



# WASTE MATTERS IN THE TOWNSHIP OF BONNECHERE VALLEY

ISSUE #1 – APRIL 2008

## RUBY ROAD WASTE DISPOSAL SITE CAPACITY EXPANSION

### BACKGROUND

The collective waste disposal capacity within the Township of Bonnechere Valley will be exhausted within the next 4 to 5 years. In recognition of that fact, the municipality has made the decision to pursue a capacity expansion at an existing waste disposal site; the Ruby Road Waste Disposal Site (WDS). The capacity expansion will not exceed 100,000 m<sup>3</sup> which is expected to contribute at least 25 years of solid, non-hazardous, waste disposal capacity to the Township of Bonnechere Valley.

### MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT APPROVAL

In order to expand the capacity of the Ruby Road WDS, the Certificate of Approval (CofA) for the WDS must be amended to incorporate the necessary changes to the terms and conditions of site operations; including the maximum approved capacity. Applications to amend Certificates of Approval are received and approved or denied by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) as required by Section 27 of the *Environmental Protection Act*.

The Ministry of the Environment has developed an extensive policy framework consisting of guidelines, objectives, manuals, and codes of practice that are important tools for managing the province's water resources. These non-legislative tools are taken into account when the Ministry is deciding whether to grant approvals.

For example, the MOE Procedure B-7-1 for groundwater dictates that groundwater leaving a property cannot be degraded in quality such that it impairs the reasonable use by the neighboring user on the adjacent properties. This Reasonable Use Policy applies to all circumstances, including landfills. For this reason, the concerns of impact to the aquifers beyond the property boundaries must be addressed before the MOE will approve a landfill expansion. A similar process exists for surface water (i.e. streams, rivers, lakes, etc.) that comes into contact with the landfill leachate.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING OF THE PROJECT

Before an application to amend the CofA may be submitted, Ontario Regulation 101/07 under the Environmental Assessment Act requires that the municipality not only complete the environmental impact studies, assessments, and designs that are typically required for this type of application, but that an Environmental Screening of the proposed project should be completed. The Environmental

Screening process provides a formal framework of study and public consultation that is to be conducted before the amendment application and supporting documentation will be received by the MOE.

## SIZE OF THE PROPOSED EXPANSION

The capacity of the Ruby Road WDS, as it currently exists and even after the proposed expansion, classifies it as a small waste disposal site. Although the expansion may result in a landfill that is seen to be larger than area residents may be familiar with; when compared to other landfills throughout the province, it is recognized that the Ruby Road WDS is a small operation that will fill at relatively slow rate, which is consistent with the demands of small population that it will serve.

### *Relative Comparison of Some Landfills in the Province of Ontario*

Landfill Size Classification	Annual Waste Deposition (tonne/year)	Capacity * (cubic metres, m <sup>3</sup> )	Example Landfills
Small	250 to 5,000	12,500 to 250,000	Ruby Road
Medium	5,000 to 150,000	250,000 to 7,500,000	Peterborough
Large	150,000 to 350,000	7,500,000 to 17,500,000	Essex County
Mega	Over 350,000	Over 17,500,000	Green Lane, Carp, Keele Valley

\* based on 25 years and emplacement density of 0.5 tonnes/m<sup>3</sup>

## ESTIMATED PROJECT TIMELINE

- Consultation events (public, government, and other identified stakeholders) throughout project
  - Next Public Consultation Event scheduled for this summer (July or August 2008)
  - Further events upon completion of the studies to review results (November 2008)
- Determination of necessary studies (March 2008)
  - Hydrogeological studies (May 2008)
  - Archaeological studies (April-August 2008)
  - Biological Studies (April-August 2008)
- Detailed work plan and field studies reports concluded (October 2008)
- Assessment of data, compilation of the details, and evaluation of net effects (December 2008)
- Preparation of Environmental Screening Report and supporting documents (February 2009)

For more information please visit <http://www.bonnecherevalleytwp.com> or contact:



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

- Q1. Why is the township looking at waste management, don't we already have a good system?**  
Yes, the Township does have a decent system for today but it will not last forever. Our estimates show that the existing landfill capacity will be exhausted within 4 to 5 years, so the municipality needs to find a new solution before that happens.
- Q2. Why are you looking at another landfill instead of exploring other options?**  
The Township has been considering this issue since 2005 so we have done some homework. Other options have been reviewed and for one reason or another found to be less satisfactory than a Township owned and operated landfill. In fact, the first choice reviewed was to buy into Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre for service to the entire township.
- Q3. What happened to the Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre option?**  
The short answer is that this option is far too expensive for the Township. However, the Township did not leave it at that. Over a one year period the Township negotiated with Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre to try and find a way to lower the very high buy-in cost for that facility, but up to this moment they refuse to consider lowering this cost. This buy-in amounted to more than the projected cost of building our own facility and keeping our landfill in our own backyard. Other facilities, such as the landfill operated by LaFleche, are less expensive to use than the Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre even when you add in the high cost of transporting the garbage a far greater distance. Even now, the Township is still open to a more reasonable proposal from Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre should one come along but quite soon we are going to need to commit to one idea or another.
- Q4. Why does cost seem to be your main concern, is not the environment also important?**  
Of course the Township considers the environment important and that is one reason why we are trying to keep our trash under our stewardship within the township boundaries. No matter who's landfill that trash goes into; it is still a landfill. Taking our trash to Ottawa Valley or LaFleche only moves the problem to someone else's backyard. That may be nice for the residents of this Township, but not a net improvement to the environment overall. Add to that the amount of pollution we cause by trucking our trash further than we need to and we can easily do more harm the farther away we haul our trash.
- Q5. So why consider any type of landfill?**  
All things considered, a well operated landfill is still one of the better environmental options. Please note that we said well operated. Well operated means that we watch what we put into it and make sure we are doing all we can to recycle or remove those things that do not belong in a landfill. Years ago, landfills were just holes in the ground where trash was buried and forgotten.

