History of the Puslinch Project

This 464-acre site was originally to be purchased by the University of Guelph, University of Toronto, McMaster University and the University of Western Ontario as an equine research site. The other universities ultimately decided not to participate in the project, so Guelph purchased the property on its own in 1969 as a veterinary research station. In the late 1980s, the University determined that the land would no longer be used for teaching and research. The land also turned out to be a significant aggregate resource, and the University was looking for additional sources of revenue to supplement its operating budget funds. The property had been designated a "potential extraction" on the Puslinch Township's Official Plan. In 1987, the land was leased to St. Lawrence Cement. Today, Holcim Canada, and Dufferin Aggregates, their subsidiary, operates the project. The University chose St. Lawrence because it has a solid reputation for environmental management and protection. In 1991, the University obtained a license to allow for aggregate mining on the land following a two-year Ontario Municipal Board hearing. The University continues to hold the license. Holcim Canada now supplies the local and greater Toronto markets with a high quality aggregate. The operation is expected to continue for the next 15 to 20 years Proceeds from leasing the land go to the University's Heritage Trust Endowment Fund, which is used to fund strategic, one-time investments that otherwise would have to be funded from the University's operating budget. This includes student scholarships; academic endeavours that support students, such as classroom renovations and acquisition of technology and library materials; and capital projects, including renovations to academic buildings.