



Massachusetts
Department
of
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

f a c t s h e e t

Old Fall River Road Landfill - Dartmouth

The Old Fall River Landfill, (the Landfill) also known as the Cecil Smith Landfill, is located at 452 Old Fall River Road in Dartmouth, Bristol County, Massachusetts. It is a 23-acre unlined and uncapped construction and demolition waste landfill and is privately owned.

Background

Unlined landfills, both municipally and privately owned, that never closed in accordance with Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)-approved closure plans are required to be capped and monitored to prevent leachate from impacting the aquifer and to comply with the MassDEP Solid Waste regulations. The Solid Waste regulations provide details for landfill operations, compliance, and closure. In addition, MassDEP has issued an unlined landfill closure policy that specifies the permitting requirements and evaluation procedures for determining the types and quantities of materials that can be used during closure. The regulations and policy are in place to eliminate or reduce public safety, health and environmental concerns.

History

MassDEP received complaints in the 1970s and ordered the owner to cease illegal dumping until such time as the Dartmouth Board of Health voted on an approval for a site assignment status for landfill activities. In the late 1970s, the Dartmouth Board of Health granted the owner a solid waste site assignment. The site assignment granted by the local Board of Health allowed 60 acres of land to be used for landfill operations. In 1980, MassDEP approved the landfill closure of the old dumping area and landfill construction plans for another area on the property. A 23-acre section of the landfill remains uncapped.

Environmental Investigations/Results

From 1990 through 2005, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducted environmental investigations which included the installation of groundwater monitoring wells and the sampling of groundwater, surface water, sediments and soils. The private water supply well located on the property was also sampled. Fifteen groundwater samples were collected in 2004 and beryllium, nickel, lead, cyanide, chromium were detected in groundwater samples at concentrations exceeding Massachusetts regulatory standards. No compounds above Massachusetts drinking water standards were detected in the private well. EPA concluded the levels of contamination present did not prioritize the landfill as a candidate site for the federal Superfund Program; therefore the site would be managed by MassDEP.

From 2000 through 2007, MassDEP held many meetings and negotiations with the owner to bring the landfill into compliance. Several attempts to finalize an Administrative Consent Order were unsuccessful due to a lack of funding for proper landfill closure. In 2009, MassDEP responded to complaints of illegal waste mining and issued a Unilateral Order to stop all unpermitted activities and to initiate an assessment for proper closure activities.

Recent Activities

In 2012, the owner arranged for Boston Environmental Corporation (BEC), an independent company, to help resolve the funding issue, and to complete the required site assessment and propose capping of the landfill in compliance with MassDEP requirements. MassDEP has also continued the enforcement process to assess an administrative penalty and other sanctions against the owner for non-compliance with solid waste regulations. The project proponent and MassDEP held a public

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informational meeting on March 28, 2013, to inform the community of the proposed project and provided a 45 day public comment period that ended on May 13. MassDEP staff and the local Board of Health conducted a joint inspection recently and witnessed additional unauthorized use of the property. The owner has started eviction proceedings.

Recent Sampling & Conclusions

BEC hired Haley and Aldrich Inc., to conduct additional environmental sampling activities in May 2013. Seven existing groundwater wells and six new wells were sampled and there is no evidence of immediate risk to human health from groundwater impacted by the landfill at this time. Low levels of manganese were detected in two monitoring wells. Although manganese is naturally occurring and is often detected in groundwater samples unlined landfills can contribute to higher concentrations. For general water quality parameters that relate to drinking water aesthetics, color, taste, and odor, there were exceedances in groundwater directly adjacent to the landfill including alkalinity, nitrate, dissolved solids, calcium, sodium, iron and manganese. These results are typically detected near construction and demolition debris landfills. Based on a review of historic data and the recent groundwater sampling, MassDEP has determined that groundwater has not been adversely impacted to a condition where there is an immediate risk to human health or the environment; however, to prevent future impacts, a standard landfill cap is necessary to close the landfill properly along with a long term monitoring program.

Next Steps

MassDEP will be leading two additional public meetings as part of the response to public comments received on the proposed landfill capping and closure plan. MassDEP is scheduling these meetings to address concerns raised in comment letters and to provide additional information for residents. Many comments emphasized concern over the nature and extent of contamination, the risk the site currently presents and how the proposal to bring in soil from urban sources as part of the closure could affect the watershed. In response, the first meeting will be primarily devoted to these site risk related matters. The second meeting, to be held on July 11, 2013, will address other outstanding matters including prior non-compliance, truck traffic, closure design alternatives and cost considerations. Both meetings will be held at the Dartmouth High School Auditorium and will begin at 5:30 p.m. starting with a Poster board Session followed by presentations and a question and answer session. MassDEP expects that the proposal for capping the landfill will be modified to mitigate the project's impacts.

Contact Information

Mark Dakers, Acting Chief of Solid Waste Management Section
E-mail: mark.dakers@state.ma.us. Fax: 508-947-6557. Phone: 508-946-2847

Web Resources

- Closure Activities at Inactive Unlined Landfill Sites:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/recycle/laws/cdguid.pdf>
- 310 CMR 19.000 Solid Waste Management Regulations:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/recycle/regulations/310-cmr-19-00.html>
- Policy #COMM-97-001: Reuse & Disposal of Contaminated Soil at Massachusetts Landfills:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/recycle/laws/bwp97001.pdf>
- MassDEP's presentation and public comment postings:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/about/contacts/old-fall-river-road-landfill.html>

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