

**Project: Establishment of an Engineered Landfill at  
Danford Lake in the Municipality of Alleyn-Cawood**

**CULTURAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC and  
HEALTH**

Brief  
presented to BAPE  
by Mary Masotti, recreational property owner, Neil Lake, since 1980

## Interest

My interest in this project stems from my concern for the environment, for the cottage life style my husband and I have created for ourselves, our three children, their partners, our friends and most importantly, for our grandchildren. Four generations have been coming to our cottage, and I want to be here to see the fifth generation enjoy it as well.

I feel strongly that this project will put everyone in this community, and those who visit, at a terrible risk, not only from the risks of driving Highway 105, but from the degradation of the environment and of the quality of life this project would cause.

I am also opposed to this project because I am now, and have always been, a person who believes in justice, equality and fair play.

This proposed mega dump is:

1. **not** an acceptable solution for the majority of people in Alleyn & Cawood
2. **not** the solution for the Outaouais
3. **not** the solution of choice of most of the MRC's, and the City of Gatineau, in the Outaouais
4. **redundant**, given existence of other landfills with plenty of capacity
5. **not** environmentally friendly
6. **outdated** technology
7. **not** a **Green** solution

## Solution

With the exception of the MRC Pontiac, the City of Gatineau and the other MRC's have spent some time examining their waste management problems. In order to meet the 2008 deadline, they have decided to use, in the short term, existing landfill(s), and to research new, modern solutions that will convert waste into energy. In the meantime, the MRC Pontiac has left itself in a position of hanging their hat on outdated methods, which obviously does nothing for the future growth and employment opportunities for their region. A landfill with revenues of \$2.00/ton is not a solution to their economic problems, and the people of the Municipality of Alleyn and Cawood should not have to suffer because one MRC does not have a vision. Employment opportunities which would give dignity to their residents, and pride in their territory should be their goal. Not a landfill.

Let's use the short term solution. Landfill space is already available. Let's work towards being a leader in Quebec, a region with a vision, and a community who stepped up when the time was right to be environmentally friendly, Kyoto friendly, and concerned citizens toward the people of Danford Lake.

# Danford Lake Mega Dump

*Down wind, downstream, down the road*

## CULTURAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC and HEALTH

*“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must **never** be a time when we fail to protest. To remain silent...is the greatest sin of all.”*

*Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor*

The Municipality of Allevyn and Cawood is geographically the largest municipality in the MRC of Pontiac but has one of the smallest populations. There are approximately 111 ratepayers in the Village of Danford Lake and about 268 additional recreational ratepayers (not including their families) in the municipality. As baby boomers retire, more and more cottage residents are planning to spend their retirement at their four season cottages, close to golf courses in summer, and ski hills in winter. A mere one hour drive from downtown Ottawa, and even less from Gatineau, this area has been a very popular retreat for city dwellers for over 100 years. The demand for recreational properties continues to grow, and the location, with its many lakes and beautiful hills, is a dream for anyone in the National Capital Region in the market for that special piece of “God’s country”.

In the proposal for a mega dump near the Village of Danford Lake, the promoter, LDC, has argued that his proposed dump will have very little negative impact on the community, but will bring in some money to the community in the form of \$2.00/ton tipping fee, and a few jobs. They have portrayed the community as a tiny village in an area of forestry and agriculture, where 100% of the residents, desperate for some extra tax revenue and possibly a few jobs, have given them full support! In fact, it is a community where most of its residents, full-time and recreational, agree that the project will bring real and unnecessary dangers to the community, and to those settlements along the route to the dump.

Apart from forestry and farming, it is an area principally suited to recreation and tourism.

The following are extracts from minutes, vision statements and newsletters from the Village of Danford Lake. <sup>1</sup>

Taken from the minutes of the monthly council meeting held on June 5, 1995 at 7:30 p.m. at the Bethany Hall, Danford Lake, Quebec:

Those present were Mayor Charmaine Hooley, councillors: Shelley Wilson, Gerald Stevenson, William Rogan, Merlin Peck, and Carl Mayer who came in late.

100/06/95

WHEREAS the Municipality of Alleyn & Cawood in its Planning Program By-law 11-91 with its amendment By-Law 16-91 has defined the specific area of Range VI lots 7 & 8 as Recro-Touristic.

WHEREAS it is the interest of the future of this Municipality that the government, either on a provincial level or on a municipal level maintain some control on the natural environment within its domain for future inhabitants;

WHEREAS the superficies of Range VI lots 7 & 8 includes access to both sides of the Pikanoc River. This river historically has been the main source of recreation in privately owned tourism establishment;

WHEREAS in keeping with our Planning Program in developing our FORESTRY TREASURES;

IT IS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED AND CARRIED by: Gerald Stevenson and seconded by Shelley Wilson to recommend to the Ministry of Natural Resources that the above mentioned properties remain as Crown Land for a possible future site of a Nature Trail which the municipality would develop and maintain opened to the general public.

UNANIMOUS

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting of June 5, 1995

In its Vision Statement of 1998 <sup>2</sup>, the Municipality of Alleyn-Cawood declared its wishes:

“to enhance the quality of life in Danford Lake for ***all*** citizens. Believing that together we can achieve a safer, cleaner and sustainable environment and community.”

