

Fresh Kills

The Largest Landfill in the World



Fresh Kills measured over 1600 football fields in size, and in some areas was taller than the Statue of Liberty.



The landfill, located on Staten Island New York, was opened in 1948 as a temporary landfill, but in 7 short years it became the largest in the world and remained so until its closure in 2001.



During operation, a landfill must continuously monitor groundwater to prevent contamination. After closure, the monitoring must continue for 30 years.

During its peak of operation, Fresh Kills received 29,000 tons of residential waste PER DAY.



This iconic photograph was taken in 1986. It appeared in a national magazine and was instrumental in raising public awareness on the negative impact humans can have on the environment. The image served as a wake-up call for many of us.



An Unexpected and Embarrassing Voyage

Over 30 years ago, a garbage barge carrying over 3100 tons of New York City household trash set sail for North Carolina. In an effort to save money, officials decided to hire a private disposal company to transfer the waste out of state. But the plan backfired. North Carolina officials, fielding complaints from residents who saw the barge trying to dock, wanted nothing to do with the fetid cargo. After being turned away, the barge meandered from place to place for two months, desperately looking for a dump site. It would be turned away by Louisiana, Texas, Florida and Belize. Authorities in Mexico and Cuba threatened to fire artillery at the barge if it tried to dock. New York officials finally negotiated a deal to have the garbage sent back home and burned in Brooklyn with its ash buried in an Islip Town landfill.



The barge logged about 6000 miles at sea, and became a long-standing national joke. But the disaster also served as an important reminder of the need to address environmental problems in a responsible and ethical manner.

Fresh Kills officially closed in March of 2001, but 6 months later reopened after 9/11. The site was used to store and sort debris from the destruction of the Twin Towers.



Workers meticulously combed through tons of debris in search of human remains and personal effects of the victims, a very difficult and monumental task.



A large park and wildlife area is currently under construction on the former landfill site. It will also include a memorial to honor the victims of 9/11.





What may seem impossible can be accomplished through hard work, dedication and necessity.





*Humankind has not woven
the web of life. We
are but one thread within
it. Whatever we do to
the web, we do to
ourselves. All things are
bound together. All things
connect.*

CHIEF SEATTLE, 1854

We invite you to view additional presentations on our website – the more you know, the more you grow!

Death by Plastic – the Great Pacific Garbage Patch



Recycled Art



Please Don't be Trashy!





Gila River Indian Community
Department of Environmental Quality
5350 N. 48th Street
Suite 120
Chandler, Az. 85226
(520) 562-2234
gricdeq.org

Contact:
janet.travis@gric.nsn.us