



Landfill Update

LARIMER COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES

APRIL, 2000

Wood Diversion Project Heating Up

In an effort to reduce the amount of waste buried in the landfill, Larimer County is exploring the feasibility of diverting wood wastes for other uses. Wood wastes make up about 20 percent of the refuse taken in at the landfill, and most come from construction and demolition debris, tree trimmings and pallets from local businesses.

The Wood Diversion Project's main emphasis at this time is the possibility of a mutually beneficial relationship between the landfill and Holnam, Inc., the nation's largest producer of concrete products. Holnam, Inc. operates a plant north of LaPorte. Currently, the company is researching alternative fuel sources that would be cheaper than the coal it now uses. Wood may be a viable alternative.

The county has formed a Project Development Team to further explore the issues. The group includes representatives of Holnam, Inc., Larimer County Natural Resources, the Cities of Fort Collins and Loveland, waste hauling companies, Commissioner Jim Disney, county residents involved in solid waste management and engineering, and others. The group first met in December 1999 and has since formed committees to study four areas: air quality, fuel sources, staging and processing, and transportation.

All committees except the transportation committee first met in February. The transportation committee will meet in March to discuss relevant issues recently identified.

Currently, the air quality committee is gathering technical information about air quality relative to burning wood wastes. The staging/processing committee is looking at different types of wood

grinders and processes for grinding. Staff members have visited some grinding operations in Colorado and New Mexico. This committee is also exploring the costs and benefits of having wood wastes dropped off at the landfill versus having them delivered directly to Holnam, Inc.

The fuel source committee is investigating other sources of wood wastes, such as cabinet and furniture makers, and private landowners who cut dead trees or clear land to defend against wildfires.

The entire group will meet again March 30 to discuss progress and new issues that have arisen. We'll keep you posted!

Check the Natural Resources Web Page:
www.co.larimer.co.us/depts/pubwor/natres/



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Water Quality Update – Favorable Trends Continue



Results of a recent evaluation of groundwater data show continued improvement in the contaminated area northeast of the landfill. In the early 1990s, ten different volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were regularly detected in groundwater samples collected from monitoring wells in that area. Five of those VOCs (Benzene; trans-1,2-DCE; Methylene Chloride; PCE; and 1,1,1-TCA) have not been detected in the groundwater since April 1998. Concentrations of the remaining VOCs are decreasing significantly over time. These trends indicate that the contaminants are slowly but steadily being biodegraded.

In the southwest area of the landfill, the water table is still dropping and leachate flow has slowed to a trickle. The local water table rose significantly after last spring's extensive rainfall, but it peaked in June and has been dropping steadily since then. The high water table caused leachate to seep from an old waste fill area. In July, the leachate was flowing at a rate of four gallons per minute; now it's seeping out at a rate of less than one gallon per minute.

As always, we continue to monitor and test the landfill groundwater regularly.

—SDH

Holiday Closures – Landfill Hours

Landfill hours:

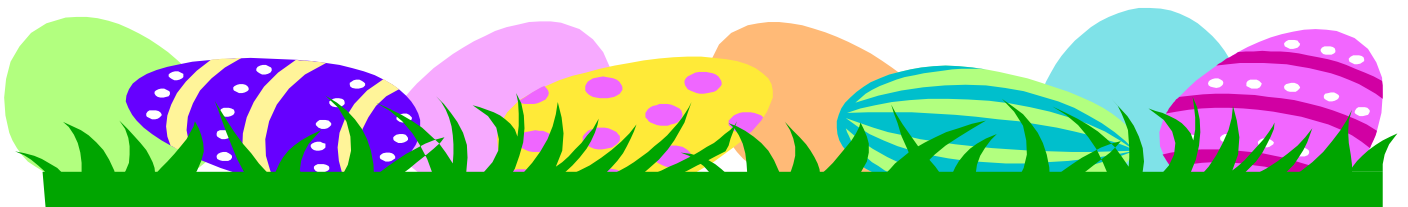
8-4:30
Monday through Saturday

The Landfill will be open on Sundays
9-4 beginning April 2.

