Escalation of Permitting Overlaps

To operate in Alberta, sand and gravel pits are required to have a provincial approval from Alberta Environment and Parks (EAP), and a development permit approval from the local County or Municipal District. Alberta is one of the few jurisdictions in Canada where a dual permitting system is still enacted. In most other provinces and territories, sand and gravel remain mineral rights owned and overseen by their respective provinces. As a result, municipalities in those other provinces are obligated to approve any sand and gravel development already approved by their respective province or territory. Municipalities, thus, only regulate haul routes and their usage.

In recent years, the ASGA continues to perceive a blurring of the permitting requirements between provincial and municipal bodies. Where municipalities should be focused upon land use compatibility issues such as noise, dust, and traffic, we see a significant shift toward items historically overseen by EAP. These items include, but are not limited to, the following: securities to ensure reclamation, reports on ground and surface water impacts as well as monitoring, soil assessments, wildlife studies and mining setbacks. The appearance of arbitrary design criteria is also increasing, such as pit size limitation, berms, and requirements around paving of haul roads. Some of these requirements are becoming so onerous that smaller sites are becoming uneconomic to operate and nonrenewable resources are being sterilized from responsible development. Currently, there are some 9-12 municipalities which have sand and gravel bylaws in place or under development encompassing some aspects of provincial jurisdiction. This is no longer an isolated event, but a widespread phenomenon.

A patchwork of overlapping and differing requirements ultimately serves no one. As such, we would welcome a joint committee, task force or working group struck between the ASGA, EAP, Municipal Affairs (MA) and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) to work toward permitting consistency and to clarify jurisdictional obligations and requirements. The ultimate goal would be for this group to develop solutions and strategies for orderly development and to achieve less sterilization of this vital nonrenewable resource across the province of Alberta.

- Travis Coates & Brock Helm

AGM 2016 Sponsorships Still Available

Even though the AGM 2016 Tradeshow is officially sold out of exhibit space, the ASGA is still looking for event sponsors!

With nearly 200 delegates in attendance at last year’s function, the ASGA AGM presents an excellent opportunity for your company to network and gain exposure within the industry.

Without the generosity of sponsors, we would not be able to make this event a success. If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact the ASGA office for more details.
The Calahoo/Villeneuve Gravel Extraction Committee was initiated in 2003 during community discussions with industry and Sturgeon County about major expansion plans for aggregate operations in the area. Public open houses and meetings with individuals outlined the need for a committee where industry representatives, public members, and County councillors could have a venue to discuss aggregate issues in the community.

Enacted as a County Bylaw, The Calahoo Villeneuve Area Structure Plan (ASP) was also a result of negotiations and agreement between the Municipal regulator (Sturgeon County), industry, and the public. This plan established a number of items such as setbacks from single and multi-lot residences, timelines for extraction, haul routes, and berm locations. Not all items have stayed the same from when the ASP was implemented in 2001, but through the Committee, slight adjustments are recommended and then approved by Sturgeon County. The requests for minor changes from industry or the public can be vetted through the Committee, who also facilitates communication with adjacent residents; however, major changes to operations still require approval from Sturgeon County and/or AEP depending on the nature.

As a key component of the ASP, funds are collected from aggregate operators in the area to assist the local communities impacted by aggregate operations. These funds first started as a voluntary contribution in 2003, then became part of the CAP (Community Aggregate Payment) Levy enacted through the Municipal Government Act in 2006. Since then, funds have been distributed to Sturgeon County, the Sturgeon County Community Services Advisory Board, and local community groups on an annual basis through grant applications. Sturgeon County also had the foresight to allocate a small portion of CAP Levy monies to create a reserve fund for capital projects in the Villeneuve and Calahoo area. Recently, the Calahoo Hall Committee applied to the Extraction Committee to access funds in this reserve to help with the construction of their new community hall. A total of $400,000 was unanimously approved by Sturgeon County Council on October 27, 2015 to be given in support of the new hall. As per the ASP, “The primary purpose for the Fund will be to finance capital projects and community improvements that will provide the maximum benefit to residents in close proximity to sand and gravel extraction operations, resulting in positive public relations for sand and gravel operators.”

The overall success of the Committee is due to understanding industry needs while incorporating innovative ideas to limit inconvenience to local residents – an approach that has all stakeholders working together. Another factor contributing to the success of the Committee is the allowance of some industry funds collected through CAP Levy to be distributed to communities effected most by industry operations. By supporting local initiatives such as West Sturgeon Aging In Place, Villeneuve Athletic Association, West Sturgeon Agricultural Society and the new Calahoo Hall project, residents can directly see how neighbouring aggregate operations support the community.

This financial support does not replace industry responsibility to best management practices or regulations, but rather enhances community relations, opportunities for regular communication, and potential for flexibility by all parties.

“The overall success of the Committee is due to understanding industry needs while incorporating innovative ideas to limit inconvenience to local residents.”

