

# A Quarry on RDU Public Land?

The RDU Airport Authority (RDUAA) is considering allowing a private company to expand quarry operations on to public land, which would destroy the land for any viable future use by the airport or the community.

Instead of turning forested public land over to be exploited by a private company for profit, and for the short-term financial benefit of the airport, The Umstead Coalition, Triangle Off-Road Cyclists (TORC), and 10,000+ petitioners support development of an outdoor recreation and education destination (currently referred to as RDU Forest) that will be a long-term, sustainable, economic boost for the airport and all of Wake County -- enhancing quality of life for residents, attracting a qualified workforce and generating visitors.

## The Wake Stone Corporation Proposal is a “Sale” not a “Lease”

The Odd Fellows tract is a beautiful forested piece of land. Quarrying would remove the trees, then the dirt, then significant amounts of rock from the property. The private company sells the rock off-site for their private gain while cannibalizing public property. Public resources are removed from the site forever and sold as a commercial product. The public permanently loses physical parts of the land (trees, topsoil, rock). In addition, at the start of such a 'lease' the land is valued at millions. At the end of quarrying, the land is valued closer to \$0.00, with a huge public safety liability. That is an **irreversible** "SALE" of public resource that can never be regained.

## Loss of Economic Opportunity

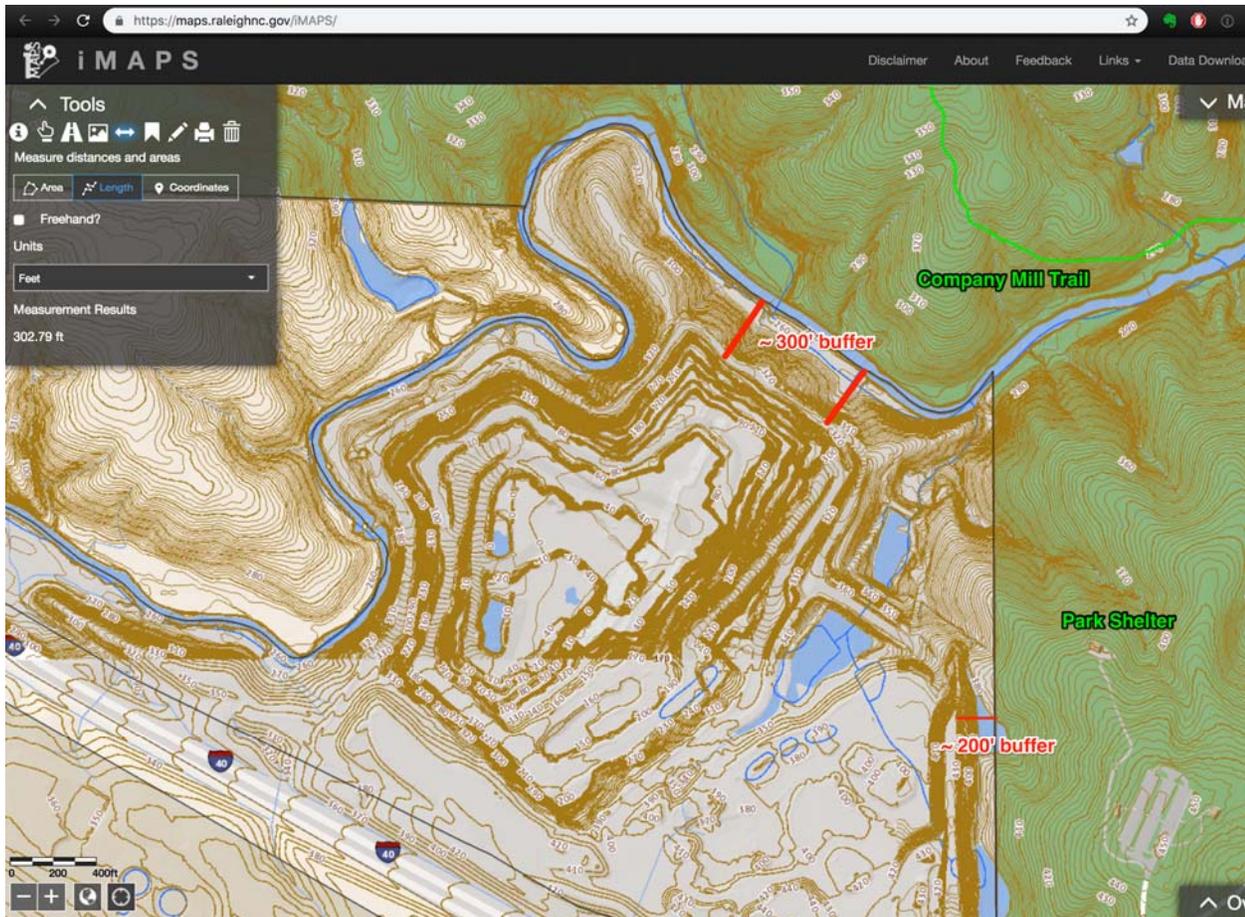
A quarry is counter to the economic development of the region - destroying the very recreational assets our residents and employees value and enjoy. Knowledge workers are the engine that drives the economy of the Triangle, and they highly value outdoor recreation - convenient and close - in such a central place.

## Inadequate Buffers and Watershed Protections

The current forested watershed (Odd Fellows tract) provides water quality and flood control protections for Crabtree Creek. Wake Stone is promoting a limited forested buffer and a berm around the perimeter of the new quarry pit.

