



**5000  
DUMPS**

## FILMSCRIPTS ON SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

This script is one of a series published to help lecturers, teachers, and group leaders prepare for viewing and discussion of solid waste management films. It is also intended for those in an audience who want a permanent record of the data presented in a film. It was written by Stuart Finley, Inc., the producer of the film, in close cooperation with staff of the Federal solid waste management program.

Titles and publication numbers of scripts for solid waste management films are shown below.

*The Third Pollution* SW-39c.1  
*Burn, Bury, or What?* SW-39c.2  
*Recycling* SW-39c.3  
*5000 Dumps* SW-39c.4  
*In the Bag* SW-39c.5  
*The Green Box* SW-39c.6  
*The Stuff We Throw Away* SW-39c.7  
*What's New in Solid Waste Management?* SW-39c.8

Instructions for borrowing or purchasing these films are given with each script and are summarized in the brochure *Films Tell the Story*, available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

1972

## 5000 DUMPS

21 minutes, 16-mm motion picture, sound, color, 1971. Order no. M-2119-X.\*

**5000 DUMPS** shows how an increasing number of communities are solving the practical problems of closing dumps and successfully initiating sanitary landfills. The film is designed to be used in the Mission 5000 national campaign to eliminate dumps by soliciting the assistance and cooperation of thousands of local communities. Designed for use by community action groups and local officials and appropriate for use in the classroom.

**Beautiful scene in West Virginia mountains in the autumn . . . panning to small town . . . zooming past it to burning dump on a hillside**

Find your way to the real America. Leave your big cities with their urban problems . . . drive along the highways—then off of them into God's country . . . up into the rolling Appalachian Mountains to these highlands of West Virginia . . . and then find a surprise!

*The town dump!* Burning one moment . . . smouldering the next . . . a reminder that ugliness can be anywhere . . . everywhere people are.

**Durham, North Carolina burning dump**

Or drive through North Carolina and watch as this city of 100,000 burns its waste.

**Woman throws garbage into huge burning dump at bottom of canyon**

Or visit the Redwood Country of Northern California as a lady disposes of her garbage.

**Pan of huge open dump in New York State**

In New York State . . . an open dump. There are thousands of them in the United States.

**Men dumping refuse in a western desert; open dump with mountains in the background**

More of man's cast-offs clutter the western desert.

**Seagulls in garbage; flies on garbage**

Open dumping is a health hazard.

**Scavenger picking through refuse; smoking dump**

The Environmental Protection Agency of the federal government has organized a campaign called MISSION 5000 . . . the purpose: to improve the quality of our environment by eliminating 5,000 of America's dumps in an

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effective 2-year project . . . soliciting the assistance and cooperation of thousands of local communities.

**Pan across burning dump**

A typical American dump. It's located near Glen Burnie, Maryland . . . just outside Baltimore . . . in Anne Arundel County.

**Scavengers leave smoking dump and then refuse truck drives in**

Until recently, the average American has accepted the cheapest and easiest means of disposal . . . usually simply a dump. Today, the mood has changed. The public demands a better environment. New systems must be devised to control the quantity and characteristics of wastes, and provide efficient collection, creative recycling of materials which can be reused, and proper disposal of the residue. Established programs must change to provide these improvements.

**Compacter truck dumps refuse**

More discards arrive.

**Zoom to show that the dump is now a landfill; landfill operation**

But look . . . the dump has been converted into a sanitary landfill. Maryland recently passed a law requiring all counties to develop a comprehensive plan for solid waste management. Because of its previous poor performance, Anne Arundel County was the first to be cited. They chose to convert the dump into a properly operated landfill where refuse is compacted and covered continuously. The credit goes to the Maryland Legislature, the State Health Department, and officials of Anne Arundel County. Incidentally, if the county had failed to cooperate, the new state law contained a hardnosed provision which would have permitted the state to do the job and bill the county.

**Meeting of the Minnesota Pollution Control Board at St. Paul**

Most states do not effectively regulate open dumping or open burning of solid wastes. Here at a recent meeting of the Minnesota State Pollution Control Board at St. Paul, officials are implementing a new antiburning law. This was D-Day . . . Dump Day . . . before the Pollution Control Board. After D-Day, communities could no longer burn refuse in the open. The discussion focussed on what scores of counties and hundreds of towns and cities would do. The flow of solid wastes would continue. Each community would have to devise a plan and put it into effect . . . in many instances hiring specialized personnel, buying land and equipment, and increasing taxes or establishing new special service charges for waste disposal. The Board set procedures to be followed and sent them to all communities. Most states have not yet moved this far.