They further defined “Sustainable Development as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present ***without*** compromising that ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

They declared the responsibility of Environmental Management would be:

“consistent with the concept of sustainable development and is compatible with diverse cultural, social and organizational frameworks.”

Once again, in the municipal newsletter of December 2003, the Municipality of Alleyn and Cawood most accurately described the Community values of Danford Lake as;

“...the environment and atmosphere of the community is an attraction to others, but also something that the residents cherish and wish to hold onto. Danford Lake Residents value their slower pace of life, their ***pristine environment and exceptional unspoiled beauty*** of the area.”

One must question the compatibility of this statement with the development of a mega garbage dump which, if approved, would import trash from a large urban population, 100 kilometers to the south of this quiet little community? Down the road, downstream, and downwind of a mega dump is not what this community aspires to. A dump represents a land use that is contrary to the vision of the community to provide development that is both economically beneficial and harmonious with the ecological and recreational value of the area.

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<sup>2</sup> Power point presentation of Alleyn-Cawood Vision Statement

## Why did the promoter choose the Danford Lake site for a large mega dump?

One would think that this location, surrounded by forests, rivers and dozens of lakes, would be the last choice. Why was it as a location in another MRC in the Outaouais, turned down for the reason it had too many lakes? We suspect that, being on the eastern edge of the MRC Pontiac, they saw Danford Lake as a lost corner, where no one would pay much attention to a proposed mega dump, and where the communities to the east had no interest, and no right, to interfere. Residents from within the MRC Pontiac seldom use the Village of Danford Lake as a gateway to their communities. The proposed mega dump would have little impact on their main route, Highway 148. In essence, the Pontiac chose a site that would provide them with some financial benefits, but have little environmental impact upon themselves. Is the Village of Danford Lake the garbage pail of the Pontiac, a place to wipe your feet and leave your garbage before you come in?

Historically, the Village of Danford Lake has always been very much a part of the communities along the Gatineau River. Highway 301 to Kazabazua, and Highway 105 (north and south), has been their main route into the city and elsewhere. Indeed, this is the route that most of the garbage trucks would use. It is the village and the communities along this route that would be most affected by this project – not the Pontiac. All residents north of Gatineau, and especially those in communities north of Wakefield where the road is the most dangerous, have a very legitimate right to object. Where is the social justice of putting the burden of the garbage of 250,000 people on the residents of a tiny village? Where is the social justice of trucking it up a dangerous two lane winding road, through villages opposed to the project and the impacts it imposes upon them, their safety, and their way of life?

## **Cultural Impacts**

### *Culture gives a community a sense of well being*

The history of the settlement of the Danford Lake area goes back as early as 1855. People came to settle the area as loggers, builders and farmers. In 1876, through the union of two townships, the United Municipality of Allevyn and Cawood was formed.

Many of the families that reside today in the Village of Danford Lake, are direct descendants of those early settlers, families such as Heney, Milford, Molyneaux, Presley, Peck and Rogan.

As well as working on the land, today's residents are very much recreational users of the land. Unlike their city counterparts who may spend a lot of time indoors on computers, reading, or watching television, the folks in the village are

outside enjoying hunting, fishing, 4wheeling, and skidoo-ing. The forests and rivers, especially the Picanoc, are their “playground”. They say that you can stand anywhere in the municipality, throw a stone, and you will hit a creek, a river or a lake.

The Picanoc River has been a fishing, kayaking and canoeing destination for outdoor enthusiasts both local and from away. Many of the older residents still fondly remember Pierre and Margaret Trudeau stopping at the chip stand with their three boys, on the way to canoe on the Picanoc River. For local families, the Picanoc River was so important to them that they bought up tracks of land along the river to preserve a piece of their heritage before it was gone to outsiders forever. Some banded together, bought land and formed such clubs as the Five Mile Club and the Bear’s Den, which are dedicated to fishing, hunting, and preserving their piece of the river.

Most importantly, the Village of Danford Lake was known as a community that took care of one another, and pulled together during hard times. Despite low employment opportunities, they continued to stay. Of those who did move away, many retained a piece of the land, on the river or in the village, and are now returning to retire to the place of their youth.

The region has also been a haven to cottagers, and outdoor enthusiasts. Cottages are now being built as homes, with the idea of becoming retirement retreats. Cottagers leave the city to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the lake and its surroundings. Just a short drive from the village, one can find golf, downhill skiing, fishing, hunting, snowmobile and bicycle trails. Snowshoeing, bird watching, nature hikes, and Xcountry skiing are available on our doorstep. Recreational property owners are a large part of the make up of the municipality. Drawn by the beautiful lakes and forests, cottagers have been coming to the area for well over 100 years, and contribute to the local economy through properties taxes, support of local businesses, hiring local workers, and by volunteering in such initiatives as the Mont O’Brien Association. Within the municipality, there are approximately 270 recreational properties, representing families who consider the cottages their “home of the heart”. Several generations of families have been coming to the same cottage, some for over 60 years. Recreational properties along HWYs 301 and 105 equate to thousands of people from outside the area, their families, and their friends, who drive these dangerous roads to spend their weekends and summers on the dock, swimming and boating on the lake. In Winter, many families have season ski passes to Mont Ste. Marie, and use their cottage as a base to enjoy winter sports.

