

CMC

KEEPING AN EYE ON WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR WASTE

AFTER IT LEAVES YOUR DRIVEWAY

Spring 2010

What is the Community Monitoring Committee?

The CMC is a citizen organization founded for the specific purpose of providing citizen monitoring of the Halifax Solid Waste Management Strategy through an agreement with Halifax Regional Municipality. There are fifteen members on the Community Monitoring Committee, nine elected by the Halifax Waste/Resource Society at its annual meeting and six appointed by the Halifax Regional Municipality Council.

The cornerstone of the Halifax Waste Management Strategy is diversion of waste from being buried in a landfill through source separation of organics, recyclables and construction & debris materials. The Halifax Waste Management Strategy is unique and widely examined for use in other jurisdictions and countries.

One monitoring role is for the Otter Lake Facility where solid waste is sorted, stabilized and disposed as inert and stable material. Community Monitoring Committee monitors the Halifax Waste Management Strategy that was prepared by the citizens of Halifax Regional Municipality and approved by Council in 1996.

How much is being buried?

The Residual Disposal Facility (RDF) is a modern day landfill owned by HRM and operated by contract with MIRROR since 1999 under approval of the Environmental Department. The amount of material deposited in the RDF is approximately 149,400 tonnes a year. Water volumes in HRM continue to decline from the 2005 peak of 163,000 tonnes to 149,400 in 2009. The cumulative total deposited in the RDF is approximately 1,644,735 tonnes after ten full years of use. The design length of use is 25 years.

How's Nine Mile River?

Surface water quality results continue to confirm that there are no off site impacts to Nine Mile River. A specialist consulting company undertakes this sampling and testing on a quarterly basis and its results are reported to CMC, HRM and Nova Scotia Environment.

There is a water monitoring program at the Otter Lake site and along the Nine Mile River including 15 surface and 52 groundwater well sampling and 30 testing locations. The sampling began in 1996 before the site was commissioned.

Diversion Targets

Diversion of waste material from the landfill is a key objective of the Halifax Waste Management Strategy as established by the Community Monitoring Committee. HRM reported in January that the current diversion rate is on target at 60%. This achievement is due in part to an energetic HRM public awareness program "the 10% challenge" encouraged and supported by the CMC and a positive response by the public.

An additional benefit to the diversion of waste material from the landfill was enabled by Council in 2007 by the creation of separate private licensed construction and debris (C&D) landfills. This council action led to the diversion of 40,000 tonnes per year away from the Otter Lake facility. This C&D waste represents 35% of all HRM waste and is expected to grow in volume.

How's the management plan for odour control?

Odour nuisance to the public is under control at the Otter Lake facilities. There is ongoing site monitoring for odour nuisance at the Otter Lake facilities in addition to the monitoring by CMC.

Odour management is ongoing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are currently in place two to three flares with the landfill gas being collected at over 100 wells throughout the landfill.

As previously reported, this landfill has a full gas collection and disposal system in place and is complemented with a system monitoring system.

Odour tends to be generated from methane gas, which occurs predominantly from decaying organic materials. This landfill is almost devoid of organic materials because of the homeowner organic bin sorting and general refuse sorting at the landfill Front End Processor (FEP).

CMC has a continuing interest in the cover material, MATRIX, and the residual from the waste stabilization unit (organics reduction to stabilization) both of which are used and buried on a daily basis as potential contributors to methane.

Western Commons Planning Exercise

Research and Information are presently being gathered to examine the future use of the landfill site in the context of the Wilderness Park for the Western Commons. We expect to receive an update in May 2010.

Other Related Activities

HRM has approved an upgrade to the Waste Stabilization Facility (WSF) which will replace the roof structure. The construction work is to take place in the summer of 2010. During the construction period the WSF will be closed.

The CMC has reviewed with HRM officials the potential and feasibility of developing a Waste to Energy Plant on site. At this point no commitments have been made for such a technology.

The CMC also explored the opportunity for a geo-thermal facility however the existing conditions are not conducive to such an operation.

The CMC has approved the production of an educational video highlighting the landfill operation. The video will be developed on the concept of *How It's Made*, a program that connects with children.

Conclusion

Site operations continue to have no significant impact on the local environment, including Nine Mile River and surrounding areas. Surface water and groundwater continue to be monitored by a third party on a continuing basis and are comparable to 1996 pre-construction levels.

CMC Board Members

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David McCaughan, Secretary, Cole Harbour

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Peter Lund, Councillor, District 23
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