

## SINCE OUR LAST UPDATE

### We're Forging New Partnerships

**1. Transport Action Ontario** (formerly Transport 2000 Ontario) has issued a strongly worded Response to Transport Canada's *Needs Assessment Study: Pickering Lands* and to then Finance Minister Flaherty's June 11, 2013, announcement. The Response argues for preserving the farmland and replacing short-haul domestic air travel with intercity rail. It concludes: "Existing airports should continue to serve, and to concentrate on, long-haul continental and inter-continental travel. Since air transport is a heavy polluter and land consumer, transportation investment should concentrate on more sustainable modes of travel. Canada's federal government should support and promote rail as the choice for short and medium distance passenger transportation and for a larger portion of freight transport." We agree! Read the Response on the Be Informed! page of our website.



Rail could also transport fresh food from fields to downtown Toronto via the Havelock Line, which runs right through the middle of the Federal Lands. This freight train is about to cross Sideline 22 on the Lands. Photo by Gordon McGregor.

**2. We're embarking on a partnership with Durham Takes Action**, a forward-thinking group of young people with a sustainable vision for the future. They are definitely thinking outside the box and we're happy to be connected. Check them out at [www.durhamtakesaction.ca](http://www.durhamtakesaction.ca)

### SUPPORTERS, CHECK YOUR DATA!

Since June 11, 2013, our supporter numbers have grown by leaps and bounds. In fact, it's been hard to keep up. Names and contact info are coming in from many sources, by many routes, and are sometimes incomplete or tricky to read.

By mid-April, you should be able to access your data via a menu on the Contact page of our website. Please take a moment to check that your personal information is accurate. Make sure that your municipality is there. If we have this information we can target messages to you, such as announcements of a meeting or an event in your area.

### ANOTHER PLACE, ANOTHER MOTION!

On March 3, Uxbridge Council unanimously passed a resolution calling for (a) federal government transparency and clarification regarding plans for the Federal Lands and the proposed Pickering Airport; (b) support for agricultural priorities; (c) respect for the Federal Greenspace undertakings and Provincial Greenbelt and Moraine policies on land outside the proposed airport site; (d) a public review of any business case; and (e) a comprehensive Environmental Assessment before any final decisions are made to proceed with an airport.

Thank you, Uxbridge!

## **WE'VE BEEN BUSY! AND WE'RE GOING TO BE BUSY!**

And we couldn't do it without you. Special thanks to volunteers who have attended events with us: Marcus Howse, Geoff Norris, Justine and Jilliane Geroche, I. Pechenkov, and many, many others. You've been wonderful!

### ***Where we've been:***

- Richmond Hill: United Church
- Claremont: Winter Carnival
- Stouffville: Probus Club
- Stouffville: WSCEC screening of the documentary "FRESH"
- Guelph: Ontario Farmland Trust conference
- York University: Regenesis Farmers' Market
- Pickering: Dunbarton High School's Water Week
- Toronto: Eastern GTA Eco Summit at Uof T, Scarborough Campus
- Bombardier Infrastructure Series: Lisa Raitt, Minister of Transport, discussed Canada's transportation future. Pickering Airport wasn't mentioned.
- Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, with Justin Trudeau

### ***Where we're going:***

- Shelburne: Food and Water First Public Meeting, April 5, hosted by Dale Goldhawk
- King City: "What Are We Leaving Our Children?" event, featuring Ontario's three major coalition environmental groups: the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance (OGA), Save The Oak Ridges Moraine (STORM), and Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE); April 9, open to the public  
<http://debbieschaefer.ca/2014/03/an-evening-in-support-of-our-conservation-plans-what-are-we-leaving-our-children/>
- Unionville High School to meet members of Eco-Action
- Markham Museum: Farm to Table exhibition  
<http://friendsofmarkhammuseum.ca/projects/>

## **DOES CHANGE OF MINISTER MEAN CHANGE IN THE AIR?**

On March 18, as many had been predicting in recent weeks, Whitby-Oshawa MP Jim Flaherty resigned as Minister of Finance and head of the GTA caucus – positions he had held for 8 years under Prime Minister Harper. He was replaced in both roles by the Hon. Joe Oliver, Eglinton-Lawrence, former Natural Resources Minister. Mr Flaherty's departure leaves many wondering whether last year's announcement of renewed plans for a Pickering Airport wasn't, in fact, all about presenting himself with a "legacy project." But this is the 21st century! If there's a choice, sustainability must trump legacy every time.

## **PRESENCE**

Toronto film-maker Geoff Norris, who grew up in North Pickering, is making an indie film about the battle to save the Lands and the impact this battle has had on his life. And yes, Land Over Landings is featured. Like many "children of the Lands," Geoff spent his youth in the shadow of an airport, and grew up to be a committed, caring citizen with a passion for social justice, an example of the maxim to "think globally, but act locally." He has an Indiegogo campaign under way to seek crowd-sourced funding for his film. For info on PRESENCE and the campaign, go to: <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/presence--2>.

Give what you can to this talented young artist and his exciting project!

## **Food for Thought**

***A just-released report from the United Nations states that biofuel crops grown on a large scale require either converting agricultural land from food crops, or destroying forests to free up land for such crops. By doing this, we may be offsetting any reduction in carbon emissions from the use of the fuels. In other words, when we produce such fuels all we're doing is robbing Peter to pay Paul.***

## **LAND OVER LANDINGS Because food is a *GROWING* concern**

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