By examining the social, economical and health impacts of this project, it can be shown that the proposed mega dump will have a negative, devastating and long term impact on this community and its culture. This community has been put at risk by a project which has been thrust upon it, without allowing the residents to have a say in their future.

## **SOCIAL IMPACTS**

The degree of community participation in a project, along with a meaningful consultation exercise, influences project acceptability. Careful engagement of all stakeholders, favorable local media coverage, and excellent communications contribute to achieving a commitment in a project. Social acceptability is dependent upon transparency, access to information, and an open process. In this regard, one needs only to refer to the brief presented by Michele Borchers on lack of democracy. The failure of the Mayor, council, and the proponent to bring all the parties together, both permanent residents and recreational property owners, to openly discuss and evaluate the project, has had a damaging effect on the population, its make-up, way of life, community relations, and quality of life.

### 1. Loss of Social Status

Many residents of this community do not accept this project, and deeply resent the manner in which the project was “dumped” upon them. On the other side, there are the supporters, and their concerns deserved to be addressed. However, there has been no forum where the two “camps” have been able to safely and openly debate their differences of opinion. The result has torn the community apart. The psychological effects of living in a tiny community under these circumstances, is devastating. It has affected all aspects of their lives, including families, church, and clubs, has caused family feuds, lack of trust in one another, and in their elected officials, failing community spirit and a diminishing willingness of volunteers to reach out and work within the community. Participation in church activities and other community organizations such as exercise group, has already decreased due to feelings of fear, intimidation, repercussions, and alienation. Each side blames the other. Incidents that have occurred in the village have been attributed to retaliation over the dump. The sense of intimidation and retaliation for taking a stand, either “pro” or “anti dump”, has further degraded community spirits and alienated one group from the other. Whether these fears are perceived or real, the community is still suffering. Described as a “powder keg”, a decision either way, will cause it to explode. As illogical as this may seem, it is very disturbing and frightening, especially for isolated and/or elderly residents. They feel marginalized by the experience. No matter what the outcome, many feel that the community will never heal. It has even been suggested that community counselling will be required, and the village monitored by the Quebec Police Force who may be needed as intermediaries. To appreciate the impact on the children, I am attaching a speech<sup>3</sup> conceived and written by then 9 year old Crystal Lafleur, and delivered at her school in the Spring of 2006.

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<sup>3</sup> Speech by Crystal Lafleur

## 2. Risk of “out migration”

If the mega dump is approved, some families have said they will move “away” to raise their families in a safer environment. Despite economic challenges, this has been a resilient community, but relocation of its young people will reduce the vitality of the community, leaving the elderly lonely, and without the traditional support of children and neighbours. This will further contribute to a decline in social networks, businesses and recreational activities, and infrastructure, inevitably leaving Danford Lake a dying community. As one person asked, “who will drive the fire truck?”

## 3. Quality of Life

Quality of life is a composite measure of an individual’s satisfaction with life. Factors affecting quality of life can range from socio-economic status to the state of the nearby environment. When considering quality of life you must take people’s needs, expectations and values into account. The cumulative effect of even a number of minor impacts is considered an attack on quality of life. The intensity of the effect depends on the relative importance of each impact. Look back again at the community values, as stated by its residents.

*“the environment and atmosphere of the community is .....something that the residents cherish and wish to hold onto. Danford Lake Residents value their slower pace of life, the **pristine environment and exceptional unspoiled beauty** of the area.”*

Any changes in the **quality of life** will only exacerbate division and mistrust.

Social relationships provide individuals with information that guide, support and reinforce their view of themselves. This project has provoked extreme emotions. It is immoral to impose this project on a community and destroy the very nature of its view of itself.

## 4. Equity

When looking at the impact of a project, the question of equity must be addressed.

Equity revolves around three main principles:

a. do positive impacts outweigh negative impacts?

Example: a \$2.00/ton corporate donation to municipal revenues vs. a 75% plus increase in dangerous truck traffic, pollution, litter and vermin

b. do those who bear the costs, also reap the benefits, or have access to the wealth generated by the project?

Example: the imposition of an unpopular dump with multiple negative impacts vs. the profits that will be realized by the investors on their \$63 million dollar investment

c. are the costs and/or benefits equally distributed between the stakeholders locally, and regionally. Groups of people are net losers if they are disproportionately affected by negative impacts, and almost completely excluded from access to the benefits

Example: the imposition of most of the truck traffic on the already overburdened communities along HWY 105 who are **opposed** to the dump vs. the financial benefits the MRC Pontiac will derive, without having to endure the impacts of a the dump because of its placement on the eastern edge of their region.

Is the MRC Pontiac being a good neighbour?

Equity can be stated as simply as “worst affected, most protected”. Equity acknowledges that different people have different kinds of rights, but fairness requires that this be acknowledged and that everyone is treated as reasonably as possible.

