

# Findlay Creek builders cited for excessive water removal

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Findlay Creek Village legally sits upon the Leirtrim Wetlands, but several environmental groups are worried more construction to expand the development will harm the protected area of the wetlands.

The village and wetlands are located between Albion Rd. and Bank St., south of Leirtrim Road.

Findlay Creek is in stage one of its construction and during October it was found that the companies involved were extracting too much water from the wetland.

"This year we issued a provincial officer's order to three companies: Findlay Creek Properties Ltd., Taggart Construction Limited and 1374537 Ontario Ltd., and the order requires that the water taken

from the site doesn't exceed 50,000 litres a day until such time as a permit is issued by the Ministry of Environment," said John Steele, Spokesman for the Ontario Ministry of Environment. "The order also required the company to submit weekly water records to the Ottawa office that confirms no more than 50,000 litres a day has been taken from the Wetlands area. We received a complaint from someone and after investigating that complaint we issued an order and we also referred it on to the investigation/enforcement branch for possible charges."

The report states that on October 22 the Ministry of the Environment received an e-mailed complaint and on October 23 and 24 the ministry requested information about pumping, volume records.

"On Oct. 25, 2007, Mike Taggart provided water taking volumes from Sept. 10, 2007, to Oct. 22, 2007, for the Findlay Creek extension in which water taking was greater than 50,000 L/day on 29 occasions without a valid Permit To Take Water," says the report.

Provincial regulations allow the pumping 50,000 litres of water a day from one location; a ministry permit is required for more.

Representatives of Findlay Creek Properties Ltd. and Taggart Construction Limited did not respond to inquiries before deadline.

"There is no construction at the stage where they want to drain the land in order to start the construction," said Erwin Dreesen, speaking on behalf of the Friends of Leirtrim Wetlands. "They are extending the road to start work there and so the first thing they have to

do is drain the land they intend to purchase on. Where they want to build, what they call stage two, is in fact in the wetlands, a section north of the so called protected wetlands."

The Friends of Leirtrim Wetland, made up of members of different organizations such as the Sierra Club of Canada and the Green-space Alliance of Canada's Capital, would like to see the construction on the wetlands stopped and they plan to seek leave to appeal to a Ministry of Environment tribunal if the ministry allows the permit.

"The developer has applied with the Ministry of Environment for a permit over the next two years to pump up to 1.7 million litres a day," said Mr. Dreesen. "This is very worrisome to the Friends of Leirtrim." Though no construction is

planned on the protected wetland area, Mr. Dreesen said the groups are concerned the pumping will still damage its unique bio diversity.

"We received a report from Dr. Clarke Jopp, Canada's foremost soil physicists, with the background of his findings, as well as his report," he said. "His findings are quite unambiguous. He took actual measurements on the site and he found that the drainage that has already taken place, in order to build stage one of the development of the village had impacted the wetland. I'm talking about the portion of the wetland that is supposedly protected wetland."

"We remain hopeful that we will be able to save Leirtrim Wetlands because the latest research shows that it is endangered," Mr. Dreesen added.

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