



Bi-County landfill is currently undergoing some challenges with permitted air space. Since people are paying attention to what is happening with the landfill we thought we would take this opportunity to share facts with the public. We will do this with our myth and fact starting out with rumors and clarifying it with a fact. For definitions of terms please visit [www.mcgtm.org/bi-county](http://www.mcgtm.org/bi-county).

**Myth:** The Bi-County landfill is out of space.

**Fact:** Because of the land swap with Fort Campbell in 2008, our landfill has at least seven decades of life remaining. The anticipated timeline of where we are as well as our intermediate and long term plans are as follows:

- As of June 15, we have 8 months of space left in our currently used permitted area.
- Engineers and geologists are working to have a section of landfill space permitted and approved by this summer which will provide us with an additional 18 months while simultaneously
- preparing the permitting on another location that will provide 4 additional years bringing us into 2023.
- As these sections are prepared, we will continue going through the necessary processes and planning to start developing the Fort Campbell land that was acquired through a land swap. The larger portion of the land is expected to provide almost 70 more years of space once the permitting has been approved.

**Myth:** Residents of Montgomery and Stewart Counties will need to send their trash to another landfill.

**Fact:** Refuse from residents in Montgomery and Stewart Counties as well as Fort Campbell will continue to go to the Bi-County landfill as usual. There are no immediate or long-term plans to send the trash to any other location.

**Myth:** Bi-County Landfill is supported by tax dollars.

**Truth:** In 1994 Bi-County began to operate as an enterprise fund, no longer using tax dollars. Since then, the funding sources for Bi-County have been through user fees, tipping fees and recycling income.

**Myth:** A landfill is the same as a dump

**Truth:** A landfill is very different than a dump. Dumps are a thing of the past and are illegal in the United States because of environmental concerns. Prepping, operating and maintaining a landfill is a lengthy, complex and ongoing process. The primary objective of a landfill site is to provide effective control measures to prevent or reduce negative effects on the environment, in particular the pollution of surface water, groundwater, soil and air.

**Myth:** Landfill space is the same as airspace.

**Fact:** Landfill Space refers to the amount of acreage that is available for the permitting process. Once landfill space is permitted for the acceptance of waste, AirSpace is how much trash can go into that permitted area (going upward into the air). Landfill space must be tested, prepared and permitted before it can be used for waste disposal. Permitting a landfill requires a lengthy permitting process that must be done in sections, not all at one time.

**Myth:** I'm being hit twice for the same thing. I pay a trash service and I pay a landfill fee.

**Fact:** If you pay a private company to pick-up your trash, you are paying for the convenience of using their services to pick up your trash **not** the landfill user fee. The User Fee is used to cover costs of convenience center operations. Centers are subsidized by tipping fees as well. The convenience/recycling centers are open to all Montgomery and Stewart County residents for trash drop off and recycling. The main landfill is open to residents for large items/loads that trash services cannot handle, latex paint, and electronics. Residents also have access to Household Hazardous Waste Collection days at no additional cost.

**Myth:** Running a landfill is no big deal.

**Fact:** Running a landfill is a **major responsibility** that requires complex processes, procedures and policies. A landfill is a commodity that all communities need. Gone are the days when you would find an unused piece of land and just start throwing in your trash.

Steps in preparing a landfill site:

- Identify the area that will be used on the landfill site
- Perform geological studies
- Perform an environmental study
- Perform engineering studies
- Excavate designated area

How a landfill is constructed:

- Groundwater. Geologists look for the groundwater table and work up from there.
- Soil is removed to a subgrade level
- Compacted clay – (Clay must be compacted in layers. Six inches per layer until a two foot clay liner has been installed and meets specific standards.)
- Plastic liner – a 60 mi. HDPE plastic liner is installed. The liner has to be welded into one solid piece.) Another geo-textile liner is installed for added protection.
- Leachate collection piping system is installed.
- Washed Stone - A layer of washed stone is installed. The stone has a dual purpose: 1. Protecting the liners when trucks and equipment are present and as a filtration system for leachate (see explanation below)
- Gas Venting - As trash decomposes it produces Methane Gas. Therefore, a gas piping system is installed to collect the gas for the generation of electricity.
- Trash/Garbage - Now the site is ready to accept and process the trash/garbage.

- Daily Cover - The trash/garbage must be covered daily to minimize odor, animal scavenging, and wind. Bi-County uses a daily cover material and covers with soil as required by the State every 14 days. Soil coverage takes available air space, but is required.
- Leachate– leachate is any liquid that comes in contact with the trash such as rain water or the juices produced when garbage decomposes. Leachate filters through the stone into a collection system where it is pumped into a treatment lagoon.

**Myth:** We are running out of space because of taking trash from outside counties.

**Fact:** We are not running out of landfill space. Our permitting process is taking longer than anticipated because of challenges with the permitting process. Professionals from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation along with a private engineering company are working diligently with Bi-County personnel to finish preparing and permitting various areas of the site to handle more waste.

**Myth:** The Bi-County Landfill was taking waste from outside counties just to make money.

**Fact:** Bi-County has been taking trash from other counties to save money. By accepting trash from outside counties, Bi-County has been able to offset the costs of the landfill user fee to our own citizens. By accepting waste from other locations, Bi-County has been able to keep Tipping Fees charged to private haulers lower. Like shopping at a wholesale warehouse, when you purchase goods in bulk you get a better deal and when things are sold in bulk the seller is able to provide a better deal. There has been only one increase of \$2, that only affected those using private haulers, in the last 20 years.

**Myth:** Bringing in trash from other counties not only takes up landfill space but also costs more in personnel and time.

**Fact:** Whether the landfill receives 400 tons of garbage a day or 700 tons of garbage per day, it takes the same amount of personnel and time to handle the trash. The volume makes no difference.

**Myth:** There is nothing I can do as an individual to make a difference.

**Fact:** We can all make a difference. Reducing the amount of garbage you create and recycling are always helpful. As a matter of fact, recycling saves two days of space per month.

**Myth:** An increase in tipping fees will mean a big increase in my garbage bill.

**Fact:** As Bi-County looks at alternatives to accepting trash from outside counties, which has been the main source of keeping landfill user fees and tipping fees low, one of the options is to increase the tipping fee to private haulers by \$5 per ton. The average household size in Clarksville is 2.9. If rates are passed on proportionately to customer households (based on average household size) there would be an increase of approximately \$12 per year or \$1 per month per family.

<http://www.cleanenergyprojects.com/Landfill-Tipping-Fees-in-USA-2013.html>

**Myth:** Bi-County landfill user fees are high.

**Fact:** Bi-County landfill tipping fees also known in other landfills as gate fees are lower than more than 2/3rds of landfills across the U.S. It is challenging to compare the rates because communities

charge these fees in many different ways. Our neighbors in Dickson County pay \$15 a month in user fees, in some counties residents are charged for each bag of trash or by the weight and in other places residents are charged a landfill fee as well as additional charges for items that they bring to the landfill.

Average monthly garbage rates in the United States are between \$40-\$42 per month, partially caused by high tipping fees. Clarksville-Montgomery County residents pay an average of \$15 per month for the convenience of garbage pick-up.

**Myth:** Once a landfill is closed out, we no longer need to worry about it.

**Fact:** A landfill site is required to be monitored and maintained for 30 years after closure.

This information and more can also be found at <https://mcgtn.org/bi-county>.