

CMC

KEEPING AN EYE ON WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR WASTE

AFTER IT LEAVES YOUR DRIVEWAY

Spring 2009

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 147,000 tonnes a year as compared to the first full year, 2000, when it was approximately 120,000 tonnes. The cumulative total deposited in the RDF is approximately 1,410,571 tonnes after eight full years of use.

The RDF is designed for burial of residual waste after organics, recyclables and construction and debris materials are removed. 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. The on-site monitoring enables small problems to be discovered quickly by the facilities operator, MIRROR, and initiate early remediation of the problem. CMC and HRM are notified by MIRROR of any irregularities at the site.

As previously reported, this landfill has a full gas collection and disposal system in place and is complemented with a system monitoring system. The amount of gas collected and disposed is small and not of sufficient volume to convert to energy.

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 be presented a report from HRM consultants during 2009.

Conclusion

In summary, the CMC is satisfied the operation of Otter Lake landfill is meeting and exceeding the requirements to provide a state of the art operation safeguarding the environment and surrounding community.

CMC Board Members

Society Representatives (9):

Jack Mitchell, Chairman, Bayside
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Tom Robertson, Director, Timberlea
David McCaughan, Secretary, Cole Harbour
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HRM Council Representatives (6):

Peter Kelly, Mayor
Reginald Rankin, Councillor, District 22
Peter Lund, Councillor, District 23
Russell Walker, Councillor, District 15
Kenny Tufts, Resident, Timberlea
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