The Landfill is CLOSED on:

EASTER SUNDAY, April 23

MEMORIAL DAY, May 29



The Landfill Update is written and edited by the staff of the Larimer County Natural Resources Department

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PROGRESS ON PROJECTS



The Landfill Entrance Project is nearly completed. We need to take care of some details and get the signs put up, but most of the work is done. We moved our two gatehouses 100 feet to the west, built a new gatehouse and widened the road to accommodate a third lane for WasteWIZARD (see below). As we enter our busiest season, we should have everything up and running, better than before. If you visit our site, give us some feedback!

The WasteWIZARD, which will allow our larger commercial customers to ring in their own transactions at the landfill, is near installation. We have had quite a time with logistics, but we are finally ready to go. Carolina Software, of North Carolina who developed the WasteWIZARD, will install the system in April. Our aim is to let our “regular” haulers, those who bring in several trucks a day with the same amount on them, to bypass the “self haulers” and others who may be in a stalled line. We hope this will speed it up for the haulers in the WasteWIZARD lane, and speed it up for the self haulers who no longer have to sit behind two or three big trucks in their lane.

We will ask a couple of companies to test the system for us when it is first installed, then it will be open to others who can benefit from it. Call Ruth Merrill at 498-5763 if you have questions or comments.

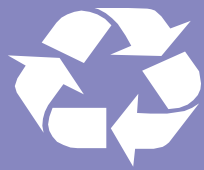


FAMILY PLANNING FOR PRAIRIE DOGS?

Our resident Prairie Dogs are the “guinea pigs” a study being conducted at the landfill by the **National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC)**. The NWRC is researching a birth control method in some of the prairie dog colonies at the landfill.

The experiment is designed to determine the effectiveness of 20, 25-diazacholesterol as a method of birth control in prairie dogs. The substance, which inhibits reproductive hormones, was first tested in humans as a cholesterol-reducing agent. This is the first time it’s been tested in prairie dogs.

The breeding season for prairie dogs runs from mid-February to the end of March, with births occurring by early May. Researchers from the NWRC are offering bait containing the substance to about 40 of the landfill’s prairie dogs. Another 40 or so are being observed as a control group. The researchers expect that the prairie dogs eating the bait will not have a litter of pups this year. Since pups stay underground for the first few weeks after birth, researchers will be looking for signs of new litters, or the absence of them, sometime in June. If the research is successful, and further studies support it, 20, 25-diazacholesterol may be a humane way of controlling urban populations of prairie dogs.



Recycling News

Could Larimer County residents and businesses be recycling *too much*? No, but in a Catch-22 situation, the amount of materials passing through the Recycling Processing Center is resulting in growing pains.

The Recycling Processing Center, opened in 1992, is nearing its maximum capacity. The facility was originally designed to handle 140 tons of recyclables per day. However, with only one 8-hour working shift, actual capacity is closer to the current 120 tons per day being processed. Waste Management, Inc., operators of the facility, could conceivably hire more workers and add one or two more shifts. But the problems would remain—the size of the tipping floor is inadequate, there's not enough space to store baled materials waiting to be shipped, and the baler is overworked.

In response to these problems, the Department of Natural Resources is looking to expand the Recycling Processing Center within the next year. We're currently exploring designs and costs associated with the expansion. Eventually, we also hope to purchase a second baler.

Unfortunately, recycling seldom pays for itself. The Recycling Processing Center cost \$1.6 million to operate in 1999, but brought in only \$1.2 million. And revenues fluctuate often depending on the market for recyclable materials. Currently, fees collected at the landfill subsidize the recycling center. Money for the proposed expansion will come from the department's reserve funds and landfill tipping fees.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Tips

Spring is here, and with it come a lot of opportunities to climb aboard the reduce-reuse-recycle bandwagon.

