

Search broadens for CIP wet lagoon solution

By André Dumont

HAWKESBURY – The pace in the search for a clean-up option for Hawkesbury's CIP wet lagoon is picking up.

The lagoon was visited last Thursday by Moose Creek landfill site owner André Laflèche.

According to information obtained by The Review, a company from the United States was also invited some time this week to inspect the wastewater pond left behind by the Canadian International Paper (CIP) company in 1985.

Last Wednesday, Hawkesbury council was briefed about these visits and presented with the four closure scenarios outlined in a report by Conestoga-Rovers and Associates (CRA).

But according to Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) project manager Suzanne Lafrance, two of the Ottawa firm's suggested options are already ruled out.

"We are not being held back by the report's four options. We are already studying other possibilities," Lafrance added.

"We are trying to find business opportunities," she explained. "There may be possibilities to sell the sludge. There is nothing contaminated in it. Maybe it could be used as fertilizer."

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More possibilities for CIP lagoon beyond existing options

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Lafrance acknowledged the CIP lagoon was being visited, but did not give further information on talks with potential private sector partners.

"I already have some ideas, but I need more information," André Lafèche told *The Review* before going to visit the lagoon the CIP built in 1965 by linking four islands in the Ottawa River.

Lafèche Environmental is expecting to soon be able to treat soils contaminated with hydrocarbons. It already recycles tires. Biogas should be extracted from decomposing garbage starting this fall.

Lafrance's presentation to council was held in a closed meeting. She said some matters discussed needed to remain confidential.

When asked why the CIP remediation planning is being handled behind closed doors, MPP Jean-Marc Lalonde said the situation was similar to a municipality negotiating the sale of a property.

"I wouldn't call it secrecy. The two adjacent property owners are aware of everything," Lalonde said, referring to ASCO and Hawkesbury Riverfront Estates.

Lafrance was also reluctant to provide *The Review* with CRA's report, but agreed to outline the four options and their cost.

The first option would have the CIP lagoon left as is and continue to be monitored for odors. This would cost between \$2

and \$5 million.

"This option is rejected, because (Natural Resources) minister Ramsay promised action leading to a clean-up and this is not a clean-up," Lafrance said.

Option 2A would involve excavating the sludge and burying it on site after dewatering it. Estimated cost is \$19 million.

Option 2B would see the sludge remain in the lagoon under a submerged geotextile cover. This option would cost \$12 million. It has already been ruled out because of potential odor problems and aesthetic concerns.

Option 2C would be similar to 2A, with the dewatered sludge being buried further away on the same site. The cost is estimated at \$51 million.

The last option would have the lagoon fully excavated and its sludge trucked away. CRA's cost estimate is \$69 million.

"We are wondering how one can come up with such cost differences. That is why we are meeting with potential partners," MPP Lalonde said.

According to Lalonde, one of the two dry lagoon owners has mentioned he knew of a similar site containing a lot more sludge that was cleaned-up for \$12 million.

Lafrance insisted that no option has yet been chosen. "We are studying more possibilities in order to reduce cost."

No one expects the Town of Hawkesbury to pick up the entire tab, Lafrance said. But the MNR, which owns the site, is also not to be expected to pour out millions.

"We are looking for partnerships," Lafrance said. "We are trying to find cost-sharing and business opportunities with the private sector."

The plant closed in 1980. The 25-acre wet lagoon was later partly filled with solid demolition waste. Its actual content is not known to be hazardous, but on warm summer days, unpleasant odours can emanate from the site.

So far, Hawkesbury Mayor Jeanne Charlebois has had a few meetings with Lafrance and the neighbouring dry lagoon owners (Kennedy and As-saly families).

At its June 25 regular meeting, council issued a call for tenders for a socio-economical impact study of remediation scenarios for the CIP lagoons.

The study is intended to examine what impact each clean-up option will have on Hawkesbury residents and businesses.