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DRAFT

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN**

**COMBE FILL SOUTH LANDFILL SITE  
MORRIS COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**EPA WORK ASSIGNMENT  
NUMBER 12.2V56.0**

**NUS PROJECT NUMBER 0718.15**

**JULY 1983**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Community Relations Plan (CRP) for the Combe Fill South Site covers the previous and current involvement and interest of the community with the site. Objectives and techniques recommended for an effective community relations program are also included, as are scheduling and budgeting of activities. A list of parties interested in the site is attached.

The primary sources of information used to prepare this plan include file materials from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region II (USEPA); the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP); the New Jersey Department of Health; the Washington and Chester Townships Boards of Health; the NUS Region II Field Investigation Team Office; the Upper Raritan Watershed Association; and a citizens organization Help Avoid a Landfill Tragedy (HALT). Additional information came from telephone interviews with state and local officials involved in the site and from the "Remedial Action Master Plan for the Combe Fill South Site" prepared by NUS Corporation.

The EPA will retain the lead in the implementation of the community relations program. The contractor will provide support as requested.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS HISTORY

### 2.1 Site History

The Combe Fill South Site is located in Chester and Washington Townships in Morris County, New Jersey. The site, an inactive sanitary landfill, covers between 60 and 100 acres, with the bulk of the landfilled area in Chester Township. The entrance to the site is located on Parker Road, one mile west of the Chester Township Municipal Building. Parker Road borders the site to the east and south, private properties on Schoolhouse Lane and East Valley Brook Road border the site on the north, and a 50-acre tract of hardwood wetland borders the site to the west-southwest. This wetland is the headwaters of Trout Brook, a tributary of the Lamington River. To the southeast beyond Parker Road lies Hacklebarney State Park, a popular recreational facility.

The site itself contains an old fill area, a new landfill area, and two open fields. There are no records of the wastes deposited in the old fill area, which may date from the 1940's. Local residents have suggested that the open fields on the site may have been used in the past for unauthorized disposal of chemical and industrial wastes. The site is not fenced, although vehicular access is restricted in the new fill area by mounds of dirt on the road. The site may be entered on foot from adjoining properties. The nature of complaints made by residents and registered at the township health offices shows that they have entered the site.

Combe Fill South Site was operated as a landfill since the 1940's. On December 12, 1972 the site was certified and approved for the disposal of non-hazardous municipal waste. On September 5, 1978, a change of ownership for the site was approved. Waste disposal was discontinued in September 1981, although reclamation activities continued until mid-1982.

The site was approved for the disposal of municipal and industrial wastes, sewage sludge, septic tank wastes, chemicals, and waste oils, although the presence of organic chemicals and toxic metals has been documented in surface and

groundwater testing programs. In 1973 toxic discharge from a leachate collection basin on the site was identified as a probable cause of a fish kill in Trout Brook. There are numerous seeps on the faces of both the old and new fill areas, and some of the numerous residential wells within one mile of the site have been contaminated with volatile organics and toxic heavy metals.

In January and February of 1981 the landfill corporation began clearing portions of the wetland for use as an additional disposal area. On March 3, 1981, Chester and Washington Townships sued the corporation, and numerous complaints from residents and environmental groups were registered with the NJDEP. In April 1981 the Upper Raritan Watershed Association took monitoring well and surface water samples. The citizens' organization, HALT, organized an analysis of 90 residential wells. Additional sampling of residential water supplies on Parker Road, Schoolhouse Lane and Valley Brook Road was performed on July 17, 1981 by the State Division of Water Resources. Because of contamination and residential complaints, the landfill was closed in September 1981.

The Combe Fill South Site was added to the National Priorities List in December 1981.

## **2.2 Community Relations History**

Apparently the Combe Fill South Site generated citizen interest at least as far back as the early 1970's. General complaints seem to have involved blowing trash, odors, and noise from trucks. File information indicates that there was a leachate problem in the early 1970's contaminating a brook on residential property bordering the site.

In 1979 citizen concern about the landfill surfaced again. Numerous complaints about odors were made by nearby residents. One resident registered concern about a leachate spring that was bubbling up near a pond on his property,

contaminating the pond and a nearby brook and then flowing into Hacklebourne State Park.

