

## FRIENDS OF LEITRIM WETLAND

### DEVELOPERS OF FINDLAY CREEK VILLAGE FACING CHARGES

February 13, 2009 -- For immediate release

Court documents show that Findlay Creek Properties Ltd., a numbered company, Taggart Construction Limited and Michael E. Taggart – developers and operators of Findlay Creek Village at Leitrim Wetland – have been charged by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment with seven offences under the *Ontario Water Resources Act*. One alleged offence concerns providing false or misleading information to the Ministry, another is failure to comply with an Order and five are for illegally taking water during 29 days over a period of six weeks in September and October of 2007.

If convicted, penalties for the first two offences could range from a minimum of \$5,000 each for Mr. Taggart and a \$25,000 minimum for the corporations, to a maximum of \$4 million and \$6 million respectively. Penalties for illegal water taking carry no minimum but could be as high as \$50,000 for Mr. Taggart and \$250,000 for the corporations.

The charges were sworn on August 13, 2008. The next court appearance (at the Elgin Street court house) is March 4, 2009 for a pre-trial hearing.

Individuals associated with the Friends of Leitrim Wetland had alerted the Ministry about possible illegal water taking. As a result, a Report and Provincial Officer's Order was issued on October 26, 2007 and the Ministry's Investigation and Enforcement Branch initiated an investigation. That the Ministry now decided to lay charges illustrates the value of individual volunteers and citizen groups becoming actively involved in environmental and community issues.

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For further information, please contact **Iola Price** at **613 - 746-6145**.

#### Background information

The text of the charges and sworn statement are available at <http://greenspace-alliance.ca/node/442>.

For general background on the Friends' long fight to save Leitrim Wetland, please visit <http://greenspace-alliance.ca/leitrim>.

*The Friends of Leitrim Wetland includes members of Sierra Club Canada, the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club and the Coalition for a Healthy Ottawa.*