

*River Rescue*

*Dorothy Seann, 2 papers  
background  
For your information, T.E.*

To county board, state's atty., state & federal legislators, EPA

DECISION OF LIFE(TIME): PDC'S TOXIC WASTE LANDFILL

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CLERK'S OFFICE

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We may never have a more important, vital decision for the Peoria area than the one before us now, to close or not to close the Peoria Disposal Co.'s toxic waste the west edge of the city and in the heart of the county.

It is going to decide our future, both in regard to our health and economic well being, more than we can realize. It's import is still dawning on me, and I suspect, you.

To build right in our midst with the highly toxic wastes of 16 states what will become the highest hill in the county, and do it in exchange for a pittance of money would be a sorry trade for the troubles to health and welfare it would bring. Its hazards would be there, literally, "forever," for eons to come.

The alternative is for the county to stick with its decision of a year ago not to issue a new permit to PDC (which requires it to close the landfill next year when its present permit ends) -- and also see that it is closed in the safest way known, and be an example for that.

Of the 16 toxic waste landfills still remaining in the nation, the one here is by far in the worst, most dangerous location to the health and safety of its area residents, we now know. *And it receives much of the nation's most hazardous waste from 15 other states as well as Illinois and Chicago.*

There are far, far superior -- and safer -- locations for such a landfill, even in the Peoria area as well as throughout the Midwest. For instance, there are over 100,000 acres of mainly open, stripmined land within Peoria and adjacent counties alone. Yet there has been no consideration of such (or other) alternative sites, even though:

1) PDC's present landfill not only sits right on top of the aquifer from which most of the Peoria area's water supply is pumped, but is also the only active toxic waste landfill in the nation even remotely close to a city's water supply source.

2) It is the only such landfill immediately upwind of a community, and its gaseous emissions permeate the air our city must breathe. Recent studies of people living in the vicinity of such landfills elsewhere revealed 40% more birth defects in 5 European countries, twice as many premature births in New Jersey, and 15% more adult strokes in New York state. And in Illinois, Peoria is reported to have a higher cancer rate.

3) Only one other city has a population approximating Peoria's 54,000 within 3 miles of a toxic waste landfill. But Peoria is the only one with houses and apartments crowded right up to its fence, as well as downwind. (Oregon, Ohio, has 43,480 within 3 miles of one, but well away and not downwind. Also, it is suing to block its expansion. Two others have 2,000 and 4,000 residents within 3 miles; only 4 of the other 12 have over 100.)

Illinois law [415 ILCS 5/39(c)] gives a local community sole legal right --

rather than the state -- to deny a permit request to open, or expand, a landfill in its jurisdiction. But only this right. (Little Minonk, IL, used it to block Waste Management, Inc., from siting a landfill for Chicago area waste at Minonk.) All other authority over landfills belongs to the state.

So Peoria County has this one stiletto opportunity to close the PDC landfill, now in operation 79 years. PDC got its toxic waste permit in 1987 (when state regulation of toxic waste began). The county board voted 12 to 6 last May not to issue a new permit. PDC is appealing to the Illinois Pollution Control Board to overturn that decision.

Primarily because of PDC's landfill, the Toxic Release Inventory of the federal EPA lists Peoria County as having by far the greatest amount of toxic pollution in the state, and 16th in the nation. Also, PDC's permit from the EPA allows 843 of the nation's most toxic chemicals to be put in the PDC landfill; and it has applied to add one more, PCBs, a very toxic and residual chemical now banned from usage.

PDC wants to triple the volume of its landfill (2.2 million more tons), which would leave for posterity a 40-acre, 10-story hill of toxic, poisonous waste. (Even half that would double the landfill's present volume.) It would become by far the highest hill in the area.

For Peoria's sake, PDC's toxic waste landfill needs to be closed, and safely. If one is deemed necessary in this region, then a much more appropriate site must be found.

All of the county board's discussions on this have been in closed session. Emphasis of county administrator Patrick Urich has been for the county to begin charging PDC a fee.