- Dale Soetaert, ASGA Director
Truck Registry

STATISTICS

As of October 31, 2015
Total Complaints YTD: 605
Total Trucks Registered YTD: 1914

Complaints By Type

Miscellaneous/ Other complaints commonly include incidents related to illegal parking, passing and other issues regarding the safe operation of ASGA-registered trucks.

Complaint Volume
COMMITTEE

Updates

Health and Safety
Kent Santo, Committee Chair

The committee continues to work with the government on pertinent areas of Alberta’s Occupational Health and Safety Code review, such as Part 36. Another area where efforts have been concentrated is in furthering silica safety and awareness. Committee representatives have continued to combine efforts with the Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association (ARHCA) in conducting a membership survey on silica, and will be undertaking data analysis and reporting. Silica safety sessions were held in both Calgary and Edmonton at the beginning of November.

We are pleased to announce that Wayne Woodhouse of Stony Valley Construction was elected to Co-Chair the committee alongside Kent Santo. Three new members have also recently joined the committee: Shelly Peterson, Kevin Kripps, and Trevor Carroll.

In other news, the H&S committee is developing a safety checklist to share with our members, is updating the committee Terms of Reference and other governing documents, and is seeking participation on the Alberta Construction Safety Association (ACSA) Board Of Directors. Keep an eye on the Safety section of the Member’s website for new resources as they become available.

Land and Environment
Brock Helm, Committee Chair

As Alberta Environment and Parks (EAP)’s review of the province’s Sand and Gravel Program continues, our committee continues to work with those involved to stay updated and provide input on behalf of the industry.

At the beginning of November, members of the ASGA Board of Directors and ASGA Executive Director met with the Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister of EAP to discuss a number of items such as approval timelines, frontline staffing, municipal/provincial overlap in permitting, performance bonds and the ongoing Sand and Gravel Program review.

The committee and EAP will be providing a detailed update on these activated at the upcoming AGM in January.

Events

ASGA AGM 2016
January 13 & 14 2016
The Marriott at the River Cree
Edmonton

Program to be released Dec 1, registration to follow

Silica Hazard Awareness Sessions
(Nov 3 & 5)

At the beginning of November, the ASGA partnered with Svend Nielsen of Nielsen Consulting to host Silica Hazard Awareness sessions for a second year. The sessions were held in both Edmonton (Nov 3) and Calgary (Nov 5), and were well received by a diverse range of ASGA members. Thanks to all who came out!
In October 2014 I interviewed for the position of Executive Director for the Alberta Sand and Gravel Association. Shortly afterward, I became the Association’s principal professional, responsible for the provision of vision, planning and operational oversight.

Great! I got the job, now what?

My immediate mandate was to recruit the best possible colleague and put an ‘ASGA Team’ in place. Next priority was to further relationship building, and improve the ASGA websites. Fortunately, for this one, Lauren, Communications Coordinator, has been exceedingly successful. She’s worked on these initiatives and improvements since her start date in December 2014. I am so impressed with the difference made during her tenure thus far, and the additional amazing upgrades being planned.

I was fortunate enough to receive approval to recruit an additional part time person and brought Alyson Klatt into the mix - And what a great mix it is! Alyson handles the membership administration, truck registry, and monetary flow for the ASGA. Lauren and Alyson each bring a myriad of strengths to the office. The truth is, if not for these amazing ladies, I would be lost.

I also find it continuously motivating to realize how deeply committed the ASGA Board of Directors are to the sand and gravel industry. They are actively involved in addressing obstacles and capitalizing on opportunities for the diverse range of companies that ASGA represents. “Represent – Promote – Educate” really does define the ASGA!

In collaboration with the Board, exploration of partnerships to benefit the membership was selected as a year one priority. I am thrilled that the 2016 AGM will include two partnership announcements. I believe, whole-heartedly, that these initiatives will bring solid benefits to ASGA members.

Early on, I became convinced that engaging with Municipal Districts and Counties across Alberta was paramount to improving overall sand and gravel operations, accountability, and stewardship. ASGA is actively advocating for the incorporation of ASGA truck registration as a requirement in Road Haul Agreements. With this simple step, communities become partners in safety and accountability within – and beyond – their local jurisdictions.

Additional benefits are derived province wide through the ASGA committee dedicated to improving the health and safety of front line workers. I have accompanied these champions of safety as they engaged with Alberta government representatives during a time Alberta’s Occupational Health and Safety Code regulations were being reviewed. The progress made by government - and industry - on behalf of workers is commendable.

Our Land and Environment Committee remains active on a number of strategic initiatives. They are partnering with government to streamline the administration and timeliness of application approvals and renewals on behalf of the ASGA members. I feel privileged to be part of this important process.

I also wish to acknowledge my personal appreciation of ASGA’s Regular, Associate, Consultant, and County / Municipal District members. The success of this Association relies on a close working relationship with all of you. Thank You for making this past year so rewarding.

I Love My Job!

- Sandra Stemmer