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The Status of the Closure of the North Wake Landfill March 19, 2008

Recently, there have been a number of comments and questions regarding the closure of the North Wake Landfill directed to the Wake County Solid Waste Division. We will continue to make every effort to keep the citizens in the North Wake Landfill area informed as to the status of the operations and the closure of the landfill and the redevelopment of the site.

The Wake County Solid Waste Division develops projection on the volume of waste that flows through its facilities. Based on those projections the life of the facilities is determined. This is the case with the North Wake Landfill. Projection showed that the landfill would be void of space in the spring to early summer of 2008. Based on those projections Wake County developed the new South Wake Landfill and planned to open it in time to replace the North Wake Landfill. Over the years, the development of the landfill endured planning, environmental permitting, engineering design, changing regulations and legal challenges. However, on February 7, 2008 the South Wake Landfill opened, in plenty of time to close the North Wake Landfill on schedule.

So, why is the North Wake Landfill not closed today?

The other factor in the equation to transition from North Wake to South Wake is the completion of the City of Raleigh transfer station that is being constructed on Highway 64 East just beyond the Beltline. The City of Raleigh facility is where a majority of the waste now being disposed of in North Wake will be taken when it opens. At the City of Raleigh transfer station, the waste will be transferred to large trailers and transported to the South Wake Landfill. The City of Raleigh originally projected that their facility would be complete and ready for service in early March 2008 to coordinate with the opening of South Wake and the subsequent closing of North Wake. The City of Raleigh now estimates that their transfer station will be ready in early May 2008. The City of Raleigh transfer station must be completed, opened and able to accept waste from North Wake before North Wake can be closed.

With the opening of the South Wake Landfill, the large transfer trailers that, in the past, hauled waste for the South Wake Transfer Station (closed 2/7/2008) to the North Wake Landfill are no longer entering or leaving the North Wake Landfill. That waste is now disposed of directly in the South Wake Landfill.

What is being done in the mean time?

The Wake County Solid Waste Division is working closely with the contractor that operates the landfill to see that day-to-day operations continue to be of the highest quality possible. We also communicate daily with the operator to discuss conditions that need to be addressed. We will

continue to take immediate steps to identify reasons for complaints and implement corrective measures if possible.

As the landfill nears capacity, there are some elements of the operations that are, or appear to be different. One difference that may be perceived by viewers is of that waste is being left uncovered at the close of the day. This is not the case. Waste is covered daily, as the regulations require. Nevertheless, what may give the appearance can be associated with two things. First, in the past the "face of the landfill" where the waste is dumped during the day, has purposely been managed to face away from the populated areas around the landfill. This is no longer possible at all times. As we near the top of the landfill the work area becomes smaller and smaller, waste must be methodically placed in certain areas by the operator to achieve contours on top to allow proper drainage after closure. Secondly, an alternative daily cover is sprayed on the waste at the end of the day to cover the waste and to control odors, erosion and vectors. From a distance the thick liquid mixture appears to be a part of the waste rather than a cover material.

Another anomaly as we near completion and the working area becomes smaller is that the bird population seems to become larger. Most of these birds are various types of sea gulls. Generally, speaking most of the sea gulls begin to migrate north in March. We are now seeing the beginning of that exodus. When they return next winter they will find that their food source no longer exists and look for somewhere new to spend their winter.

Windy conditions at the landfill are increasing due to two conditions. First, it is quickly becoming the time of year that this part of the country experiences windy conditions. In addition, the working area is at a higher elevation than it has ever been. The higher up we go the more prominent sustained breezes and wind gusts become. These conditions contribute to increased litter and blowing dust. We adjust our operations on windy days to prevent wind blown litter from escaping the working face of the landfill. We reduce the size of the working face, stage the trucks to block the wind, install berms on top of the landfill to block the wind, install fencing to catch wind blown litter, and require the trucks to wait until the wind subsides before dumping. We now suspend operations if sustained strong winds are experienced at the working face of the landfill. In addition, we also recognize that these conditions may cause increased litter and have stepped up our litter control efforts in and around the facility.

We will continue to keep citizens in the North Wake Landfill area informed as more information becomes available. In addition, personnel from the Solid Waste Division will be available for discussion and question at the Falls River neighborhood meeting scheduled for April 28, 2008.