

Waste Management Forum, Corner Brook, May 8/03

I was pleased to attend the forum in Corner Brook on May 5th as a representative of the Central NL Waste Management Board.

The morning session focused on the progress made to date. This included an overview of the planned approach and reports from different parts of the province on progress so far. Much of this was repetition but it did indicate that our group is making as much, or more, progress as the rest.

The afternoon sessions brought presentations on standards and education, two main areas of concern. I believe Jeff has already furnished you with a copy of the standards presentation. The main things I noted about this presentation were:

1. It is a work in progress. This was evident from the mention of two liner possibilities--with no decision as yet having been made. Also, suggestions like the one about covering the cells with soil of 10⁻⁶ permeability with no knowledge whatsoever of

how such permeability could be obtained, grade of soil and pressure required etc., show a minimal knowledge of this facet of the standards. However, it was readily acknowledged that this was a work in progress. This is important since it enables us as interested parties to have some input into the finished product. I think it would be a mistake for us to let questionable material be part of the standards if we can get it modified. We can also, of course, make suggestion from our own expertise. Be proactive!

2. It is called "standards" and already holes are being left for those areas and situations where the standards do not apply. Do we want "standards" that are not too flexible to be effective. If so, this would be an area to watch.

The session on education was very enlightening, even educational. It was obvious that MMSB and government are looking to the public sector, the management boards, to be the instruments of education with them functioning as facilitators. That is they'll take the ideas after we have them and help put them into practice, even take credit for them. In no way did they present themselves as looking to lead in educate the public. For those who operate with volunteers only this might prove onerous. It was interesting to note that the two areas with the most educational activities both have hired co-ordinators. Of course they are being effective---it's their job. Plus they speak to the members of MMSB and government in a different way----as co-workers even. Perhaps we should investigate the possibility (and possible funding) for this.

Springdale area impressed me with the work they have done there. Of course they

have all the equipment (almost free) and other political advantages but it seems we should be learning from their experience. One member from there seems to think they are being kept out of the limelight till election time. Big surprise!

Despite the political games and relative lack of knowledge of those who are holding the decision making power, (but are willing to learn), I did leave the forum with the hope that out of it all, with determination and persistence and a positive attitude, we may be able to rescue a victory for waste management in our province.

For more technical explanations, consult Jeff.

Thanks
Catherine Armstrong