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## The Franklin Ash Landfill Proposal: A Reality Check

Opponents of CRRA's proposed ash landfill behind the former Franklin Farms on Route 32 in Franklin have been saying a lot about CRRA's proposal – most of it untrue or, at the minimum, their statements have bent the truth. Let's do a reality check!

**OPPONENTS' CLAIM:** "CRRA wants to excavate 350 acres along the Shetucket River."<sup>1</sup>

**REALITY:** The overall site that CRRA is proposing for the ash landfill is 350 acres, but most of that would be left in its natural state as a buffer between the ash landfill and the surrounding property. This buffer would ensure that the ash landfill would not be seen by anyone passing on Route 32, in the Pleasure Hill section of Franklin, or by anyone in a boat floating on the Shetucket. The ash landfill would actually occupy just 100 acres in the middle of the overall site.

**OPPONENTS' CLAIM:** "The ash landfill will potentially be 14-stories high."<sup>1</sup>

**REALITY:** The ash landfill would not rise to anywhere near that height. The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) considers visual impacts during the permit approval process and would restrict the height of the ash landfill accordingly. We anticipate that the ash landfill would eventually be approximately the same height as the surrounding trees.

**OPPONENTS' CLAIM:** The proposed ash landfill "will be a blight on Franklin and surrounding towns. It will be an area, once a beautiful woodland and riverside, that will be unusable for MANY, MANY generations."<sup>1</sup>

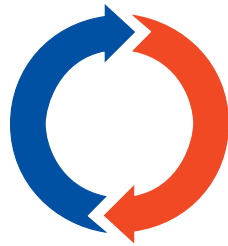
**REALITY:** CRRA would create nature trails through the property so that the people of Connecticut – especially the people of Franklin – could hike in the woodlands and enjoy what is now private property. There is also the possibility that several ball fields could also be created on the site, increasing usage by the public. The riverside, meanwhile, would remain unchanged from what it is now. We would ensure that several hundred acres of the site would remain green and undeveloped forever, acreage that could be part of the gravel mining operation currently on the site or some other large-scale development.

**OPPONENTS' CLAIM:** Peter Egan, CRRA's Director of Environmental Affairs, testified before the legislature's Environment Committee in April 2008 that ash landfills leak.<sup>1</sup>

**REALITY:** The ash landfill's opponents have misinterpreted Mr. Egan's testimony. He said that the DEP requires any landfill to be constructed as if there will be leaks. This is why the DEP requires ash landfills to be constructed above aquifers that are adjacent to Class B rivers or streams like the Shetucket. Although highly unlikely, if there were a leak, the aquifer would allow the leakage to flow into the river where it would be harmlessly dissipated. There is no evidence that the closed Windham ash landfill, located a little more than four miles upstream from the Franklin site and which has NO liner system, has ever had an adverse impact on the Shetucket.

<sup>1</sup>– <http://dumptheashdump.com>, February 19, 2009

**For all the facts, visit <http://www.ctsafeashlandfill.com>**



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**OPPONENTS' CLAIM:** The ash landfill would eradicate the history of the site where building “foundations and cemeteries can still be found.”<sup>1</sup>

**REALITY:** CRRA is currently conducting an archeological survey of the site. There are some ruins of former structures there, but they are not located within the actual footprint area of the proposed ash landfill. This archeological survey, and all the other on-site tests CRRA is performing, will be reviewed by both the DEP and the Connecticut Environmental Review Team, which is conducting independent oversight on behalf of the Town of Franklin.

**OPPONENTS' CLAIM:** The site is inappropriate because the ash landfill “will be located on top of a Class A (drinkable as is) moderate to high-yield aquifer.”<sup>2</sup> And the Shetucket River will also be needed to supply water to this region.<sup>2</sup>

**REALITY:** The DEP requires that any landfill in Connecticut be located above an aquifer that is adjacent to a Class B river or stream. There is an aquifer underneath the proposed site of the CRRA ash landfill in Franklin, but it is still undetermined whether it is a high-yield aquifer. The DEP would prohibit the construction of a landfill above a high-yield aquifer. Consequently, if tests CRRA is currently taking on the site determine it is a high-yield aquifer, CRRA will withdraw its proposal. However, tests to determine the capacity of this aquifer have not been completed and until they are there is no evidence that this area could supply drinking water. Further, the DEP would also prohibit the construction of the ash landfill if there were a threat that the water quality of the Shetucket would be degraded.

**OPPONENTS' CLAIM:** Reducing, reusing and recycling would help reach the goal of zero waste.<sup>1</sup>

**REALITY:** CRRA is Connecticut's largest recycler and the state's leading advocate for recycling. In fact, CRRA's education programs have received the Beth Brown Boettner Award for Outstanding Public Education from the National Recycling Coalition. As a result, Connecticut's recycling rate is around 30 percent, as opposed to other states whose recycling rates are in the 5-percent-to-10-percent range. However, despite the best efforts of CRRA and other entities, not everyone recycles, so 70 percent of Connecticut's trash must be disposed of in the state's trash-to-energy facilities, producing electricity for public consumption. The by-product is the inorganic, odorless ash that must still be deposited in a safe, environmentally responsible ash landfill like the one proposed by CRRA in Franklin.

<sup>1</sup>– <http://dumptheashdump.com>, February 19, 2009

<sup>2</sup>– News release, Sen. Prague, May 1, 2008: “CRRA has proposed dumping a reported 300,000 tons of ash per year at a 350-acre site in Franklin that some say would threaten the area aquifer, from which many Franklin residents draw water through private wells, and the nearby Shetucket River, which supplies drinking water for the nearby town of Sprague.

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