

Members of the Independent Expert Panel Visit Holcim (US), April 2009

Panel members Christoph Imboden, David Richards, and Daniel Gross visited 3 sites over 5 days. The visit allowed the panel to see operations spanning the full site lifecycle: A new extraction site, existing operating plant, and one plant and quarry undergoing permanent closure.

Sites Visited

- St. Genevieve: plant and quarry site, constructed wetlands area, conservation easement area. New plant which started its operation this summer.
- Holly Hill: existing quarry, wetlands area owned by Holcim, neighbouring Beidler Forest (operated by Audubon society).
- Dundee: existing quarry, constructed wetlands area. Site currently undergoing permanent closure.

People met

- Holcim (US) staff, both at corporate and plant level
- Audubon Society at Holly Hill
- Ozark Regional Land Trust at St. Genevieve
- Biodiversity consultants at St. Genevieve and Holly Hill



4 Holes Swamp adjacent to Holly Hill quarry

Visit Summary

- Biodiversity management is driven by local needs and there is good understanding of local requirements which very much depend on the lifecycle stage of the operations.
- Holly Hill demonstrates the role of long term partnerships and good community relations for the conservation of the adjacent 4 Holes Swamp, which was recently declared a Ramsar Wetland site. The plant works closely with the Audubon Society and there is an opportunity to define clear conservation related objectives in the planning of the rehabilitation of existing quarry site. Pro biodiversity measures taken 25 years ago were noted by the panel. This illustrated that the business case can be made for biodiversity conservation and allows going beyond the minimum required.
- St. Genevieve was rated by the panel as “an extraordinary project in all measures”. This new plant with highly competent and knowledgeable partners have conducted extensive (most complete and detailed seen so far) ecology studies as part of the permitting process and Holcim was required to establish a 2,200 acre conservation easement and create a wetland onsite. The plant works with a local conservation organization, Ozark Regional Land Trust, and there may be opportunities to complement this partnership to include others to develop clear conservation objectives for the easement area and its management. The panel recommends the development of an integrated, long term biodiversity plan for the entire site.
- In Dundee, where the site is undergoing closure, the options to enhance biodiversity through rehabilitation are limited due to, among others, the lack of a comprehensive integrated closure and rehabilitation plan because of the existing environmental

impact due to its historical operation and its potential future industrial use. While operating, the Dundee plant did create a wetland for water treatment (reduce hydrogen sulphide and total dissolved solids) and provide wildlife habitat. The resulting mosaic of ponds, marshes, streams offer a high biodiversity potential through the creation of a “biodiversity island”. The panel noted that considerable benefits could be derived from developing an active partnership with one or more conservation groups.