## **ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

There is no question that the Village of Danford Lake needs jobs. Jobs, along with the financial benefits to the community through a corporate donation of \$2.00/ton, has been one of the reasons used by the Mayor and council for hosting a mega dump on their territory. Other reasons given are: the cost to recycle, shipping the village’s garbage outside the region, and monitoring the current trench dump for 20 years.

The \$2.00/ton has the potential of doubling the current Municipal budget, which is approximately \$550,000.00 for 2007. The mayor has, on a couple of occasions, indicated that the cost of exporting the garbage and monitoring the old trench

dump each year, for 20 years, would cost the community \$100,000.00 to \$125,000.00/year. Should the mega dump be approved, the village would pay nothing in tipping fees, and LDC would mine the old trench dump, and dispose of it at their dump site, free of charge. Very compelling arguments for hosting the dump, but we must look at the facts.

### **MUNICIPAL BUDGET and the cost of handling garbage**

1. 2007 budget of \$599,222.00 equates to about \$5400.00 for every full time resident in the community. Taxes are up 44.425 in 2007; administrative costs are up by 15.6% to \$200,983. Administrative costs are 33.54% of the total budget.
2. 2006 tax revenues: full-time residents contributed 22%' cottage owners 52%; other lot owners and businesses 26%.
3. Due to an increase in property assessments in 2007, recreational property owners faced an average increase of 60-100% in their property taxes; full-time residents averaged a 30% increase.
4. Other municipalities in the region adjusted their mill rate to soften the blow caused by the increase in assessments. Alleyn-Cawood did not. Alleyn-Cawood has the second highest mill rate next to Maniwaki, whose population is over 4000 people,
5. LDC says each person produces (after recycling) .75 tons of waste a year (Public Hearings, May 16, 2007, 7:00 p.m., Mont Ste. Marie, lines 3053-4). Permanent residents in Danford Lake total 111 people as of the latest census. Therefore, accordingly to LDC, the community of Danford Lake will produce 83.25 tons of waste per year, after recycling, which is close to what is estimated in the MRC Pontiac Waste Management Plan for Alleyn-Cawood. Following through with LDC's projected cost of \$200.00/ton to ship to Lachute, the annual budget required to send Danford Lake's waste to Lachute is \$16,650.00. The province will be subsidizing the cost of recycling through royalties of \$10.00/ton.

It should be noted that Kazabazua, a community 11 km east of the Danford Lake Village, has purchased a garbage truck, which they use every Monday to pick up garbage, and every second Tuesday, to pick up recyclables. The garbage truck is available each week, Wednesday through Friday. Kazabazua is paying \$68.00/ton to send its garbage, through a transfer station, to Lachute, and with transportation, it costs them \$100.00/ton. If the Danford Lake Village were to come to an agreement with Kazabazua and share a pick up schedule, the estimate of \$16,650.00 could be reduced to under \$9,000.00/year.

6. Thorne, a Municipality in the Pontiac, has a population of 408 full-time residents. Their trench landfill was mined, and taken to Lachute for a one time cost of \$37,000.00. If Danford Lake did the same, this is a potential saving of \$363,000.00 to the taxpayers, who, accordingly to the Mayor, would have to pay monitoring fees of \$20,000.00/year for 20 years.

**Do potential revenues from the \$2.00/ton corporate donation<sup>4</sup> from LDC justify the social, economical and health costs to the community?**

### **JOBS – a few jobs at the dump vs. skilled jobs for many**

Aside from providing some tax relief to the community, the proponent has promised jobs. Initially he estimated the number of jobs at around 37, but recently LDC says there would be 6 permanent, and up to 6 part-time, with some jobs requiring bilingualism. The Village of Danford Lake is almost exclusively English speaking. As indicated by LDC in the public hearings, trucking companies would bid for the contract to transport waste. We can assume that these trucking companies have their own employees, and would not be hiring from within the community. Tipping fees will put money into the hands of the politicians who already make decisions that are not supported by the community, rather than directly into the pockets of the families to spend as they see fit. We must therefore weigh the negative impacts to the community as a whole, against the possibility of a few local jobs and a corporate donation.

**But what about alternatives?** The municipality has a great potential for tourism and eco-tourism. The area is rich in lakes, many undeveloped. Retiring baby boomers are looking for recreational properties, and soft adventure. Danford Lake has the supply to meet the demand. If land developers were encouraged to come into the community and develop lake front properties, jobs would follow.<sup>5</sup> Should the municipality encourage their young people to apprentice in the trades, this would give them employable skills that would be useful locally and away. Much is being written about the lack of skilled trades people, such as carpenters, plumbers, and electricians. Other communities, like Low, Quebec, are trying to attract their youth back back to the community. Kazabazua has seen recent re-growth in their population. A mega dump does not reconcile with the potential for growth and jobs, especially in tourism.

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<sup>4</sup> Letter of Agreement between Alleyn & Cawood and LDC

<sup>5</sup> Potential Employment Opportunities

## Real Estate Values & Property Ownership

**If each person in this room were truly honest, and had choice, would they choose to buy property near a dump?**

**Have the residents of the Village of Danford Lake been given a choice?**

One of our largest and most emotional purchases in life is our home. The one that lives in our hearts is our cottage. Both full-time residents and recreational property owners in Alleyn-Cawood have chosen to live, or locate in this beautiful area, because it is dear to them, and provides them with a way of life that is important to them.