A buffer less than 250' is not nearly enough to protect the beauty and experience of the Old Reedy Creek recreation corridor nor the border with Umstead State Park. The current quarry pit has much larger buffers between it and neighboring recreational areas. For comparison, the buffers for the current pit are roughly:

- 250' of forested undisturbed buffer between the Northeast side of the current pit and Crabtree Creek
- 200' of forested buffer (100 foot undisturbed, plus vegetated berm) between the East side of the quarry clearing and the Umstead Park border



## Loss of an Important Recreational Asset

RDUAA and Wake Stone are proposing to mine the Odd Fellows tract for 25-35 plus years, then donate **some** of the land to Wake County or State Parks, and make it a greenway connection. This proposal is not only unrealistic, but also undesirable. A new quarry pit would destroy the natural beauty of the Odd Fellows tract, permanently obliterate the dense hardwood forest and rolling terrain, pollute the waters and leave the community with an unwanted second pit (a permanent liability).

Conservation Groups and North Carolina State Parks have the means and intent to buy and permanently preserve the Odd Fellows tract, establishing an immediate and enduring recreational and economic development asset for our community and thereby also protecting neighboring assets: Old Reedy Creek corridor and Umstead State Park.

## Not a Pretty Lake

The Wake Stone Corporation conceptual drawings are misleading and portray the quarry afterlife as a pretty lake, but that is unlikely. Because of very limited ground water recharge to the pit (as is the case at the existing Wake Stone quarry), the only source of water to fill the pit would be polluted stormwater runoff, with no flushing ability. The top edges of both pits are far higher than the elevation of Crabtree Creek. The result would be a polluted pit of water inaccessible to the public due to the large vertical rock face down to water.

## Demand for Rock

Do we really need another quarry so centrally located to Raleigh and RTP? Two other quarries exist within a closer drive to the RDU runway project site. Overburden is also readily available to RDUAA from another quarry.

Wake Stone cites the growth of our area and need for rock, but we haven't seen data to back up any kind of urgent supply/demand imbalance that cannot be met with other existing quarries.

The proposed new quarry will be significantly smaller than the existing Wake Stone pit. Is losing this irreplaceable community asset worth the relatively small incremental increase in local rock supply? Especially when additional rock can be affordably mined elsewhere?

Wake Stone cites with no evidence the advantage of their quarry as enabling shorter trips to job sites. According to Wake Stone 80% of its product is trucked to asphalt and concrete plants. A Google search of such plants shows no significant distance advantage for Wake Stone over other quarries in western Wake County. But keep in mind the huge downside: the longer this quarry is operational, the more heavy truck traffic we face on our **most congested local freeway** (I-40) during **the busiest time of day** (8:00 AM rush hour). We already experience a constant flow of truck traffic travelling to and from the I-40 Harrison Avenue exit during early morning rush hour.

The community has long waited for the end of the dusty, noisy, heavy trucks putting burdens on these busy roads and negatively impacting nearby workers and visitors to Umstead State Park. Expanding the quarry would exacerbate these traffic problems.

**Eight** other quarries operate in the Triangle area:

- Wake Stone: <https://www.wakestonecorp.com/locations/> - Wake Stone operates other quarries East of Raleigh (Knightdale) and Southwest of Raleigh (Moncure)
- Hanson: <https://www.lehighhanson.com/home/locations> - Hanson operates quarries in Northeast Raleigh, Northwest Raleigh (close to RDU and Umstead Park), and Holly Springs
- Martin Marietta <https://www.martinmarietta.com/locations/mid-atlantic/north-carolina-east-district/raleigh-durham-quarry/> Martin Marietta operates quarries in Fuquay-Varina, Garner, and practically "right across the street" from RDU airport off Highway 70. ***This is the closest quarry drive-wise to the RDU runway construction site, less than 2 miles.***

## Appropriate Use?

A quarry on this unique and pristine public land is bad public policy. It is up to the sponsor governments to inform their appointees an accurate assessment of what constitutes the public good. Wake County appoints persons to other boards and commissions with the expectation that the appointees are fully accountable to the county commission. Why is RDUAA different?

RDUAA was chartered to develop and operate an airport for the good of the citizens of Wake and Durham counties. That is its mission. Since RDUAA has declared it has no aeronautical use for the Odd Fellows tract, the appropriate next step is to allow other public agencies the opportunity to obtain



the tract, not turn it over to a private party. Wake County and the other governments must tell RDUAA they are “off mission” and to stop wasting public time and money on a quarry.

While the RDUAA oversees the land use, the land itself is public property under the jurisdiction of the four local governments: Raleigh and Durham City Councils, and Durham and Wake County Commissioners. It is therefore a community resource. If the Odd Fellows Tract is of no use to the RDUAA for airport operations, then the local government owners should facilitate public input and have a say in how this community resource is managed.

## Legacy

We urge Wake County and the RDUAA to enhance their legacy and create pride in their community. A short-sighted destroying of the Odd Fellows tract with a new quarry pit does not advance the public good.

RDU Forest, a forested recreation and education center, supports the eight priorities promoted in Wake County’s new Destination Strategic Plan. Sustainable, long-term revenue streams to RDU International Airport will be facilitated by development and tourism opportunities (and parking) associated with RDU Forest.

What attracts the China flight? What beckons employers to relocate or expand? What entices qualified workers to come and to stay? Certainly not an unnecessary new quarry that will destroy pristine forested open space located in the heart of our growing region. Recreation and educational amenities do attract, beckon, and entice!

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There is a better alternative to quarrying this land. The [RDU Forest Solution](#) is supported by over 11,000 signatories, local businesses and community organizations.