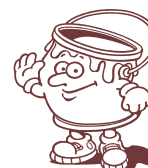
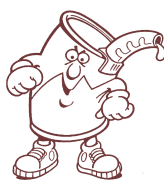
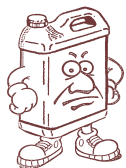
Are you a spring cleaning freak? Reduce the amount of hazardous materials you use in your cleaning efforts by trying safe and healthy alternatives to toxic household products such as stain removers, silver polish and oven cleaner. Call us for our free booklet entitled *What's Cooking?*, which provides recipes for a variety of environmentally friendly cleaners and other products.

Time to pull out those warm-weather clothes! Reuse those old clothes that just don't seem to fit as well this spring as they did last year. If they're in relatively good condition, include

them in a yard sale, drop them off at a charity, or take them to a consignment shop. If they're too faded and torn for someone else to wear, use them for rags instead.

And a tip for the yard junkies out there: recycle yard wastes by letting grass clippings lie on the lawn, which will add organic matter and plant nutrients to the soil and improve water retention. Or compost the clippings, along with tree trimmings and other organic wastes, and use them again in a few months as fertilizer or mulch.

Follow these tips, and you can sit back and relax in the sun with your ice-cold drink, knowing that you've made at least your corner of the world a better place.



Hazardous Waste Program Continues to Grow

The 1999 figures are in—the Hazardous Waste Program collected 1.6 million pounds of hazardous waste in the year just passed. This is 100,000 pounds more than we collected in 1998. With more public awareness and higher participation—about 13,000 people in 1999—the Hazardous Waste Facility continues to process and properly dispose of more hazardous waste every year.

In 1999 we tested a program to reach out to the smaller communities in our County. Four one-day events were conducted in Berthoud, Estes Park, Wellington, and Red Feather Lakes which allowed area residents to dispose of household hazardous waste safely, conveniently and economically. All were highly successful and we plan to do it again. Although plans are not yet finalized, we will be in Berthoud in May and Estes Park in June. Wellington and Red Feather Lakes will be scheduled soon.



Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility Hours [for household waste only]

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
9-3

2nd and 3rd Saturday of Each Month
9-3

Business Waste

Call for a BHAPE Packet
498-5760

This is the first step to getting help with small quantities of business hazardous waste. Sorry, business waste cannot be dropped off without an appointment.

The "Be Happy" Program

Does your company generate small quantities of hazardous wastes like solvents, hydraulic fluid, epoxy paints, fluorescent light bulbs, antifreeze, etc.? Larimer County's **Business Hazardous Waste Assistance Program and Education, or BHAPE** offers low-cost disposal options for businesses that qualify as "conditionally exempt small quantity generators."

How do I find out more?

Call 498-5760 and ask about the BHAPE program.

How do I know if my business is a conditionally exempt small quantity generator?

Call us and we'll help you determine whether your business is eligible for this program.

Can I just bring my waste out to the Hazardous Waste site and drop it off, like individuals do?

No. Because of state and federal regulations, we have to be more cautious with business waste. Plan ahead. Call our office for a BEHAPE packet, read the materials and sign up for the program. When you are ready to dispose of your wastes, we will come to your business and inspect it. Then we'll set an appointment to dispose of it.

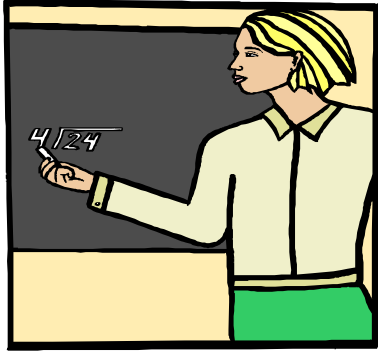
How much does it cost?

It depends on what you have. It could be as little as \$.08 per pound for antifreeze, or as much as \$5.20 per pound for aerosols.

We charge only a small percentage more than it costs us to dispose of the waste.