LDC claims there will be no impact on real estate values. They support this with a study by Reichert, Small and Mohanty, called "The Impact of landfills on Residential Property Values", (research documents for this study are from 1976-86) and published by the Journal of Real Estate Research, December 20, 1991. Further support came at the BAPE hearings from the Vice President of the Environment Management Committee, who said that an agent told him that values go up, not down, in the vicinity of a dump.

These claims can be easily debated:

1. All major real estate companies serving the Outaouais were asked to provide, in writing, the impact of the proposed mega dump on real estate values in Alleyn-Cawood. **Off the record**, they indicated that, despite a strong demand for cottage properties, the market had already softened in Danford Lake on the news of the proposed dump. They further indicated that there could be a substantial loss in property values should the project be approved. Because of the effect this would have on their ability to make their living, they refused to put this in writing. One very sympathetic agent tried to get all 100 of her peers at the major companies, to sign a petition against the mega dump. Her wording was as follows:

*WE THE UNDERSIGNED, WITH A TOTAL OF HUNDREDS OF YEARS OF EXPERIENCE SELLING REAL ESTATE IN THE GATINEAU HILLS, OPPOSE THE CREATION OF A MEGA LANDFILL (DUMP) IN DANFORD LAKE. WE BELIEVE IT WILL HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE VALUE OF NEARBY AND WATERFRONT PROPERTIES AND THE RESULTING TRAFFIC, POLLUTION ETC WILL BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE LIFESTYLE WE SO PROUDLY HAVE IN THESE GLORIOUS GATINEAU HILLS*

In a BAPE report on the expansion of a landfill at Saint-Thomas, Quebec, it was noted that real estate values near the landfill dropped as much as 20% in some cases.<sup>6</sup> A similar situation occurred near a landfill in New York State, just over the border from Quebec, where a land owner stated that when he applied for a home equity loan, his property was appraised at a value of \$27,000.00 less than when he had purchased it 4 years earlier.<sup>7</sup>

2. This is not 1991, and the small landfills of the past are being replaced by mega landfills. Mega landfills come with a mega environmental price tag, and the public is beginning to notice and speak out. **Coalitions against mega landfills** are now widespread and successful in preventing the expansion of current landfills. In Ottawa, due to public pressure, the largest waste disposal company in North America has given up their fight to expand the Carp dump (currently the size proposed by LDC) and are committed to handling the garbage through more modern methods.<sup>8</sup>
3. You must differentiate the purchase of a recreational property with the purchase or ownership of a family home. The study submitted by LDC addresses residential dwellings. The location of a family home is dependent on many factors – proximity to schools, churches, employment, family, or in the case of many in the village, inherited. Often times, new developments built on the fringe of **existing housing near a dump** will drive up the price in the overall area. When it comes to recreational property, buyers can afford to be more discriminating, and if one location is not suitable, **they will look elsewhere.**

### **What are the options for the person living in the village? Owning a cottage?**

What happens if the impacts become intolerable. Will they sell? Do they have a choice? Is it financially viable?

What if this is the only home they have ever known and they can't or won't leave?

What are the personal and financial impacts of making such a decision?

Will residents/cottagers be able to renew a mortgage on a property which is declining in value?

Would their children want to move away from their grandparents, aunts/uncles and friends and the only community they know?

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<sup>6</sup> BAPE report – Projet d'agrandissement du lieu d'enfouissement sanitaire de Saint-Thomas

<sup>7</sup> Franklin County Public Hearings

<sup>8</sup> Ottawa Citizen article on Incineration

Would they be able to sell their home? Who would buy it?

Would they want to relocate to a new locality where they would feel like an outsider rather than part of a community?

Would they be able to afford to purchase a similar property elsewhere?

Would they still be able to fish and hunt in their own background?

Would noise, vibrations, dust, and gull droppings and rats damage their homes beyond their financial ability to make repairs?

Would the lakes be over colonized by gulls, and become so intolerable and polluted as to make the property impossible to sell? (**Note:** A former president of the cottage association of Little Red Pine Lake, 8 km from the proposed dump site, has told me that her lake is **one of 6 protected lakes in Quebec**. What would be the impact of gull pollution on this lake?)

Will the village become a ghost town once young people move away, and the elderly pass on? What would happen to the long history of Danford Lake?

### **What are their options if they stay?**

Residents of rural communities have a sense of belonging, and are naturally uncomfortable with moving to larger communities, distancing themselves from family and friends. Retaining the existing population is attained by increasing economic security. It is incumbent on the leaders of this community to involve everyone in planning for the future by identifying issues, challenges, and then solutions. Efforts must be made to identify employment and business opportunities, to encourage apprenticeship programs, small business endeavours, and mentoring.