Citizen concerns continued the following year. Specifically, community members were upset because there was no monitoring of what went into the landfill, no monitoring of groundwater quality, and no monitoring of residential drinking water. There was also concern that the Upper Raritan Watershed was in danger. Residents felt that trucks traveling to the landfill not only caused noise but caused damage to the roads, a liability that they as tax payers had to absorb. One resident mentioned that the trucks were a danger because the truck drivers seemed to be careless.

Community outcry increased significantly in January and February of 1981, when the landfill company began clearing the hardwood wetland on the site to make room for the disposal of additional waste. Residents sent numerous mailgrams and letters to state officials demanding that the clearing operation be stopped immediately. Apparently the citizens were concerned about additional water contamination and about the destruction of wildlife habitat. On March 3, 1981 Chester and Washington Townships brought suit against the landfill; the NJDEP ordered the landfill to stop activities on March 19, 1981.

Because of citizen concern over water quality, a sampling program was begun in April with funds donated by both townships and the Upper Raritan Watershed Association. Well and surface water samples were taken.

Citizen concern with the landfill was also reflected by the organization of a local group, HALT. Apparently the group was organized to test for volatile organics in water in the area of Parker and East Valley Brook Roads. Files also indicate that the group was considering seeking an injunction against the landfill. According to a local official, HALT was a very active organization that sponsored many meetings, demonstrations, and slide programs, and encouraged letter writing campaigns. Residents of both townships were HALT members.

A informal alliance of neighbors in the vicinity of East Valley Brook Road was also formed to oppose the landfill. Not only did these residents write letters to state officials and register complaints about the landfill, but they petitioned to have private residential wells monitored and the landfill closed. Membership in this alliance may overlap with membership in HALT.

Water testing continued, with HALT having samples from ninety wells analyzed and the Division of Water Resources testing residential water supplies along Parker Road, Schoolhouse Lane, and Valley Brook Road. The Washington Township Health Department suggested that at least one resident drink bottled water because of well contamination.

Concern over the landfill has continued. Some residents are having their wells monitored privately. Others have installed filters or are drinking bottled water. HALT is still active in the community, although a core group is carrying on activities which seem to be confined to organizational meetings. A local official noted that the group still has its telephone contact lists and is still capable of generating general community interest in the site.

The Raritan Watershed Association, which was instrumental in securing water testing in 1981, has also continued to be interested in the site. Representatives of the association recently toured the site with federal and state officials. The director of the watershed association has been quoted in the media as urging local residents to get involved in the cleanup activities.

Local media interest in the site has been evident, but media coverage has not been particularly heavy. Reporting seems to be accurate. A local official noted that Washington Township receives regular inquiries from the press asking for the latest information on the site cleanup.

### 3.0 ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Of primary concern to community members in the area of the Combe Fill South Site is the issue of surface and groundwater contamination. Residents, all of whom seem to rely on private wells for water, are concerned about groundwater contamination. The local watershed association is concerned that water quality of the surface waters has declined and that it will continue to decline until the cleanup is accomplished. Some residents are also concerned about surface water contamination and the effect contamination will have on wildlife.

Coupled with concern over water contamination is community concern over health issues. Some residents are still drinking bottled water because they do not want to drink contaminated water. There has been some concern that heavy metals will concentrate in fish that are caught in nearby recreational areas and will be subsequently used for human consumption.

Some residents have also expressed concern over the possibility that property values will decline because of the contamination. A recent newspaper article noted that several new houses in the area were still vacant and that residents along Parker Road were trying to sell their houses.

Also mentioned as community concerns were the potential harm to the hardwood wetlands in the area, the financial hardships caused by buying bottled water, and the potential harm to recreational areas downstream from the site.

#### **4.0 COMMUNITY RELATIONS OBJECTIVES**

The following community relations objectives are recommended for the community relations program at the Combe Fill South Site:

- To provide accurate and timely information to community members in order to keep them up to date on site plans and progress and to encourage effective communications with government agencies.
- To establish effective communication between government agencies and local officials so that officials are kept informed of site activities and can respond knowledgeably to inquiries from community members.
- To promote effective communication between government agencies and the media and to provide media representatives with accurate information on site plans and progress.
- To provide opportunities for community members to comment on remedial alternatives being considered and to seek opinions of community members and public officials on remedial action at the site.
- To foster cooperation between residents of the different townships involved, between local officials of each township, and between other organizations interested in the site to foster cooperation among these segments of the community.

