

08-22-08 Quality and Quantity: Landfill Capping Completed

Well, it took several decades but Halifax is now officially considered “In Compliance” with MA DEP. I am referring to the landfill, which, several years ago, received an ACO with P. That stands for Administrative Consent Order with Penalty. The penalty was for allowing thirty years to pass without capping the landfill and for conducting an activity over an uncapped landfill; namely, a composting operation. While it is truly wonderful to compost, it is not wonderful to conduct business on an uncapped landfill. Until testing and monitoring have taken place, it is uncertain as to whether or not there are contaminants leaching into the groundwater or gasses escaping to the surrounding area. Those environmental concerns need to be addressed. They have been and will be addressed for the next thirty years. That is correct. For the next thirty years, Halifax will monitor the water and air surrounding the landfill.

If anyone out there is beginning the process of dealing with our State’s Department of Environmental Protection and needing to select an engineer, please give me a call or send an email. I would be happy to pass along some lessons learned. And, boy, were there many! For now, it is such a relief to know that we are in compliance.

The completion of the capping was the main portion of that compliance. A minor portion was the penalty. We were given the opportunity to propose some projects addressing the nexus of the penalty and achieving a monetary value equal to the penalty. In the case of Halifax, that equaled about thirteen thousand dollars worth of solid waste related activities. Halifax’s proposals were accepted and over the course of a year, they happened. The revival of recycling, a week’s worth of roadside cleaning, recycling department training, some school visits and a hazardous waste awareness week are the highlights of Halifax’s “Supplemental Environmental Projects”. Classroom visits was definitely my favorite. Children of all ages were very interested in anything that helped the earth by improving the environment.

When visiting a classroom I usually presented “Ten Ways to Reuse A Jar”. It brought home the idea that recycling is good but reusing is better and reducing before we reuse or recycle is even better.

If you would like to receive an outline of my “Ten Ways to Reuse A Jar”, which concludes with using a glass jar to make butter, please contact me and I will send it along. It is lots of fun and is also very applicable to home schooling and quality time with children. Does life get any better than quality time with children? I don’t think so.

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