*River Rescue's* longheld position is that not one deformed baby, or any increase in strokes or cancer, is worth any amount of money that could be received from PDC to continue dumping there. Its already massive hill of poisonous waste will be there and dangerous, literally, "forever." To double or triple its present size would be foolhardy. PDC's landfill, when much smaller, did break open about 1980, requiring a special federal emergency crew to deal with it.

Closing PDC's landfill will profit society far more than any other route. Moreover, it would also better enable the state to see to the correction of the landfill's many deficiencies, prevent a future environmental catastrophe, and make it an outstanding example of closure.

We and the state need to get this done now while all are on top of the issue -- and PDC is still available to shoulder its financial responsibility -- not the taxpayers.

The county board needs to coalesce on this. Then we know (and legal experts agree) that the Pollution Control Board will definitely rule for the people of Peoria County.

That does not mean we leave PDC behind. There is no reason it can't work with the state EPA to open another landfill in a far safer location.

*Tom Edwards*

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## TO HEAL OUR ENVIRONMENT: CLOSE TOXIC WASTE LANDFILL

By Tom Edwards/River Rescue

5/11/07

If we will, we can bring about a major environmental healing for the Peoria County and City area. The healing would be closure of the Peoria Disposal Co.'s hazardous waste landfill that takes in highly toxic wastes from 15 states, and sits on the west edge of the city off Rt. 8. Its federal-state EPA permit allows 843 such chemicals to be dumped there, and PDC is applying to add one more, PCBs, a now banned chemical.

But not just closure. We must see to it that the Illinois EPA brings about a closure that not only seals away "forever" the couple of million tons of toxic chemicals already there, but also eliminates the gaseous emissions that are constantly emanating from PDC's privately owned landfill into the air Peorians must breathe. *There are even vent pipes!*

However, PDC is appealing to the Illinois Pollution Control Board the Peoria County Board's decision of a year ago to deny a permit for PDC to continue and expand its landfill, which means it must close by next year. Arguments are to be in by June 7.  
*Decision is*

Our research has brought out that the PDC landfill is in, by far, the worst, most dangerous location of any of the nation's 16 still remaining toxic waste landfills:

1) Peoria has the only such landfill that not only sits right over its area's water supply aquifer, but is the only one even remotely close to a community water supply source.

2) And just Peoria not only has a dense population (54,000) living downwind of and within 3 miles of a toxic landfill's fumes, but also has housing projects crowded right up against its perimeter fence. (Oregon, Ohio, has 43,500 within 3 miles of one -- but well away and not downwind. It is suing to block that facility's expansion. Two towns have just 2,000 and 4,000 residents within 3 miles; under 100 live in 8 of the other 12 towns.)

Recent studies of people living in the vicinity of such landfills elsewhere revealed 40% more birth defects in 5 European nations, twice as many premature births in New Jersey, 15% more adult strokes in New York state. In Illinois, Peoria has a higher cancer rate.

But now that we are finally aware, what will our governments do to "forever" remediate this grim situation? Even more, make it an example of safe disposition of toxic waste for the world to follow? But just for now, there are far safer locations for such a landfill in the Midwest -- including over 100,000 stripmined acres in Peoria and adjacent counties.

We can be a bell ringer for a new dawn of waste disposal and treatment. Otherwise we will eventually go the way of the dinosaurs because of our own misdeeds and inattention. Remember, we are just a fraction of an immense developing world -- and most of it, in their desire to be as "wealthy" as us, dump their waste like there is no tomorrow.

The Peoria County Board took a crucial first step when it voted 12 to 6 a year ago not to issue a permit for expansion of the PDC landfill. However, the other six are listening and learning like all of us. And they have caused us to intensify our research and knowledge.

And with them we can take that knowledge to state and federal officials. Perhaps we will be among the world leaders in this. It will help with its salvation, probably vitally so.

**BUT IT'S UP TO US TO MAKE IT HAPPEN**