## 5.0 COMMUNITY RELATIONS TECHNIQUES

The following techniques are recommended to meet the objectives listed in Section 4.0:

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Techniques</u>
To provide accurate and timely information to community members in order to keep them up to date on site plans and progress and to encourage effective communications with government agencies.	Issue fact sheets monthly.  Create an information repository at a convenient location in each township.  Issue press releases.  Attend citizen group meetings.
To establish effective communication between government agencies and local officials so that officials are kept informed of site activities and can respond knowledgeably to inquiries from community members.	Issue monthly fact sheets.  Conduct briefings of officials.
To promote effective communication between government agencies and the media and to provide media representatives with accurate information on site plans and progress.	Provide media representatives with contact telephone numbers and a press kit before work at the site commences.  Issue press releases.  Provide opportunities for media representatives to cover onsite activities if feasible.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Techniques</u>
To provide opportunities for community members to comment on remedial alternatives being considered and to seek opinions of community members and public officials on remedial action at the site.	Conduct public meetings to solicit input from community members.  Conduct small group meetings with residents in affected neighborhoods.
To foster cooperation between residents of the different townships involved, between local officials of each township, and between other organizations interested in the site. To foster cooperation among these segments of the community.	Encourage communication and participation by all interested groups at public meetings.

## 6.0 SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

A list of major project steps and the specific community relations activities that should accompany each step follows. Because community relations activities are closely related to technical progress at the site, they should be conducted in conjunction with technical work.

### 1. Remedial Investigation

- Conduct a briefing of public officials on plans for site work.
- Issue a press release on plans for site work. Provide media representatives with contact telephone numbers and a press kit.
- Conduct a public meeting to present plans for the investigation and site work.
- Issue fact sheets monthly on site plans and progress.
- Conduct briefings to update officials on site progress.
- Conduct public consultations in affected neighborhoods to get citizen input on site activities.
- Establish an information repository in each township involved with the site and announce the availability of these resources with a press release.
- Attend meetings of citizen organizations.
- At the conclusion of the remedial investigation, brief officials and issue press releases on investigation results.

- Conduct a public meeting to present the remedial alternatives to be considered and to solicit public input.

2. Feasibility Study

- Conduct a briefing of public officials and issue press releases on remedial alternatives being considered.
- Issue fact sheets monthly.
- Conduct public consultations to inform affected residents on the remedial alternatives being considered.
- Attend meetings of citizen organizations to get input on remedial alternatives being considered.
- Hold a public meeting to explain the findings of the study, to announce the selected alternatives, and to announce the three-week comment period.

## 7.0 BUDGET AND STAFFING PLAN

Following is a list of the community relations activities required during the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study at the Combe Fill South Site. Some activities can be coordinated to reduce costs and to increase staff effectiveness. Because local and regional interest in the site may fluctuate during the course of site work, it is recommended that a reassessment be conducted prior to implementation of the remedial action. The following figures apply to the initial community relations activities.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Work Hours</u>
Press Releases (4)	16
Fact Sheets (12)	192
Information Repositories (2)	8
Community Meetings (3)	192
Briefing of Public Officials (4)	64
Attendance at Citizens' Group Meetings (6)	48
Public Consultations (6)	24

## 8.0 INTERESTED PARTIES

### Local Officials

#### Washington Township

Washington Township Municipal Offices

43 Schooleys Mt. Road, P.O. Box 216

Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

201-876-3315

Mary Lou Pruent, Sanitarian

Brenda Payne, Washington Township Committee, Township Administrator

Edward Shields, Washington Township Mayor

Tracy Tobin, Washington Township Committee

#### Chester Township

Township of Chester

Box 428

Chester, New Jersey 07930

201-788-6900

June Smith, Board of Health

Lorette Skinner Chester Township Council

Frank Addressa, Mayor

Edward Russo - Township Councilman

**Local Officials**

Morris County Board of Freeholders

Morristown, New Jersey

Frederick Knox, Jr., Freeholder

Patricia Maynard, Freeholder

**Federal Officials**

Senator William Bradley

731 Senate Hart Office Building

62nd Street and Constitution Avenue, N. E.

