

OTTER LAKE NEWS

Our Annual Report Card | HRM Moves to Support Textile Recycling

Visit the Website

The Community Monitoring Committee's website is www.otterlakecmc.ca. The site has a lot of information on the Otter Lake landfill, including photos, a video, and past newsletters. There is even a quiz you can take to see what kind of recycler you are.

Follow Us On Facebook

We are on Facebook. Just search for The Halifax Waste-Resource Society.

While there, please also follow Otter Lake Community Monitoring.

We are on Twitter Too

You can get your Otter Lake Landfill news in bite-size form by following us at @OtterLakeCMC

Our Report Card

Last year we posted our first annual report card. The purpose of the report card is to evaluate how we have done our job over the past year and to report to the community. Here is how we scored these efforts for 2017/18.

The State of The Environment Around The Landfill - A

We continue to be pleased with the operation of the landfill by Mirror, and in particular with the state of the environment surrounding it. There was one notable odour event due to an equipment failure, but Mirror reacted quickly and resolved the problem. It is typical of the quick response we have come to expect from the operator.

Last year's grade was A.

Relationship with Mirror - the Landfill Operator - A

Mirror attends all of our meetings as an observer and provides regular updates to us on tonnage received and operational matters. If there is an issue at the landfill, or a potential issue, they inform the CMC immediately, and follow up with a report on action taken. Excellent communication and transparency on the part of Mirror makes for a solid working relationship.

Last year's grade was A.

Relationship with Local Communities - B

We continue to communicate with our local communities via newsletters such as this and our website. We have recently digitized all of our historical minutes, and are in the process of



Please Continue to Recycle

The recent decision by China to severely restrict plastic and paper imports for recycling has caused difficulty for recyclers around the world, including right here in Halifax.

Although there was a need to dispose of some stockpiled plastic because it had degraded beyond the point of recycling, that was a relatively small amount of material when one considers the vast amount of waste Halifax residents divert through the recycling program.

Please continue to recycle. One thing you can do to help is to make sure that you are recycling the right materials, and that containers are free of food and other contaminants. Download the free Hfx Recycles smartphone app; it has all the information you need to Recycle Right!

posting them on our website. We will also soon have a history of the Otter Lake landfill posted to the website. This is an effort to increase transparency and raise awareness about the landfill operations.

*Last year's grade was **B**.*

Relationship with Department of Environment - **B+**

Each year we meet with staff at the Department of Environment to review the past year and discuss expectations for the coming year. We have found this dialogue useful as it gives us an opportunity to discuss our impressions of the landfill operations, and to hear from the Department staff what they expect from us with respect to communications with the local community.

*Last year's grade was **B**.*

Relationship with Halifax Regional Municipality - **D**

Unfortunately, the relationship with HRM was poor in 2016/17, and has not improved. We were pleased that the Manager of Solid Waste accepted an invitation to attend a recent meeting of the Community Monitoring Committee and provided updates on several items of interest. However a letter sent in November 2017 requesting an orientation meeting with CAO Jacques Dubé still remains unanswered 5 months later. This continues a persistent pattern of unresponsiveness to correspondence sent to HRM. Further, we were disappointed in the staff report that recommended against a community integration fund. Staff took a very long time to write the report, it was done without any consultation with the CMC, and suggested that the funding of the CMC by HRM was equivalent to community investment in return for hosting the landfill, which it certainly is not. As the CMC was established by HRM for the purpose of providing oversight of the landfill operation on behalf of the local community, we expect better communications efforts by HRM.

*Last year's grade was **C**.*



About Us

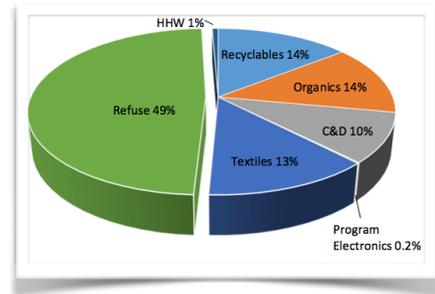
The Halifax Waste-Resource Society is a registered Society comprising residents of HRM.

In 1999, HRM and Halifax Waste-Resource Society entered into an agreement which established the Community Monitoring Committee, which is tasked with overseeing the landfill operations.

HRM Supports Textile Recycling

When the Otter Lake Community Monitoring Committee conducted a waste audit of the material coming into the landfill, it was disappointing to see that 13% of it was textiles. Worse, almost all of the clothes, linen and other materials could have been recycled in donation boxes that are available all over Halifax Regional Municipality.

So we were thrilled when HRM Solid Waste announced that it will work with local charities to promote their textile recycling programs. They are going to help promote the charities that provide doorstep collection of donated recyclables. All of the service providers will be vetted to ensure they are legitimate before they are promoted (an important step as some provinces have seen fly-by-night operators set up collection depots and pose as charities).



In the meantime, we encourage people to recycle their used clothes, linen, towels, teddy bears and anything else made of cloth by putting it in the donation bins. To find out more about what can go in the bins (you will be surprised by all they can take), and where the nearest bins are, visit www.afterwear.ca.

Textiles should not be put out for collection in the regular recycling program.

Banning Plastic Bags

Lately there has been a lot of discussion about plastic bags, and whether or not they should be banned at grocery stores. Concern has been heightened by recent difficulties in finding markets for plastic film recycling.

Proponents of banning plastic shopping bags say that the plastic is too persistent in the environment, taking hundreds of years to decompose, especially when they are buried in a landfill. They also point to a litter issue, where plastic bags can often be found tangled up in trees, blocking storm drains and floating in the ocean.

HWRS Directors

The Halifax Waste-Resource Society has 9 volunteer Directors, elected by members of the Society. They also sit on the Community Monitoring Committee.

Currently, the Directors are:

- John Cascadden, Chair
- Scott Guthrie, Vice-Chair
- Bob Angus
- Andrew Giles
- Frank Johnston
- Peter Lund
- Murray Power
- Tom Robertson

One seat is vacant.

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Email: info@otterlakecmc.ca

Opponents of banning plastic shopping bags point to the ability to recycle them, their convenience, and the ability to reuse them for collecting garbage and pet litter. They often point out that if there are no shopping bags to reuse, they will just be going to the store to buy new bags.

Montreal banned the use of plastic bags beginning January 1st of this year. In January Regional Council asked staff to look at banning them in HRM.

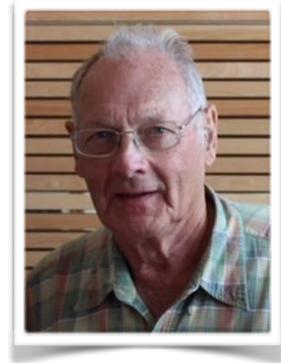
Despite dire warnings by plastic bag manufacturers, the sky has not fallen in California where plastic bags were banned in 2016. In fact, Californians took it in stride and switched to the much more environmentally friendly reusable cloth bags and paper bags.



Lindsay Gates

The Halifax Waste-Resource Society and the Otter Lake Community Monitoring Committee mourn the passing of long-time member and friend Lindsay Gates of Timberlea. Lindsay passed away on Tuesday, January 9, 2018 at the age of 84.

Lindsay was an ardent volunteer in his community and well-known for his service. Besides his involvement in waste management, he was also volunteered with BLT Trails, Boy Scouts and St. Andrew's Anglican Church.



Lindsay had a strong environmental ethic, and that made him an ardent defender of the community. In recent years he defiantly opposed changes to the Otter Lake Landfill proposed by Halifax Regional Municipality staff, broke promises to the local community when the landfill was built.

We miss him.