**Civil War statue in Moultrie, Georgia . . . panning to center of downtown area**

Moultrie, Georgia is famous for its tobacco, cattle, hogs, poultry, cotton, peanuts, corn, pecans, watermelon—and dump. But, Moultrie’s dump is being eliminated. Two petitions from local residents caused the Georgia Department of Public Health to place the city “under orders” to cease and desist within 30 days. The city had known for several years that eventually it would have to develop a better system . . . but repeatedly failed to take action. The 30-day notice is finally forcing action, but is also introducing complications because of the short time allowed.

**Moultrie’s new landfill**

Moultrie decided that a sanitary landfill was the most practical and economical alternative available. After evaluating several possible sites, this hundred-acre tract was chosen. It is quite close to the city . . . and has no drainage problems. Moultrie’s buying it . . . will install access roads . . . and will eventually move the city shops and garage to this location to centralize public works operations.

**Moultrie’s dump . . . showing burned material . . . then panning to bulldozer pushing around large piles of fresh refuse**

But the old dump is going to be difficult to close because it is infested with rats. If the daily supply of garbage were simply cut off, they would leave and might invade nearby homes searching for food. Therefore, the local health department will undertake a systematic rat poisoning project at the old dump before the new landfill is opened. Then the piles of refuse and ashes will be compacted and covered with earth. Meanwhile, the trash is getting higher and higher. Moultrie is “under orders” . . . orders that are difficult to obey quickly.

**Inferior operation by a private operator showing dozer pushing wastes and litter nearby**

As Mission 5000 encourages thousands of communities to eliminate their dumps, the communities may encounter a variety of problems. Let’s consider a few typical ones. Here a small town has contracted with a local private operator to run its landfill. He has plenty of equipment and personnel but the techniques are new to him so he doesn’t know exactly what he should be doing. He is careless in grading to handle runoff water . . . and causes water pollution. He uses insufficient earth cover . . . and litters the surrounding area. It takes a knowledgeable operator to run a good landfill.

**Burning dump where a new landfill is to be opened**

Meanwhile, a nearby community which has been dumping and burning for years has decided to clean up. It will start its new landfill on the same site as the dump. The city fathers naively believe that if you dump garbage in a hole and cover it, you have a sanitary landfill. So far, no detailed plan has been drafted, no equipment purchased . . . and the mayor is still quite vague about just how to do it.

**Skyline of Raleigh, North Carolina panning to landfill operation showing dusty conditions**

Raleigh, North Carolina will never be called a Mission 5000 success story because this city of over 100,000 people has been operating a sanitary landfill for 6 years. But, here too, there are some practical problems: dust . . . and a sandy soil which is not ideal for cover material. Raleigh's landfill is located close to the central city and adjacent to a new freeway. The fill will bring a low area up to grade with the highway and will be made into a park when completed.

**Large effective landfill operation with dozer placing refuse and pan bringing cover; wide expanse of landfill**

Then, there is the case of the community that only went half way. This city of 30,000 people obviously has an excellent sanitary landfill . . . good equipment . . . skilled personnel . . . adequate cover material . . . and plenty of space. But only part of the city's solid wastes are being landfilled. The officials just can't bring themselves to bury the big stuff.

**Burning dump showing refuse lying around**

Material that burns easily . . . tree limbs . . . leaves . . . furniture . . . and big items, such as refrigerators, are still being hauled to the old dump. So, the city has all the expense of a sanitary landfill and most of the nuisances of a burning dump. It's a state of mind, a habit. The city hasn't yet grasped the concept that it needs a total disposal system.

**Boonsboro, Maryland "Dump Closed" sign, panning to covered dump**

This old dump has been closed and covered. In attempting to establish a new facility, the community could have requested advice from the state solid waste officer . . . or the Regional Representative of the Solid Waste Management Office of the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Woman shoveling trash out of a pickup truck; close-up of dump; wide shot of dump**

Instead, they did it on their own . . . opened a landfill which is really little better than the old dump. Cover is applied only when somebody gets around to it. State or federal engineers would have made recommendations on equipment and procedures . . . perhaps arranging for operator training to get the project off to a good start.

**Heflin, Alabama covered dump; wide shot of landfill; operator at work**

If Mission 5000 is going to be a success, 5,000 communities will have to get organized. Heflin, Alabama already has! This huge tract is the site of an old burning dump . . . now eliminated and covered. Today, Heflin and Cleburne County have undertaken an areawide effort by starting a sanitary landfill. Jointly they bought equipment. The County hired an operator who admitted he didn't know a landfill from a hole in the ground . . . but he quickly learned the basic tricks of the trade . . . a small landfill face . . . proper compaction of the waste . . . daily, complete cover . . . no wasted motion. The

state solid waste officer calls him "a jewel". Next, the county will start a container collection system which promises to reduce roadside dumping and allow small rural dumps to be eliminated.

