



Maryland Department of the
Environment

FACTS ABOUT: HISTORIC LANDFILL INITIATIVE

Maryland's Historic Landfill Initiative is a multi-year project designed to define the locations of historic waste disposal sites and rank their potential to contaminate the environment of Maryland.

The historic placement of landfills and open burning dumps was for the most part unregulated prior to the 1950s. Most towns, farms and industries set aside areas for waste disposal. Typically, these sites were located in low lying wetlands, riverbanks or ravines on the edge of the town or property. It also was a common practice for waste to be collected and burned in place. For the purposes of this study, the term landfill references all land disposal practices used prior to the modern age of lined sanitary landfills. These practices include open burning dumps, municipal and industrial fill areas, and made-land on the margins of the state's waterways.

At the request of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is documenting the numbers and locations of Historic Landfill sites and assess the potential for further pre-remedial investigations of select facilities. The objective is to collect information concerning conditions at Historic Landfills and determine whether any human health and environmental hazards are present. MDE also shall determine if further investigations are warranted. The information collected is to be used to target areas for future study and hazard evaluation.

MDE has historic records on 456 old landfill sites that were operated by various industries, municipalities, and/or private entities. There is locational data on 235 of the 456 sites. However, roads and landmarks have changed over time and much of the locational data is no longer relative to current geographic conditions. There is no record of the exact location for 233 of the known sites and no ownership or location information on 150 of the known sites. Historic information places primary waste types into seven basic categories; Municipal, Industrial, Rubble, Land Clearing, Clean Fill, Other and Unknown. Seventy-seven of the total historically referenced sites are classified as having accepted either municipal or industrial wastes. Thirty-five sites are documented as Rubble Fills. Three sites are referenced as receiving clean-fill. Ninety-eight sites received either unknown or other wastes. The types of waste disposed of at the remaining 243 sites are not identified.

Historical records indicate ownership of 148 of the sites. Many of the identified sites have been incorporated into other facilities. For example, in Anne Arundel County, Smucks Dump was incorporated into the Glen Burnie Landfill, and the Johnson and Speake Dump became a cell of Solley Road Landfill. Both of these facilities were



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investigated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the sites given a no further remedial action planned (NFRAP) status on the CERCLA list of inventoried sites (CERCLIS).

One hundred thirty one sites were scheduled for assessment under the Landfill Initiative.

Environmental Investigation and Action

Several of the 456 sites are currently being addressed under the CERCLA Pre-Remedial Program, via the completion of Pre-CERCLIS Assessments, Preliminary Assessments, and Site Inspections.

Current Status

MDE continues to assess the issues at the known historic dumps and landfills identified in the Landfill Initiative Report. A number of the sites documented in historic information do not have concrete site locations. Further study to define the exact locations and extent of historic landfills and dumps continues.



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