**The status quo is not working, and a mega dump is not a solution.**

## **LOCAL BUSINESSES/FUTURE INVESTORS**

Many of the local businesses depend, not only on local patrons, but on the money brought into the community by cottage owners. Businesses such as Lindale Nurseries, Roger Johnston's Garage, Alan Peck Construction, Miljour's Store, Wayne Tanner's Outfitters on the Picanoc, the local chip stand, and the B&B, would not be able to survive on the patronage of the local community alone. These businesses hire locally. Members of the community are able to find work in construction, clearing lots, providing sand and gravel, building driveways, providing snowplowing and backhoe services, security and maintenance, and selling firewood.

Clubs that use the Picanoc have already expressed concern about using the river due to the introduction of leachate, albeit treated to a certain standard, entering the river upstream from where they launch their boats. Right now water testing indicates that the water is of drinking quality. This concern has the potential for loss of business to outfitters who charge a fee for launching boats at their point on the river. For the paddling community in the National Capital Region (Ottawa & Gatineau region), the spring whitewater run on the Picanoc River is the "jewel in the crown", and as big to them as the "Tulip Festival" (quote from Wally Shaber, Trailhead). They consider the flat water portion "a nice paddle as well".<sup>9</sup>  
<sup>10</sup> What happens to these users when the river becomes polluted, litter is blowing around and floating on the water, noise from machinery from the dump drowns out the peace and tranquility, gulls are fouling the river and screeching overhead, and rats are running along the riverbanks. **They go elsewhere!**

Because of the proximity of the village to Gatineau and Ottawa, and the demand for recreational property<sup>11</sup>, the potential to bring in more businesses and create more employment opportunities is enormous. Politicians at all levels of government have declared that the potential for tourism and eco-tourism in the Outaouais is enormous.<sup>12</sup> The MRC Pontiac call themselves the outdoor centre of the region, and their motto is "You deserve it, we preserve it".<sup>13</sup>

However, the question that must be asked is:

### **Do landfills make good neighbours for other industries?**

Robert Bullard, director of the environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University has stated that the locality of one waste disposal facility tends to attract others and can unintentionally discourage "cleaner" industries. Thus, a landfill "could restrict ... economic prospects without providing offsetting

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<sup>9</sup> Trailhead

<sup>10</sup> Flyer from Radisson Expedition

<sup>11</sup> Articles on demands for cottages

<sup>12</sup> Articles on potential for tourism

<sup>13</sup> Flyer from MRC Pontiac

advantages. Most of these facilities don't even hire people that live in the community", asserts Mr. Bullard. (quoted from "Talking Trash: The economic and environmental issues of Landfills")

Tourism, eco-tourism and land development are **industries of the future** in this region because of its scenic beauty and natural attractions. Increased traffic, safety, air and water pollution, litter, and vermin will compromise the innate potential of the area. A mega dump will significantly detract from the aesthetic and practical appeal of this important tourism destination.

Aggressive marketing will further open this area to tourism, eco-tourism and land development, but this potential is threatened with the introduction of 250,000 tons a year of garbage, and therefore a threat to economic development.

## **HEALTH IMPACTS**

**"To know the road ahead, ask those coming back"**

In order to appreciate our opposition to this mega dump, I direct the Commission to the BAPE report on the expansion of the landfill in Saint-Thomas, Quebec. Many of the concerns reported in my brief are already part of the day to day reality for the people of Saint-Thomas.

Research shows that residents who live near mega dumps are concerned about more than money. For them, these dumps bring noise, odours, pests, litter, air and water pollution, and dangerous truck traffic. This is not in harmony with the vision of the community of Danford Lake?

For the residents of Danford Lake, quality of life is closely associated with a healthy and safe environment, in an enjoyable natural setting. This is the reason why people, including recreation residents, live here.

The list of potential health issues and by extension, safety issues, is wide ranging.

### **1. Odours**

The Village of Danford Lake is downwind from the proposed mega dump. Odours can travel for miles, and accordingly to Waste Management Inc. (ref), can gather in a bowl like setting, similar to that proposed by LDC, then rise as a large plume, and drift down wind. Therefore, the protection of hills in the area of this site will not prevent the migration of odours.

Dumps have significant gaseous emissions that have highly offensive odours and contain hazardous chemicals that are known or suspected human carcinogens. Landfill gas emissions, principally methane and carbon dioxide, contain significant amounts of odorous and hazardous chemicals. Flaring

helps control gas emissions, however it does not eliminate the odours which come from garbage that has just been dumped, and not yet covered and sealed.<sup>14</sup>

Waste Management Inc., the largest landfill company in North America which owns the Carp dump in Stittsville (Ottawa), is again sited for not being able to control the odours.<sup>15</sup>

## **2. Noise**

Noise causes many negative effects from stress, psychological problems, hearing damage, property damage, disturbances and annoyances to day to day life, and loss of enjoyment of property. (see also Transportation/Stress) The communities along Hwys. 105, and 301 can expect an increase in noise caused by the increase in truck traffic along these routes. For some, the situation is already intolerable, and the additional traffic will cause an even greater burden. Residents along the 301 complain that they cannot hear on the phone while a truck is passing by, even with the windows closed.

Speed limits will have to be increased, not decreased as promised) in the village of Danford Lake to cater to the truckers, who would otherwise have difficulty making the hill on the west side of the village. This will only add to noise and stress levels as the trucks ramp up to increase their speed. Some feel this impact alone will be the death knell of the village.