**Troy, Alabama in-town landfill**

Nearby, Troy, Alabama has closed its out-of-town dump and is filling this huge gully only four blocks from City Hall. It used to be called "Buzzard's Roost" . . . and was 40 feet deep. The key personality here is a City Councilman who is a civil engineer by profession.

**Interstate 75 at Adel, Georgia**

When Interstate 75 was built through Adel, Georgia, the contractors purchased rights to strip material from nearby property.

**Gravel pit**

As a result, this 20-acre gravel pit was left in the middle of an industrial park.

**Dozer working landfill**

Adel's investigation showed that the pit was a good landfill site. It took less than 4 months to put it into operation.

**Burning dump by water**

Water pollution may result when drainage from open dumps reaches surface streams or ground water supplies.

**New landfill being built; pan and zoom to storm drainage system being installed**

Here a new landfill is being constructed in an area where geological studies indicated that surface water would leach through the buried refuse and carry pollutants into the ground water. The solution is to install an adequate drainage system to bypass surface water safely. Solid waste landfilling is an engineering project . . . requiring careful design.

**Frederick, Maryland landfill being operated in the snow**

If you think that landfill techniques are restricted to the sunny south, think again. It is the accepted method in the colder sections of the country also. Solid wastes are collected in all weather and must be disposed of in the rain, snow . . . even when intense cold makes it uncomfortable for operators . . . and freezes the surface of the ground.

**Mobile, Alabama landfill operation**

Mobile, Alabama once had one of the worst dumps in the country. Mobile now has a sanitary landfill which handles 400 tons a day. The cost is about \$1 per ton including amortization of equipment. But \$1 per ton is infinitely greater than nothing per ton . . . and the city budget is feeling the pinch. Officials are reluctant to impose a special refuse disposal tax . . . even though this is standard practice elsewhere. Instead they have increased charges to private operators who pay fees to use the site.



**Conference of officials regarding landfill approval**

Here a private operator is seeking approval to open his own landfill to serve his commercial customers. He has obtained land use rights and needs only official sanction to start operating. The result of this conference was that he can operate only if he lines the bottom of the pit with compacted clay to prevent pollutants from oozing through to the sand below. Public and private operations can be successfully coordinated. The choice of whether a community wants to do its own solid waste collection and disposal or contract it out . . . is an economic and political question . . . not a technical one.

**Lawton, Oklahoma dump; man throws refuse out of truck; pan to trash**

**City employee sets fire to the dump; dump burns furiously; distant shot showing smoke across the plains**

Lawton, Oklahoma . . . one of the first Mission 5000 success stories. May there be thousands of them!

Lawton . . . last year! The people were starting to object. The Comanche County Sanitarian was critical. The Oklahoma Solid Waste Chief indicated that action was overdue. The Environmental Protection Agency Regional Representative in Dallas suggested corrective action. The pressure was beginning to build. But, Lawton might have just drifted on for years if the Oklahoma Legislature hadn't stepped in. It passed a law prohibiting open burning by cities of over 10,000 population by January 1st, 1971. Lawton was put on notice. Members of the City Council started to look at other landfill operations . . . investigated possible sites . . . and authorized the city attorney to obtain land purchase options.

**Dump is locked closed; signs say "closed; keep out"; charred remains of dump; dozer comes in to clean up**

On January 19th, just 19 days late, burning finally ceased. They would have made the deadline except for a few problems which had to be solved systematically:

- The City Council considered six landfill sites and held public hearings to select the best.
- Numerous nearby residents vigorously objected to having a "dump" near them.
- The Sanitarian satisfied some of the objections by establishing landfill specifications . . . operating procedures . . . a fence . . . and beautification.

**Landfill operation**

Finally, this site was selected. It is 2 miles south of the city limits and is centrally located in the county. Other problems . . . equipment was not delivered on time . . . good operators were hard to find. But, today the Lawton Sanitary Landfill, second in the state of Oklahoma, is operating well. The site is expected to last 12 to 14 years. After completion, it may be converted into an industrial or recreational park. Yes, Lawton did it . . . made a quick switch from an obnoxious



**Final cover being applied to big landfill at Washington County near St. Paul, Minnesota**

burning dump to a sound system of solid waste management. Thousands of communities throughout America have a comparable problem. With today's increased emphasis on the environment, each town, city and county will have to face up to its true responsibility to be a good housekeeper.

In just 2 years, Mission 5000 should eliminate most of America's open dumps. The ultimate goal of the Environmental Protection Agency is to provide all Americans with acceptable solid waste systems.

It sounds easy . . . but actually it requires hard work . . . and money. You *pay* for a clean environment with your energy and your dollars. But, the question is . . . can we really close those dumps? It depends on local leadership . . . not just officials . . . but the citizens themselves. Mission 5000 is a "now thing". Look around at your environment . . . it's later than you think.

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