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Gravel Watch Ontario Releases Review of SAROS papers

Gravel Watch Ontario today released *Review of SAROS: A Sustainability-Based Review of the Ministry of Natural Resources 2009 State of the Aggregate Resource in Ontario Study (SAROS)*. This Review presents an initial analysis of the six papers that comprise the MNR SAROS study.

Gravel Watch Ontario congratulates the Ontario Government for undertaking this work and for its stated commitment to gather the most up to date information and current science on the present status and characteristics of aggregate resources.

Review of SAROS was commissioned by Gravel Watch Ontario in order to provide for a broader stakeholder viewpoint. The SAROS papers themselves were authored by organizations with a long working history as part of the aggregate industry in Ontario. Gravel Watch Ontario believes that input from a wider and more diverse audience is critical to appropriate decision making.

In the recently released Consensus Recommendations made to the Minister of Natural Resources by the Aggregate Resource Advisory Committee, the SAROS report was described as an important “first step in an effort to increase knowledge and understanding of aggregates.” The Committee goes on to describe a need for government to “work with its partners to set a strategic course to address the issues, the obstacles and the knowledge gaps so that a strategic roadmap can emerge for effective and sustainable aggregate resource management”. Gravel Watch Ontario agrees with this characterization that the SAROS papers represent a “first step” and would add that in some ways the papers raise more questions than they answer.

Review of SAROS supports the Committee’s recommendations by identifying future steps for addressing some of the issues highlighted by the Committee and by bridging some of the knowledge gaps acknowledged by the Committee. This is especially important work in light of the ongoing aggregate issues being debated in communities across Ontario as well as the process of updating the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement which is currently underway.

Gravel Watch Ontario commissioned this review of the SAROS Report’s six papers based on the MNR’s vision of achieving a “healthy environment through sustainable development” and its stated commitment to “conserve biodiversity and use natural resources in a sustainable manner” (MNR Strategic Directions 2005). The MNR emphasis on sustainability was the basis for Gravel Watch Ontario undertaking the review through the lens of sustainability. Gravel Watch Ontario believes that the recommendations included in the *Review of SAROS* are an important next step in achieving that vision.

Gravel Watch Ontario acts in the interests of residents and communities to protect the health, safety, quality of life of Ontarians and the natural environment in matters that relate to aggregate resources.

Background documents:

Gravel Watch Ontario Review of SAROS

<http://www.gravelwatch.org/orig-gw/saros/100716-Master-Final-SAROS-Review-GWO-TM.pdf>

Gravel Watch Ontario “SAROS Predicts the Past”

<http://www.gravelwatch.org/orig-gw/saros/100630-gwo-critique-consolidated-rept.pdf>

Overview of SAROS by Gravel Watch Ontario: <http://www.gravelwatch.org/saros.htm>

SAROS reports on MNR website: <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Aggregates/2ColumnSubPage/286708.html>

MNR Strategic Directions 2005: <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/About/2ColumnSubPage/200238.html>

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