Outlook

Re: Question about campaign

From Smiths Falls Record-Journal <[redacted]>
Date Wed 2026-08-12 7:17 AM
To Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]>

I am thinking of skipping this story because, although important, it is above the voters' heads. Perhaps it would be best to present the positive; the future you can give Smiths Falls. Please provide this for an article

David Leonardo

On Wed, Aug 12, 2026 at 7:00 AM Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]> wrote:

> Hi David,
>
> Thank you. Before we leave the matter there, I would like to clarify a few points in writing so that there is a clear factual record of our exchange before anything is published.
>
> First, I want to make sure there is no ambiguity about my position: **I have not alleged that the MECP took no action in response to my report. I have specifically stated the opposite.**
>
> There was significant regulatory follow-up after I contacted the MECP. This included correspondence with the municipality, requirements for additional investigation, groundwater monitoring, soil testing, and changes relating to the compost site's approval documentation.
>
> My concern relates primarily to what occurred afterward, particularly the municipality's handling of subsequent test results showing contamination, the timing of their disclosure to regulators and public health officials, and the use of solicitor-client privilege in relation to some of those records.
>
> I also want to clarify something from your earlier email. You wrote:
>
> “The Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP) says they are without a complaint from you. Are they wrong?”
>
> I subsequently provided you with documentation showing direct correspondence from the responding MECP officer concerning the report I made and the issues I raised.
>
> Could you please provide the exact wording of the question you put to the MECP and the exact wording of the response you received, or otherwise clarify precisely what the Ministry told you when you said they were “without a complaint” from me?
>
> I ask because there may simply be a distinction in terminology, subject matter, or the particular MECP program or office that was contacted. However, given the documentation I have provided, I think it is important to understand precisely what the Ministry was asked and what it actually said.

Similarly, after I provided that documentation, you wrote: “So you were in contact with the MECP and there was no action from them.”

That was not what I had said, and I subsequently corrected that characterization and explained the significant action that followed.

I am not asking you to accept my interpretation of these events. Throughout our correspondence, I have offered to provide the underlying documents so that you can independently verify what occurred, and that offer remains open.

Finally, if information you receive from the Town, MECP, Health Unit, or another source materially contradicts anything I have told you, I would appreciate the opportunity to respond to that specific factual discrepancy and provide any supporting documentation before publication.

My only interest in sending this follow-up is to make sure my position and the documentary record are represented accurately.

Best regards,

Nate Morris

From: Smiths Falls Record-Journal <[redacted]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 8:32 PM
To: Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]>
Subject: Re: Question about campaign

I have it all

Thank-you

On Tue, Aug 11, 2026 at 7:07 PM Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]> wrote:

> Hi David,
>
> No, that is not what I’m saying. To clarify, there was significant action by the MECP in the year that followed.
>
> The Town had to spend more than $90,000 installing groundwater monitoring wells to address the contamination concerns, and it updated the composting site’s approval documentation to reflect the actual location of the site.
>
> In the email I shared with you, the MECP directed the Town to conduct delineation work and identify the source and extent of the contamination. The Town subsequently began that work and collected 10 soil samples, with the test results received on December 30, 2024.
>
> Those results showed that the situation was more serious than I had originally understood. Exceedances for heavy metals and petroleum hydrocarbons were identified at multiple locations across the site.
>
> What happened next is one of the aspects of this matter that concerns me most.

The Town had explicitly assured the MECP that it would provide the results of this testing. However, rather than immediately providing the December 30 results to the Ministry, the records were sent to the Town's solicitor, who also serves as the Town's Integrity Commissioner, at his office in Kingston.

Solicitor-client privilege was subsequently asserted over those records. They were withheld in response to Freedom of Information requests and, according to the documentation I have reviewed, were not provided to the MECP for approximately five and a half months.

So my concern is not that the MECP failed to act. There was significant regulatory follow-up, including groundwater monitoring, additional testing, and directions to investigate the contamination.

My concern is that once the Town obtained test results showing contamination that was more extensive than had previously been understood, those results were not promptly provided to the regulator despite the Town having represented that they would be. Instead, the records were routed through the Town's solicitor and withheld for months.

That distinction is important to understanding what I am alleging and why I believe the handling of these records warrants further scrutiny.

Perhaps most concerning, the Health Unit was also in communication with the municipality.

When public health officials later contacted the CAO seeking the test results, the CAO did not disclose the existence of the results being withheld under solicitor-client privilege. Instead, the municipality provided only test results that showed no contamination.

As a result, public health officials were not made aware at that time that the Town was already in possession of separate test results showing serious exceedances.

This had a significant consequence. The Health Unit subsequently issued the findings of its public health assessment stating that no evidence of contamination had been identified at the site. I contacted the Health Unit and advised them that this conclusion was not accurate because additional test results showing contamination existed and had not been provided to them.

The Health Unit then sought the relevant testing documentation from the MECP and subsequently issued a revised public health assessment correcting the record.

Again, I am not asking you to simply take my word for any of this. I have documentation supporting each of these statements, including the correspondence between the municipality, the MECP and public health officials, and I would be happy to provide it.

Best,
Nate

From: Smiths Falls Record-Journal <[redacted]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 6:22 PM
To: Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]>
Subject: Re: Question about campaign

So you were in contact with the MECP and there was no action from them. Did they explain why?

