

NDACT working to educate local residents on where exactly their food comes from

Written By PAULA BROWN

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A local organization is continuing their work of protecting prime farmland within the community as COVID-19 makes the existence of food insecurity even more apparent.

"When there's shortages of toilet paper on the shelves, what would happen if that was food?" questions Karren Wallace, chair of North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce (NDACT).

North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce or NDACT is an organization of local farmers and residents that work to change legislation and regulatory amendments, protecting both prime agricultural land and water sources. The taskforce was formed in 2009 to protect farmland in Melancthon, from a proposed mega-quarry and continues to do so today.

"We continue to fight for farmland and source water through legislative and regulatory changes and increasing awareness," said Wallace in an interview with the Free Press.

"The changes can't come at the local level, they have to come at the provincial level," said Wallace.

Like many other volunteer based organizations, all NDACT projects for 2020 have been restricted by COVID-19. While the group continues to work on letter writing campaigns and policy analysis, their "pounding pavement" initiatives such as the distribution of agricultural and environmental information packages to larger organizations closer to the city, and information stalls at farmers markets, have had to stop.

"We can't do that," said Wallace.

But, despite the restrictions on their own "food and water first" campaign Wallace said that she believes people are becoming more aware of where much of their food comes from throughout the pandemic.

"When you're off the farm for a generation or two or three, if you're not raised on a farm, it's really hard to understand exactly where your food does come from," said Wallace.

With shortages of demanded goods throughout the pandemic and NDACT's ongoing efforts to protect farmland, Wallace notes, "I don't think that we want to be a nation that is going to rely on someone else for our water and our food."

Continuing with their campaign for protecting prime agricultural land, NDACT is next hoping to organize a video of the mega-quarry story from 2009, furthering their fight for agricultural land in Ontario and the greenbelt.

"We have a resource here that I think most of the people don't realize how rare and how important it is," she concluded.