Washington, D. C. 20510

202-224-3224

Home Office:

1605 Vauxhall Road

Union, New Jersey 07083

201-688-0960

Senator Frank Lautenberg

372 Senate Russell Office Building

Constitution Avenue, N. E.

Washington, D. C. 20510

Home Office:

970 Broad Street

Newark, New Jersey 07102

201-645-3030

DRAFT

Representative James A. Courter  
325 Cannon House Office Building  
Independence Avenue, S. E.  
Washington, D. C. 20515  
202-225-5801

Home Office:  
P.O. Box Building  
1 Morris Street  
Morristown, New Jersey 07960  
201-538-7267

**State Officials**

Governor Thomas Kean  
609-292-6000

Mr. Lino Periera  
Administrator  
Solid Waste Administration  
P.O. Box CN-027  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

John Castner  
Solid Waste Administration  
32 East Hanover Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625  
609-292-0241

Beth Davison  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
Trenton, New Jersey  
609-984-3081

Richard Zimmer  
New Jersey State Assembly  
District 23

**Organizations**

Upper Raritan Watershed Association  
David Peifer, Executive Director  
201-234-1852

HALT  
Box 113  
Chester, New Jersey 07930  
Mrs. Shirley York - Chester Township Contact Person  
Lee Tucker - Washington Township Contact Person  
201-879-6033

**Interested Residents**

Washington Township

Judy & Frank Tormey  
5 Green Hills Road  
Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

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Audrey & Dick McIntyre  
159 E. Valley Broad Road  
Long Valley, New Jersey 07853  
201-876-4217

East Valley Brook Road Citizens:

Mr. Bodo Baltycki  
157A E. Valley Brook Road  
Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

Audrey & Dick McIntyre

Fred & Grace Nast  
161 E. Valley Road  
Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

Jonathan & Maryann Brown

Chris & Walt Harding  
P.O. Box 173  
Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

Marguerite & Charles Crotsley  
153 E. Valley Brook Road  
Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

Robert F. Carruth  
Louise M. Ling  
Robert Crew

DRAFT

Hut Uliatus  
Germaine Carl  
Gwen Harris  
Martha Nusiak  
Peter Joseph  
Robert Taggart  
Marge Gural  
Kathi Jayne  
Gertrude LaBash  
Judith Bonkoski  
Ronald Ruthner  
Helga Plemenik  
Kay Quelle

Virginia Eitner  
96 E. Valley Brook Road  
Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

Scrivens  
151 E. Valley Brook Road  
Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

Chester Township

Dr. & Mrs. John Coshen  
1039A State Park Road  
Chester, New Jersey 07930

Howard Steinfield  
Parker Road Box 962  
Chester, New Jersey 07930

**Media**

Kevin Granville

Staff Writer

**Daily Record**

Morristown, New Jersey

**Observer Tribune**

Lorraine Pelter, Editor

201-879-4100

**Morristown Daily Record**

Morristown, New Jersey

**Newark Star-Ledger**

Newark, New Jersey

WRNJ Radio

Hackettstown, New Jersey

WNUR-AM

1700 Union Avenue

Union, New Jersey 07083

Bill Franklin, Assignment Editor

WERA-AM

120 W. Seventh Street

Plainfield, New Jersey 07060

201/755-1590

"Newsline"

Mark Wurzburger - Host/contact

**"Sideline"**

Barbara Ballard - Host/contact

**"Ask Your Neighbor"**

Peter Jaye - Host/contact

**WRAN-AM**

Box 1510

Dover, New Jersey 07801

201/366-1543

Frank Scafida, News Director

**"Shirley Lazarus Show"**

Shirley Lazarus - Host/contact

**"Morris Hills Regional Report"**

Pat Caruso - Host

**WWHT-TV**

390 W. Market Street

Newark, New Jersey 07107

Bob Fasbender, Assignment Editor

**WNJU-TV**

1020 Broad Street

Newark, New Jersey 07102

Hector Valdeparres, News Director

**U. S. Environmental Protection Agency**

Lillian Johnson

Office of Public Affairs

212-264-4534

DRAFT

Bob Goltz  
Project Officer  
212-264-9212

**Public Meeting Locations and Information Repositories**

Chester Township Municipal Building  
Washington Township Municipal Building