On Tue, Aug 11, 2026 at 6:06 PM Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]> wrote:

Hi David,

This is an internal email sent by MECP officer Greg Davis to the Town of Smiths Falls, informing the municipality that I had filed a report alleging the dumping of construction and demolition waste and associated heavy-metal contamination.

I want to highlight what I see as a serious problem with the way the complaint was handled. To properly investigate a report of potentially illegal dumping, I would have expected the responding officer to attend the site, document the conditions as they existed at the time, and preserve the available evidence before alerting the party that was the subject of the complaint.

Instead, the municipality was notified by email before that evidence was independently documented. That gave the Town an opportunity to alter the site by remove material before an enforcement officer could inspect it.

This is particularly significant because I also have internal municipal emails that document the Town subsequently taking steps to remove material and alter the site after becoming aware of the complaint.

I can provide those emails as well, along with the rest of the correspondence and supporting documentation.

Best,
Nate



From: Davis, Greg (MECP) <Greg.Davis@ontario.ca>
Sent: November 14, 2024 11:27 AM
To: Vanessa Bernicky <vbernicky@smithsfalls.ca>; Paul McMunn <pmcmunn@smithsfalls.ca>; Stephanie Clark <sclark@smithsfalls.ca>
Subject: RE: Smiths Falls Biochar Remediation Strategy

Good morning,

I received notification from an individual today that the Town's compost site has been used for construction and demolition disposal for 30 years. While I am not aware of this currently occurring but perhaps this did occur historically. Construction and demolition (or other?) waste disposal at this site would be considered illegal waste disposal. And going back to our meeting with other ministry staff recently to discuss the proposed use of the site as a snow disposal site and biochar operation there was mention of the site being contaminated. I assumed this was from the composting operation. If the composting operation is not the source of this contamination please confirm what is. As such have there been any delineation studies conducted to ensure no adverse effects are occurring, ie discharges off-site to the surrounding wetland, residential wells, etc. Please forward these reports to me. If these studies have not been completed this will need to be conducted as soon as possible through a detailed work plan.

Thank you,

Greg Davis
Environmental Compliance Officer | Badge 725| Ottawa District Office | Eastern Region
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks| Government of Ontario
(613) 866-0926 or greg.davis@ontario.ca

2430 Don Reid Drive, Unit 103
Ottawa ON K1H 1E1

From: Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 5:44 PM
To: Smiths Falls Record-Journal <[redacted]>
Subject: Re: Question about campaign

Hi David,

I find that odd, as I had extensive correspondence with the MECP responding officer, Greg Davis. When I raised concerns about the inadequacy of his initial response, I also had extensive correspondence with his superiors.

I have documentation of all of this, including my original report to the MECP, the responses I received, and the subsequent correspondence. I would be happy to share any of it with you.

Perhaps the best next step would be to have a brief online meeting so I can walk you through the documentation and we can discuss how best to proceed.

Best regards,
Nate

From: Smiths Falls Record-Journal <[redacted]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 5:02 PM
To: Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]>
Subject: Re: Question about campaign

The Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP) says they are without a complaint from you. Are they wrong?

David Leonardo

On Tue, Aug 11, 2026 at 3:29 PM Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]> wrote:

> Hi David, thank you for getting in touch. I'd be more than happy to discuss the concerns I've raised about the Smiths Falls water system with you.
>
> There are several different aspects to the concerns I've raised. These include contamination within the drinking water Intake Protection Zone, lead within parts of the Smiths Falls water distribution system, lead plumbing within individual homes, and serious concerns about how the municipality has handled and disclosed test results showing contamination.
>
> These issues also fall under different pieces of legislation and regulation, including the Clean Water Act and Ontario's drinking water regulations, and there is some overlapping responsibility between the MECP and public health officials. Because of that, it can become fairly complicated very quickly, so it may be easier to schedule a meeting, either in person or online, where I can walk you through the different issues and the supporting documentation.

With all that said, to directly answer the question in your email: yes.

In my role as Chief Technology Officer for the Rideau Roundtable, where I was leading the biochar initiative in partnership with the Town of Smiths Falls, I became aware that the Town had test results showing heavy metal contamination within the Intake Protection Zone that had not been properly disclosed to the MECP.

I urged the Town to report those results to the MECP. When they refused to do so, I reported the matter to the MECP myself in the fall of 2024.

That report led to a lengthy process involving the MECP and the Town. Ultimately, the MECP required the Town to submit a new, updated application for its compost site (ECA), which involved significant additional groundwater monitoring and soil testing.

I have quite a bit of documentation relating to all of this and would be happy to go through it with you and answer any questions you have. Please let me know what works best for you.

I have also attached a document containing a list of specific questions that I have invited Mayor Pankow and Council to meet with me in a public setting and address.

I would respectfully encourage you to consider putting these questions directly to Mayor Pankow and Council and seeking clear, substantive responses.

Best regards,

Nate Morris

From: Smiths Falls Record-Journal <[redacted]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 9:17 AM
To: Nathaniel Morris <[redacted]>
Subject: Question about campaign

Mr. Morris

A part of your campaign concerns the contaminated drinking water of Smiths Falls. Have you made a complaint about this to the Ontario ministry supervising the town's water?

David Leonardo