

Responses to Questions asked at the Project Overview Meeting #4

December 17, 2024, City of Old Town, Town Hall

Below are the questions and answers provided at the fourth Public Overview Meeting held by BGS and NEWSME about the proposed Phase II Expansion of the Juniper Ridge Landfill in Old Town. Both questions and answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

1. What is depredation, in the context of seagulls at the landfill?

Depredation is damage or loss caused by birds. Depredation includes agricultural damage, private property damage, threats to human health and safety, and threats to recovery of protected wildlife.

A federal depredation permit authorizes one to capture or kill birds to help reduce damage to agricultural crops/livestock, private property, human health & safety (including at airports), and protect wildlife. A depredation permit is meant to be used with other non-lethal measures to help eliminate or significantly reduce the problem.

2. Where will the seagulls go if the deterrent measures are effective at JRL?

The deterrent measures are designed to minimize the food source and roosts available at JRL, as well as adding bird scare equipment. This should make the landfill less attractive to the birds. While the birds may initially go to other nearby locations, since there is no other potential large food source nearby, they are expected to ultimately scatter to other more remote locations along the migration corridor where they will be less of a nuisance.

Outside of JRL and the Old Town Municipal Airport, The Wildlife Hazards Site Visit (WHSV) Report conducted by Stantec identified 13 additional sites as potential attractants for hazardous wildlife within a 5-mile radius of the airport, or as potential gull roosting sites outside of the 5-mile radius.

Two large concentrations of roosting gulls were observed during the WHSV with one flock observed on a small island on the Penobscot River near downtown Old Town, and the second at Perch Pond.

3. What happens to the seagulls after they have been culled?

Regulations require that any animals culled as part of a depredation permit must be buried. Any gulls would be disposed of in the landfill.

4. Who is responsible for implementing the deterrents, and what is the cost?

Casella is responsible for providing any vector deterrents at JRL.

5. What methods other than depredation is Casella proposing to manage seagulls?

Other methods to limit the impact of seagulls at JRL include minimizing open fact of the landfill to reduces access to food and the use of noisemakers, such as Zon guns, and the physical presence of JRL staff to scare birds away.

6. What is the size of the 25-year storm used to calculate the sizing for leachate collection infrastructure?

The 24-hour 25-year storm used in the calculations at JRL is 4.9 inches as prescribed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP) Chapter 500 rules for southern Penobscot County.

7. What safeguards are in place to ensure there is not a leachate outbreak caused by either mechanical failure or large storm events?

The landfill cells are designed to drain by gravity down to the base of the cell and then pumped to the leachate storage tank through a series of pipes. The leachate storage tank was engineered with a capacity to store leachate flows from a 25-year storm event during a wet period and has at least 25% additional capacity without discharge of leachate. A second leachate tank will be added as part of the Phase II Expansion. The tank's secondary containment, which is designed to contain any leachate leaks from the leachate storage tank, is engineered to have 10% more capacity than the largest leachate storage tank.

8. Where are test points within the leachate collection system to check for possible failures (leaks)?

The first place that a leak would be detected within the collection system would be from the pump stations. These pumps are monitored daily for flow volumes. Eight leak detection system sampling points and 18 underdrain sampling points will be checked monthly. Fifty-six monitoring wells around the site will be tested 3 times a year.

9. Was it methane or trash that was burning during the fire in 2023?

The fire that broke out at JRL burned the waste in the landfill, not the landfill gas.

10. Why are flares for Casella's Thiopaq System and the flare for the Renewable Natural Gas Plant running at the same time?

The Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) plant is in the process of being commissioned. Once commissioned, the gas will be directed primarily to the RNG facility to be turned into renewable natural gas and an put into the natural gas pipeline for reuse. The JRL flare will be kept as a backup in the event that the RNG plant cannot accept some or all of the landfill gas. At times both flares may need to run to ensure both emissions and odors onsite are controlled. The flare at the RNG Plant is designed to operate automatically when the plant has a shut down, is running at partial capacity, or if gas generated from the facility doesn't meet proper pipeline specifications and can't be sold.

11. What is the mitigation strategy for contaminated ground water wells?

The exact details would depend on the circumstances, but the most likely approach would be to drill additional wells that would pump out the contaminated groundwater, which would be collected, and sent to an appropriate treatment facility.

12. Would Casella consider a warning siren for emergency situations?

The use of a warning siren will not be considered, but Casella would consider the implementation of some other form of early notification system for emergency situations for immediate property abutters.

13. Will all PFAS compounds be eliminated with the new treatment system?

There are thousands of PFAS compounds that have been created by manufacturers. Currently there are two PFAS compounds that are identified as hazardous by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and six PFAS compounds regulated under the drinking water standards by the MEDEP. There are currently no standards for PFAS in landfill leachate, so the treatment system will be standards that are yet to be established by the MEDEP during the licensing process for the Phase II Expansion, per the Public Benefit Determination.