—RM

A Day in the Life of an Environmental Educator



“What do you think can be made from this plastic pop bottle?” I ask a group of 19 kindergartners (yes, kindergartners!) gathered eagerly (yes, eagerly!) in the recycling center’s observation room.

“Another bottle!” yells one.

“A toy?” questions another.

I explain to them that they’re both right, and that some plastic bottles can also be made into the piece of carpet I’m holding and the fencing sample that’s sitting on the table in front of them.

As the new environmental educator for the Department of Natural Resources, one of the many things I do is give tours of the landfill and its facilities. Natural Resources has always tried to involve and educate the public on the services it provides and the issues surrounding solid waste management, weed control and forestry. But with a limited number of staff members who each have their own responsibilities, public outreach wasn’t always accomplished to the extent we had hoped for. So the decision was made to hire a full-time employee to concentrate on this important aspect of the department.

In addition to acting as tour guide, I also develop informational and educational brochures and arrange for the production of videos on a variety of topics related to our departmental services. Writing press releases and newsletter articles, giving presentations to classrooms and community organizations, and attending or facilitating public meetings are all part of my duties. In addition, I represent the department as a member of community task forces and committees, as appropriate. For instance, I’m involved in the Fort Collins Earth Day Committee, a group of people from the public and private sector who are pooling resources to create the city’s Earth Day event (see sidebar). And I’ll get to perform magic by turning an empty building located at the landfill into one very cool and exciting environmental education center!

But perhaps my most important responsibility is to get to know you—our customers. I’d like to learn where your natural resources interests lie, what your opinions are and how you think the Department of Natural Resources can better serve your needs. So please, if you have any comments or questions, call me at 498-5772. I’ll do my best to help, or refer you to someone who can!

—Cheryl Kulus

Thirty Years of Earth Day Celebrations

Do you remember April 22, 1970? On that day, 20 million people across America celebrated the first Earth Day, with the objective of promoting a healthy and sustainable environment. Earth Day is now a worldwide event, and we encourage you to keep up the tradition of this important occasion by joining us in celebrating the 30th anniversary of Earth Day at the following festivities:

Fort Collins Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 22

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CSU, west of the Lory Student Center (In case of inclement weather, the event will be held in the basement of the Lory Student Center from noon to 6 p.m.)

Come for food, activities, music, speakers, a scavenger hunt, and more. A wide variety of groups will be represented, each providing education and information in a fun way. Be sure to visit the recycling booth, presented jointly by the Natural Resource departments of Larimer County and Fort Collins. Also visit the county’s Weed Control District booth. For more information, call Aaron Fodge at the City of Fort Collins (221-6281) or Cheryl Kulus at 498-5772.

Loveland Earth Day 2000

Sunday, April 16

Noon to 5 p.m.

Foote Lagoon, 500 East 3rd Street.

This outdoor event will include entertainment, children’s activities, refreshments and more. Local environmental organizations and City of Loveland departments will provide environmentally oriented booths. The event will focus on the importance of trees in our environment. Please stop by! For more information, contact Kathy Hartman at 669-8565.

Studies of Landfill Options Continue

The Solid Waste Advisory Group (SWAG) formed several months ago to research questions left unanswered by its predecessor, the Solid Waste Task Force. Both groups explored options to consider when the landfill reaches its maximum capacity, which is expected to happen in five or six years. Janelle Henderson, director of Natural Resources, presented SWAG's findings to the County Commissioners in January, after which the commissioners recommended further study of one of the proposed options—a vertical expansion of the landfill.

To comply with the commissioners' request, Natural Resources staff will be talking to landfill neighbors, consultants and others to determine how we can make such an expansion a win-win situation for all involved or impacted. We have recently contracted with a market research firm to conduct a public attitude survey, as well. The survey will be sent to a random sampling of residents from all over Larimer County in an attempt to determine awareness of and attitudes toward the county's solid waste issues.