Not so today. If we expand or create a landfill we will be bound by strong environmental laws as well as our own strong desire to make sure that it is operated in a modern way using best practices.

**Q6. What about recycling? Could we not make existing space last longer by recycling more?**

Absolutely, recycling is something that we strongly support and it must be part of any solution we create. However, recycling has its limits and some items are just not recyclable at this time. That being said, we are working with Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre and the Ministry of the Environment to try to make recycling easier. Already we have been successful in establishing a battery recovery program and we hope to follow up with some common sense ways of dealing with florescent lights and other household hazardous wastes. Organic compostable materials are also on our agenda. Still, we do not see 100% recycling as being anything we can hope for soon. We will still need more space than we currently have or some other option for dealing with the stuff that will not go into the blue boxes.

**Q7. Why does a “mega-dump” on Ruby Road seem to be the option the township prefers?**

“Mega-dump” is very misleading and by all standards is a gross misnomer for the Ruby Road waste disposal site expansion. There is nothing “mega” about what the expansion being considered. The property being considered is 80 acres in size but that does not mean it will all be required to provide the necessary natural attenuation and buffer. The size of the expansion suggests that only about 7 ½ of those acres will be required for the actual landfill area. Seven and one half acres is a fairly small landfill.

**Q8. So why do you want 80 acres?**

The Township is not necessarily seeking the full 80 acres. The objective to secure a property of sufficient size such that the Township can be certain that any environmental changes caused by the landfill and its operation will be completely contained on land that we own.

**Q9. With 80 acres to play with won't you or some future government be tempted to open this site up to other municipalities in order to make money?**

That would be extremely difficult to do. First of all, *if* we build this landfill, the service population using it will be limited by the Certificate of Approval issued by the Ministry of the Environment and any expansion application would require supporting documentation to prove the impacts could be managed. Secondly, it would be very short sighted for any future municipal government to shorten the life of the facility by accepting additional waste from outside the Township that had not been included in the original plan.

**Q10. If that is so, why do we hear that the Pikwakangan First Nation is being consulted in this process?**

Again, we have two reasons. First, the law requires us to consult with any and all First Nations people with an ongoing land claim that may be impacted. Second, they are our friend and neighbour. Their reserve is small and they do not have land for a viable landfill. Given that their residents will continue to generate waste, a solution will be required to their waste management issues for the sake of the local environment. They have asked if we would **consider** allowing them to be part of our facility. While we have not said yes or no to them being included, we felt it would be both unfriendly and rude to shut the door on the descendants of the people who gave their land and friendship to our ancestors.

**Q11. Why Ruby Road and not Sand Road or the site by Snowdrifters in NAW?**

We did look very closely at Sand Road and for some time it was our preferred site. However, Sand Road had some things about it that made us realize that it might not be as good as it looked on paper. The Sand Road site has would not be able to support a larger site due to the existing environmental conditions and constraints.

As for Snowdrifters, it is in another township and while we own the land we could be certain that NAW Township would be very opposed to us expanding that site. It might sit better with our taxpayers but it would sure make those in NAW justifiably angry.

**Q12. Why try to expand an existing site, don't we have hundreds of acres far away from everyone where a new site could be created without upsetting people?**

If such a site exists, we would love to hear about it. The fact is that outside of crown land somebody has an interest in every other parcel of land in Bonnechere Valley Township. Even if we did find another willing seller somewhere else, the only difference is that there would be a different group of people angry with us for considering that site instead of expanding an existing one. From what we can tell, there is no site currently serviced by a suitable road that does not have someone living close enough to complain. Crown land is out of the question. The province is the least willing seller of all.

**Q13. Don't all landfills pollute and cause problems in the future?**

Twenty years ago landfills were holes in the ground where trash was buried and forgotten. The existing Ruby Road waste disposal site was just a site. Everything and anything went into them. Most of time there was no one there to even watch what went on. The result was some fairly nasty things went into some places that were in no way suited to receive waste. Today that is different.

Today's landfill has to be sited in a location where any change to the environment must be contained within the landfill property. Soil testing and groundwater studies have to be completed and meet strict regulations before the site can be considered to receive trash. Monitoring locations are created throughout the site and observed to spot and harmful activity before it can get off the site. Reports summarizing and interpreting the data from these sample points are sent on a regular basis to the Ministry of the Environment.

**Q14. It is clear that many people near the Ruby Road site are upset with your plans, why continue?**

Any waste management solution is bound to have opposition but Council has a responsibility to the Township as a whole to do its job and explore all the possibilities to find the right one for Bonnechere Valley. While we know that some people will be opposed no matter what we decide, we hope that most will recognize that whatever decision we reach will be the result of much thought and planning. We are committed to doing the least amount of damage to the environment with any decision we make and we consider the environment to extend well beyond our backyard. We have and will continue to consider all options and we will continue to listen to anyone with a good idea to share. We hope the people of Bonnechere Valley support us in this and understand that at some point we need to stop talking and do something about our waste.