

LANDFILL MYTHS

MYTH: "There is no secrecy." --common assertion by officials

Officials who deal in landfills often do much of it in secret. Living next to something like Kersey Valley is far too negative for folks to accept and folks would fight it much harder if they knew the reality beforehand. Once a landfill operator's foot's in the door, they know it's nearly impossible for you to get it out!

"My boss told me people might suspect something if they saw city vehicles going in there so we parked trucks at the (I-85) cloverleaf [1/2 mile away] and got in private cars to go to the site."-- ex-city worker #1, personal communication

Officials are very careful about what they say and what they don't say about landfills.

They've been known to gerrymander hearing schedules and locations to purposely exhaust and reduce public input and resistance.

"None of the low and middle-income homeowners I talked to said they were consulted about any of the area's landfills." --Martin Rudolf Brueggemann "Environmental Racism In Our Own Backyard..." UNC Chaper Hill, 1993



MYTH: "You're being paranoid. There are no landfill lies." -- Common assertion by officials
Big money is at stake and big money can be made in landfillery, some will say anything to further an agenda.

Some historic interactions of D.H.Griffin Co., MRR of High Point, LLC and High Point officials *"We're trying to stop the city [from building more landfills.]" "My daughter wants to live here."*

-- MRR of High Point, LLC land buyer to church deacons and others as he bargained to buy land from them to secretly use for a landfill.



MYTH: "Waste was not left uncovered." --Perry Kairis, High Point Official
Official City written response to public hearing complaints about uncovered garbage..

Exposed garbage on Sunday the first weekend Kersey Valley was open.



MYTH: "There is an occasional buzzard out there."

-- Duane Jarman, High Point Landfill Supervisor, Public Hearing for Phase 3
An acre of dump buzzard feces is not the result of an occasional buzzard.



...and it's not just at Kersey Valley...

".. during a rainstorm, waste from the Forsyth landfill caused a wave of putrid garbage to take down a protective fence and spread across a nearby road. Waste Management denied that trash had escaped the dump until a picture of the overflow appeared on the front page of The Rhinoceros Times, after which company officials confirmed that, yes, some trash had washed out of the site."

-- "County Acting Weird About Future Dump" , The Rhinoceros Times,



7/31/2003

MYTH: THE BIODEGRADABLE MYTH

Much biodegradable talk is myth. Several university landfill archaeology digs including <http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/physio/schools/318/landfill.html> have found perfectly readable 50 year old landfill newsprint. It reduces after 30-40 years, but landfills form leachate for millennia. Ancient Roman landfills still make leachate. So, landfill garbage doesn't just disappear.



"This artifact was excavated (by an I.S. 318 student 10/28/99) at Dead Horse Bay in Brooklyn - this landfill has been closed for over 40 years and the newspaper date and condition demonstrates how slow decomposition occurs in the absence of proper aeration."

MYTH: LEACHATE SYSTEM -- Leakproof?

Garbage contains many poisonous substances that vary from day to day. When mixed, they make many more unknown poisons that also can vary daily and are carried with rainwater and liquid seeping through the garbage like a giant coffee percolator. It is called "leachate." Kersey Valley is built like a giant bathtub with bottom and sides made of packed clay and 1/16" plastic. Leachate shouldn't **penetrate** this liner and escape, but that's another story. This one is about **overflow**.

Officials and liner manufacturers brag about landfill liner excellence using each others' data. Their hype is full of technical talk but, under scrutiny, we find some is fact but some is made up. In our Kersey Valley documentation, we had many opportunities to sort out the talk and myths. If leachate was visibly escaping, we simply took pictures. They are NOT myths.

To prevent the leachate pond from overflowing, tanker trucks use the dirt road (white) to access a pumping area at bottom. There, it is pumped into the truck and carried off to be treated. If things go wrong, it pollutes Kersey Branch, a few feet away.



Leachate



Leachate running into pond



Kersey Valley leachate pond



Leachate Tanker exiting main gate



Kersey Branch



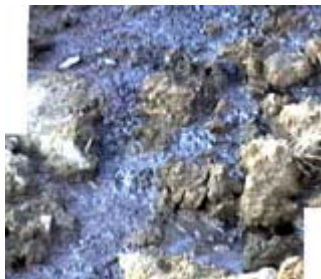
Leachate on roads

One way is when the lifts reach an elevation higher than the berm and enough hydrostatic pressure develops on the side slope of the landfill, the leachate pops the thin dirt cap in the form of "leachate springs."

Another way. To store maximum garbage, the lift passing the top of the berm often only has a few inches of freeboard and escaping leachate easily pools to where it breaches the top, runs down the outside of the berm and into Kersey Branch. This is compounded during rains. This leakage has been observed and documented a number of times.



Kersey Valley Leachate spring.



Leachate leakage.



Leachate path leading to Kersey Branch

Another way leachate finds its way into Kersey Branch is via access roads and careless grading. These roads breach the bath tub rim to give trucks access. When the landfill gets higher than the rim, these roads can form a convenient run off channel out of the bath tub into Kersey Branch. This is compounded during rains and is doubly compounded by sloppy or non-existent alternative cover and sloppy or non-existent surface runoff control.

Photo right was taken on the banks of Kersey Branch. It shows a background of failed approved alternative cover, below that, just past the weeds is the access road.



Photos at right show a background of failed approved alternative cover that slopes into access roads leading toward camera, barely seen at left edge of the photos, the green areas contain surface drainage ditches that lead directly into Kersey Branch.



THIS IS NO MYTH: LEACHATE ESCAPES IN MANY WAYS. ANY SAILOR CAN VOUCH THAT WATER (LIQUID) IS A RELENTLESS ADVERSARY.

THIS IS NO MYTH: NONE OF THESE LEACHATE CONTAINMENT FAILURES HAVE APPEARED ON A STATE LANDFILL INSPECTION. TWO PERMIT EXPANSIONS HAVE BEEN UNQUESTIONINGLY GRANTED AND ANOTHER IS COMING UP.

THIS IS NO MYTH: LARGE VOLUMES OF UNTREATED HUMAN FECES IN

LANDFILLS IS A NON-DISCUSSED KERSEY VALLEY LANDFILL FACT.



<http://www.wastenotvi.ca>.

JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

The numbers. 2% of High Point's 100,000 population is of diaper age. Of these 2000 babies, 95% or 1900 use disposable diapers. Each baby produces a total of about 1 ton of soiled diapers or about 1/3 ton per year.

A conservative estimate is 1900/3 or 633 TONS of soiled diapers (untreated human excrement) enters the Kersey Valley waste stream per year from this source.

Increasingly popular similarly used adult-elderly hygiene products are not included, nor are feminine hygiene products or home use syringes, catheters, and more.

Unlike regulated medical waste, there are no special provisions or separation. It is treated like ordinary garbage. Besides the obvious disease problems, powerful medicines and hormones not metabolized by the body are excreted and carried to the landfill. Estimates say it will take 500 years for disposable diapers and adult hygiene products to biodegrade in a dry tomb landfill like Kersey Valley.

Sources: <http://www.wastenotvi.ca>

<http://www.city-data.com/city/High-Point-North-Carolina.html>

http://www.censusscope.org/us/print_chart_age.html