Aside from vertical expansion, another option upon closure of the landfill is the siting of a new landfill. We have completed a siting study and located potential new areas at which to develop a landfill. Our next step in considering this option is to identify the associated costs.

The final option is to convert the current landfill into a transfer station and ship wastes out of the county to other landfills.

Here Comes WasteWIZARD

We are in the process of installing WasteWIZARD at the landfill.

What is WasteWIZARD? This application is an add-on to our WasteWORKS cashing system at the landfill. It will allow larger companies who bring in the same amount in their trucks several times a day to bypass the self-haulers, ring in their own transaction, and be on their way.



We had some trouble getting the hardware we needed to run the application, but we are ready to install as soon as it can be scheduled with Carolina Software. Our target is the second week of April.

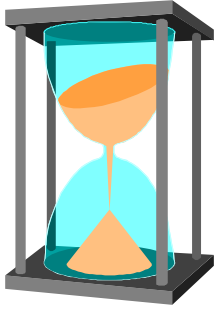
We will be looking for a couple of companies to be our guinea pigs for the first week or so, then we will open it up to those who can benefit from this program.



The spring Chinook winds keep us guessing! Throughout the year, we stay open in all kinds of weather, but we are required by law to close the landfill when sustained winds reach 55 or more miles per hour. A wind closure is bad for business—ours and yours.

You can save yourself some trouble by calling our 24-hour information line at **498-5770** before leaving for the landfill. When the weather is bad, the message will be updated with the latest information from 8:00 AM till 4:30 PM. Once in a while we are bound to change it right after you call—although we have tried, we have been unsuccessful at controlling the wind.

Keep that number close at hand: 498-5770.



AS TIME GOES BY . . . Changes are bound to happen, and here are some of ours.

December - Craig Edwards joined the team in hazardous waste as a Hazardous Waste Technician. Originally from North Carolina, and lately from Boulder, Craig received his degree in Environmental Health from CSU. We welcome Craig to our department.

Matt Misner became a Transfer Station Gate Attendant at the Wellington site. A senior in Chemical Engineering at CSU, Matt is a Loveland native.

January - January 1, 2000 came and went without a hitch at Larimer County. All our computers worked perfectly and nothing crashed, including the utilities.

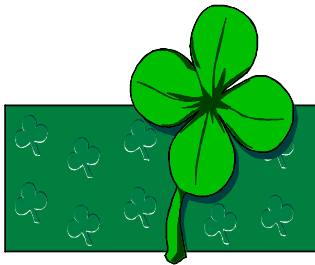
February - Cheryl Kulus became the Natural Resources Environmental Educator. Originally from Pennsylvania, she has lived in Colorado 8 years. Her BS in wildlife biology and MS in technical writing are both from CSU. Cheryl spearheads our public outreach program. We're happy to have Cheryl on board.

March - With sadness, we say good-bye and good luck to Linda Koch who worked as a Hazardous Waste Technician for over 9 years. We will miss Linda's expertise, hard work and great sense of fun.

Michelle Duet ("do-ay") came on board as a Landfill Gate Attendant. Michelle has been working in Colorado mostly in the restaurant business since 1991. Originally from Louisiana, Michelle has only a trace of the accent. Welcome aboard, Michelle.

Matt Misner has been accepted into the doctoral program at the University of Massachusetts, starting this fall. Congratulations, Matt!

Find Us Fast



Call us: 970-498-5760 FAX us: 970-498-7380

Call our 24--hour Landfill Information: 970-498-5770

E-Mail us: Merrilr@co.larimer.co.us

Visit our WEB site: www.co.larimer.co.us/depts/pubwor/natres/

The Flyover

A few observations from the air

About 200,000 cubic yards of wood waste is buried in the landfill each year. It accounts for 15-20% of the waste in the landfill. If all this wood were moved off site, it would mean the contents of one in every six vehicles (dump trucks, pickup trucks, roll-off trucks, etc.) wouldn't be using up landfill space. It makes sense to try, at least, to find another disposal method for our wood waste.

