

Letter: Look before we leap on landfill capping

To the editor:

While acknowledging the dictate for the capping of the landfill and of the great need for soccer fields, it seems that more thought and caution is imperative before grave errors are made.

At first blush, it appears that the capping would be a win/win situation, but let's consider some of the ramifications if we rush blindly ahead while there are so many unanswered questions.

None of the capped landfills that we visited had the same conditions that exist in our situation. We not only have a very precious watershed in the immediate area, but many residents who would be disturbed by the extreme number of very heavy load-bearing trucks rumbling by their homes for three years or so. Eighteen thousand trucks in and 18,000 trucks out, a tremendous burden to our roads.

Several other cities and towns had their landfills capped, many of whom reported problems ranging from fairly moderate to very severe. Let's learn from their experiences.

As for getting "free" soccer fields, consider this -- the area will be a 24-acre lot tapering sharply to a 14-acre mesa, 70 or more feet high. The grasses used to hold the soil in place are a coarse variety resulting in a very lumpy surface. The domed usable area would need to be built up and leveled, at taxpayers' expense. This leveling would require more trucks, more traffic and unknown thousands of tons of dirt to bring it up to a playable level. It would need to be seeded, watered, mowed and maintained by the taxpayers of the city. It would require hauling equipment up a steep incline, without disturbing the surface, prescribed by the DEP.

It would require a parking area and oversight of all activities. Last, but by no means least, the area would be vented to release the buildup of gases. It is known that birds build nests in the open vents and die from the fumes. If used for recreational purposes, it would require a different gas-burning venting system.

Is this scheme one that we should rush into without a great deal of more consideration?

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