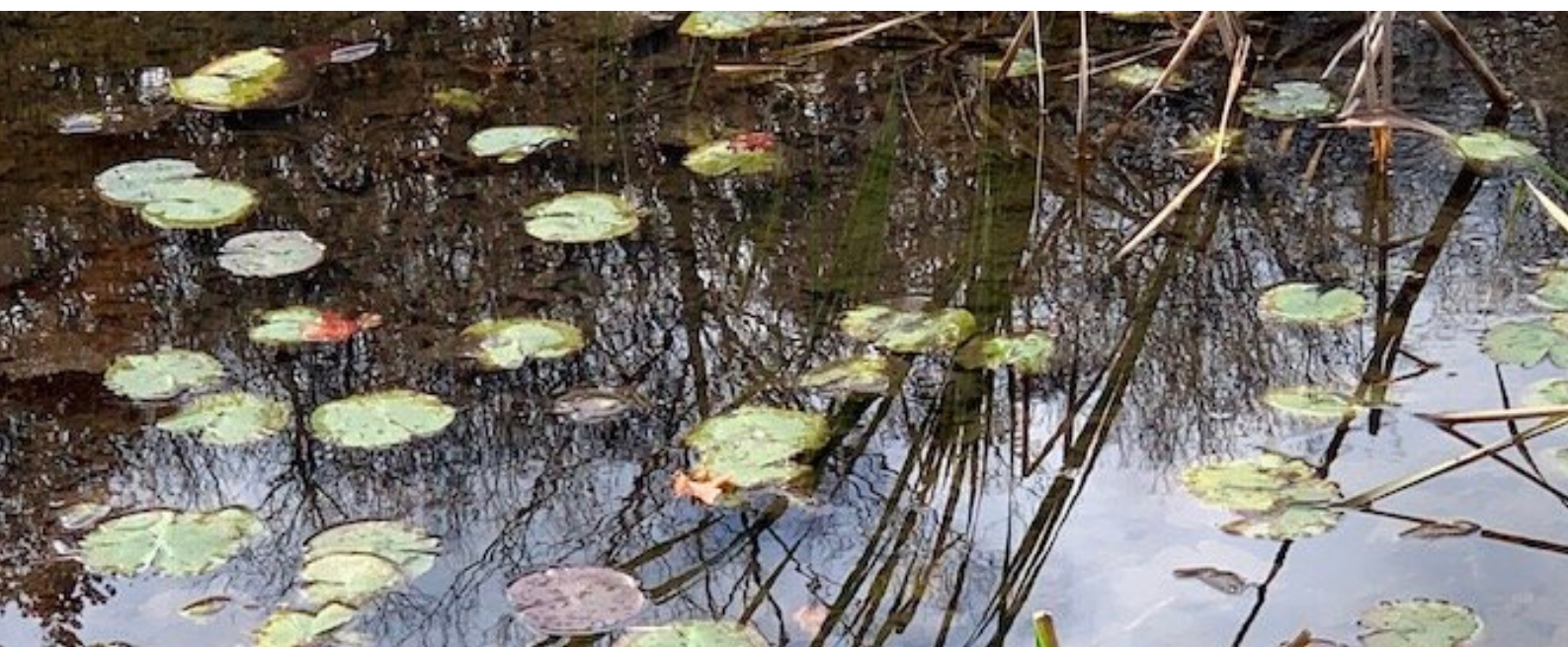
OLT hearing

2. COMMUNITY ACTION

TO STOP PITS & QUARRIES

As a company tries to obtain a license to operate a pit or quarry, there are proactive steps that groups can take to fight back and ensure that community voices are heard at each step of the way. The process chart on page 7 provides an overview of the legal and technical actions that RGMC recommends at each stage of the gravel mining application process.

The legal and technical actions that community groups can take to oppose a pit or quarry are relatively formal and standardized. In contrast, the public campaign is a creative effort that is unique to each local group. The public campaign is the way that a group mobilizes public support to build people power and put pressure on decision-makers with the aim of winning clearly defined demands. The following section, 'Working with RGMC to Defend Your Community,' provides an overview of the steps involved in planning and implementing an effective public campaign.



COMMUNITY ACTION TO STOP PITS & QUARRIES

Phase	Legal	Technical
1	<div>Incorporate residents' group and retain lawyer</div> <div>Begin researching issues for OLT hearing</div> <div>Begin drafting submissions for OLT</div>	<div>Survey issues for OLT hearing</div> <div>Select issues for hearing and obtain initial opinions from experts</div>
2	<div>Finish researching issues and drafting submissions for OLT</div>	<div>Finish selecting issues for hearing and obtaining opinions from experts</div>
3	<div>File appeal or register as party to appeal (within 20 days of municipal decision)</div> <div>Establish issues</div>	<div>Obtain witness statements</div> <div>Conduct expert studies</div>
4	<div>OLT hearing</div>	<div>Expert testimony</div>

3. WORKING WITH RGMC

TO DEFEND YOUR COMMUNITY

RGMC is a grass roots coalition led by a volunteer Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is made up of leaders of local groups that are defending their communities from gravel mining. RGMC is also an incorporated organization with staff members who offer support to community groups in areas like campaign development, communications, political advocacy, fund raising, and more.