Truck and other vehicular traffic and equipment used at dumps are noisy and can be damaging and disruptive to those on the water, or who use properties near the landfill (i.e. Gilles Pelletier and Charles Pink).

## **3. Air Pollution**

Air pollution is mainly from exhaust emissions from vehicles. Poor air quality results from the particulates in the air from gas emissions and from the dust that is churned up as the traffic drives along the highway. These particulates in the air result in premature deaths, and respirator diseases, such as asthma.

Another potential health hazard comes from the biogas, and other gases that will be emitted from the dump, and drift toward the village. This is a very serious problem around the Saint-Thomas landfill, and we can only predict the community of Danford Lake will suffer the same problems.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> BAPE on Saint-Thomas – Odours (p.73-76)

<sup>15</sup> Provincial Officer's Order

<sup>16</sup> BAPE on Saint-Thomas – Biogaz (p.76-78)

#### 4. Water Pollution

Water quality and aesthetics are important for safe drinking water, and recreational uses of the lakes and rivers as well. Leachate contains a wide variety of conventional and non-conventional contaminants and hazardous chemicals at concentrations where even small amounts of leachate in groundwater, renders the groundwater unusable for domestic water and other purposes.

What does the community do, if all the experts are wrong, and the wells become polluted sooner than predicted? The element of human error is something which cannot be overcome. The dump **will contaminate** ground and surface waters, creeks, streams and rivers. Good quality ground water is the only source of drinking water in the community. Double membrane liners do not eliminate all risks of technological failure or human error. They only postpone it. Many in the community are able to reach good drinking water sources with a sandpoint (a shallow well, where water is available within 20' of the surface). These shallow wells are the most vulnerable to pollution.

Long term health issues, and even death, are a possibility. Has the MRC Pontiac and the Municipality of Alton-Cawood foreseen the restoration of groundwater and surface water if there is an accident? Have they determined how they will compensate the affected property owners when their drinking water becomes polluted, and their health is compromised?

#### 5. Dust

Particulate matter emitted into the atmosphere consists of material in a broad range of diameters. Some will fall to the ground, but the lighter particles will remain suspended in the atmosphere. This is known as "dust". A new study by the Health Effects Institute (HEI), a nonprofit organization funded by government and industry in Cambridge, Massachusetts, states that dust will lodge in the lungs, causing problems, especially for the elderly, in the form of cardiac and lung disease.

#### 6. Vermin

Insects, scavenging birds and rodents, which are present at all mega dumps, have all been identified as vectors of pathogens such as Salmonella, E. coli, Shigella, and Campylobacter, and have the potential to transport diseases to neighbouring communities. Impacts on health and the environment from insects and vermin can be found at landfill waste management facilities throughout the world.

Infestations of insect populations, such as House flies, can be sustained by dumps. Compost material could arrive with an already significant fly infestation. They can arrive naturally, imported from waste transfer stations or arrive directly through the waste processing cycle from commercial and

residential collections. Their numbers soar during summer, when temperatures are high. Flies will migrate to local residencies, resulting in further potential for direct disease transmission from waste management facilities to households. Other insects, such as earwigs, that do not winter over well naturally, are already arriving by cars from the city. The importation of garbage will only increase this phenomena.

Rats pose a significant risk to human health. Rats can be present in large numbers at landfill facilities where they use sites for both breeding and feeding. They are known carriers of numerous diseases such as Leptospirosis, Versiniosis and Cryptosporidium. There is the potential that they will follow the Kaz Creek to the village and start invading homes. This has been a problem in Cantley, Quebec.

Avian vermin such as scavenging corvids and gulls increasingly rely on the foraging opportunities presented by mega dumps. Gulls are a high risk species, and nest in colonies by the thousands, usually at waters' edge. They are known to travel upwards of 50 km a day to roost, hence there is a high potential for transfer of disease by birds over vast areas of land. Gulls have been directly linked to the transfer of Salmonella, and the contamination with fecal bacteria of water courses (i.e. rivers, streams and lakes). Gulls also serve as mechanical vectors of disease organisms that are picked up on their feet and feathers.<sup>17</sup>

During the day, gulls use various sites as "loafing areas" when they are not feeding. These areas often include roofs, open fields, ponds, lakes and rivers, close to the "feeding" areas. They generally spend most of the day loafing, washing and defecating, leaving only occasionally and for short times, to feed at the dump. Gulls have been known to carry and drop garbage, littering area outside the dump site.

Safety is an issue as gulls and other birds are threats to low-flying aircraft, which are frequently seen in this area.

Residents near the Cantley Dump across the Gatineau River, say that their greatest problems are gulls and rats. They report that rats are following the creeks, and are now entering the homes of the residents. Rats are seen squashed on the road like "black pancakes".

Although not related to health, Gulls also have a negative impact on native species. Songbirds, frogs, turtles, and the plentiful crops of wild blueberries and raspberries in the area will be decimated by these voracious eaters.

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<sup>17</sup> BAPE Saint-Thomas – Gulls (p. 93-95 complaints)

Gull control plans do not work, and only drive the birds away from the landfill temporarily, to become a nuisance to neighbouring communities.<sup>18</sup>

## 7. Transportation

Living in an area with noise, such as traffic, has been proven to raise children's blood pressure and stress levels. It was also found that this kind of stress can affect motivation.

Increased or constant noise from traffic has also proven to cause mental and physical stress in the elderly.

An increase in traffic can only increase the number of traffic accidents on an already dangerous, poorly maintained, and overburdened highway. It's not just adding a little more traffic and saying a few more trucks can't hurt – **the situation is unacceptable now**. Pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and vehicle passengers are all potential "traffic victims". The social, financial, and health implications are immeasurable. The expectation that a speed limit will have a positive effect is unreasonable, especially in winter, when trucks must speed up through the village in order to make the hill on the west side of the village.

Families suffer daily from the stress of worrying about their loved ones on the highway going to work, school, or an appointment in town. They worry about whether their child, spouse, family member or friend, will make it safely to their destination and back; will road closures keep them from getting home.

Teens ride their dirt bikes and four wheelers along side Hwy 301. Elderly and disabled people walk along the shoulders. Children play in their yards. These activities can be a real danger for these citizens. Should the dump be approved, they will be stressed even more over pollution, safe roads, (and gulls and rats in their yards), and parents will question whether they should let their children out to play.

The dump will be open Saturday mornings for local garbage collection. This leaves less than a day and a half of relief from garbage trucks each week.

Garbage falling from trucks passing through villages creates unsightly surroundings, and spread the danger of disease. Garbage spills as a result of accidents pose another health threat. The Ministry of Health and Safety expressed their concern at the BAPE hearings that many communities, including Danford Lake, are **not** prepared with an emergency plan. Have the communities along the truck route even been informed that they are responsible for a spill in their jurisdiction?

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<sup>18</sup> Email from Jean MBaranga, Ministry of the Environment

## Conclusion

“Deep doubts, deep wisdom; small doubts, little wisdom”

To date, landfill operators have demonstrated poor records in dealing with problems, accidents, gull control, odour control, pollution of wells, and traffic impacts. You need only to read about the intolerable situations listed on the websites of other communities with established dumps to realize that, in 2007, mega dumps are not the answer.

Once established, the promises made by the developers are forgotten in an effort to make the business profitable. Governments are slow to investigate and fine operators for violations.<sup>19</sup> Complaints fall on deaf ears.<sup>20</sup> When fines **are** levied, they are so insignificant and therefore have no impact on the dump owners; it is just part of the cost of doing business. The drive to make money is to the exclusion of the environmental and safety of the citizens.

ALL residents of Alayn-Cawood feel a complete loss of control over their future. Should this project be approved, they will be forced to accept the garbage of strangers from outside their tiny community, at the expense of their quality of life.<sup>21</sup> The impacts will be difficult, relentless, and unnecessary.

Solutions are already in place. Existing landfills such as Lachute and St. Sophie are able to accept Outaouais garbage, in fact, most of the Outaouais garbage already goes to these locations. Lachute has a capacity of 500,000 tons a year. **Why approve a new landfill with the capacity of 250,000 tons per year? Where will it stop? Do we want to entertain proposals from every private investor who wants to open a dump in the Province of Quebec.**

The difference in the distance to Lachute is minimal. Fuel costs would be insignificant because better highways equal better travel times and safer conditions. In the next few years, the last 2 km of the four lane highway to Lachute will be complete. The risk of serious accidents is far less on a four lane, divided highway, compared to the winding, narrow, and poorly maintained highways leading to Danford Lake.

I do not support landfills as an answer for waste management. We are on the verge of better, cleaner, greener solutions. The federal government is allocating extensive funding for green solutions. The citizens of Quebec, and the rest of Canada, are demanding that their leaders address the problems of global warming. Let's take a second sober look, choose short term and viable solutions for the Outaouais, while our leaders research better technologies that

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<sup>19</sup> Quebec Auditor General's Report January 2007

<sup>20</sup> BAPE Saint-Thomas (p. 114)

<sup>21</sup> Environmental Discrimination (an essay)

are now being used successfully elsewhere, and therefore available to us in the near future.

We must also ask ourselves whether we should approve a project which does not meet the principles for economic development as stated in the Plan de développement durable du Québec (2004):

**Québec's economy needs to perform in respect of the environment, with as goals, innovation and prosperity favourable to social progress.**

The community of Danford Lake is at a crossroad. Will they be allowed to go forward and embrace the benefits of tourism and recreation and in doing so, fulfill the values of their Mission Statement? Or will they be forced to accept the role of dumping ground, which will destroy the area's natural resources, which are what brought us to this community and what keeps us here: The Picanoc River, the Kazabazua River, Mont O'Brien, dozens of pristine lakes, Groves Creek, the forests, the flora and the fauna, and the peace and tranquility.

Preserving the natural environment is a legacy we leave for our children and a responsibility we share with our neighbours. To intentionally allow a project to harm that fragile balance would be to ignore the environmental efforts of the past and to say to future generations that the people of 2007 simply did not care.

We can do better, we must do better.