To provide this support, RGMC relies on a cooperative funding model. In this cooperative funding model, the community groups that make up the coalition contribute according to their capacity and the types of support they need. When groups are first starting out, RGMC offers free initial guidance to help them get off their feet. Later, when groups have gained a solid footing, RGMC is available to help them develop and implement a fund raising plan with the aim of covering their contribution to the coalition as well as other financial needs. The contribution of each local group enables RGMC to provide initial assistance to new groups free of charge. Groups will not be turned away due to lack of funds.

During the orientation period, RGMC helps groups to become more familiar with the gravel mining application process, to understand their options and next steps, and to begin to develop a plan for opposing the project that is threatening their community.

After the orientation period, interested groups reach an agreement with RGMC regarding the types of support the group will receive as well as the monthly contribution the group can offer. The agreement can be revised as needs and capacities change over time.

The following outline provides an overview of the steps involved in creating a public campaign to fight a pit or quarry. You can also think of this as a menu of options for support that you can choose from when creating your agreement with RGMC.



PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS TO STOP PITS & QUARRIES

Organizational set-up

- Establish organizational leadership roles
- Create committees and recruit volunteers
- Join RGMC

Develop Campaign Strategy

- Assess your community's situation in the face of the gravel mining application.
- Set campaign goals and demands (see the section below to learn about the demands that RGMC recommends groups make to their municipal Councils and MPPs).
- Research and identify your primary targets (those who have the power to stop the pit or quarry), as well as your secondary targets (those who have the power to influence primary targets).
- Identify allies and opponents.

Develop Advocacy & Action Plan

- Develop a campaign timeline.
- Develop a community outreach plan. This may include a petition, lawn signs, leaflets, community meetings, and more.
- Develop actions and tactics to influence primary and secondary targets in support of your demands. This will likely include delegating to your municipal Council and engaging your MPP.

Develop communication strategy

- Define your story
 - Identify high moral ground
 - Define key values and messages
- Identify audiences and adapt key messages to specific audiences
- Identify communications channels
- Develop a news and social media strategy

Develop and implement communication plan

- Develop your organization's brand, including a logo
- Develop materials, which may include:
 - Backgrounder
 - Lawn Sign
 - Leaflet/flyers
 - Newsletter
- Distribute targeted messages to targeted audiences
- Provide communication training to volunteers

Develop and implement fund raising plan

- Define your fund raising goal
- Identify your target donors
- Develop a strategy to engage target donors
- Consider partnership with Small Change Fund

DEMANDS:

RGMC recommends that community groups make the following demands:



Lobby your municipal Council for:

- a) Interim Control Bylaw (See RGMC's Municipal Action Plan)
- b) Vote no on rezoning
- c) Pass a resolution supporting moratorium on all new gravel mining applications
- d) Support request to MPP for an Environmental Assessment



Lobby your MPP to:

- a) Request that the proposed site to be designated for an Environmental Assessment
- b) Support a moratorium on all new gravel mining applications



Lobby MP to support federal regulations that may apply to protecting environment and species

THE ROAD AHEAD WITH RGMC

If you decide to work together with RGMC, you will have the opportunity to link your fight against pits and quarries in your community to a growing provincial movement to win a new standard for gravel mining in Ontario. The following chart outlines RGMC's current strategy, both for defending communities from gravel mining at the local level, as well for winning a moratorium on new gravel mining approvals at the provincial level.

DEFEND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Campaign support to build local community capacity

- Communications
- Community outreach
- Government outreach
- Fundraising

Win municipal support to oppose application(s)

- Advocacy to ensure that Bill 23's OLT fiscal chill policy is not proclaimed

Win policy improvements

- Improve municipal bylaws on issues like air quality and noise

Stall applications until next provincial elections

- ICBL
- Environmental Assessment
- Impact Assessment / Canadian Wildlife Service Intervention
- Environmental Compliance Approvals
- First Nations outreach

WIN PROVINCIAL MORATORIUM

Make the problem visible

- Air pollution
- Cumulative impact mapping
- Unfair OLT process
- Corporate capture

Make the opposition visible

- Media
- Reform Gravel Mining Rock Tour

Change the narrative

- Challenge industry and government narrative
- Transition away from aggregates

Build broad-based alliances

- First Nations
- Municipalities
- Farm organizations

Win opposition party commitments

Build coalition capacity

CONCLUSION

We hope this booklet has helped to orient you to the process of defending your community from an aggregate mining project. We are excited to work together to preserve all that makes your community special, and to protect lives and the environment from gravel mining across Ontario.

We would like to acknowledge the RGMC Steering Committee for inspiring and shaping the content of this booklet; Mike Balkwill, RGMC Campaign Director, and Susan Lloyd Swail, for writing and input; and Sam Demby, RGMC Communications Director, for writing and design.

Each community group that comprises RGMC is living on and enjoying the benefits of Indigenous land. As a coalition that is at present comprised largely of white settlers, we are currently engaged in a process to deepen our internal education as well as strengthen our strategy for working with First Nations partners to support their rights to sovereignty and consultation.

If you have questions or would like to discuss working with RGMC, please contact us at: campaign@reformgravelmining.ca.

