

SECTION 6.0
CUMULATIVE & GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

6.1 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The primary cumulative impacts of the expansion of the landfill include:

1. the loss of City-owned property identified in the 2002 Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Plan for potential acquisition by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission (APBPC),
2. the loss of wildlife habitat and wetlands, and

The 2002 Management Plan identifies acreage goals and ranks parcels within the Pine Bush study area based on criteria such as the presence of pine barrens, potential to restore pine barrens, presence of threatened and endangered species, value as a buffer for fire management, provision of important linkages, water resource value, and presence of cultural resources. The Expansion Area was identified as site 15b in the 2002 Management Plan and was categorized for full protection due to its high value as a linkage and buffer. Therefore, the loss of the parcel would represent the loss of a buffer that may be important for fire management. Its linkage value is important because at the time it was the only link between the Preserve lands to the west and the State lands to the east.

Both upland and wetland communities occur within the Expansion Area. Loss of this area represents a cumulative loss of these natural communities from what was once a much larger expanse of pine barrens, wetlands, forests, and other communities.

Mitigation for the cumulative impacts on the APBPC goals for land acquisition and the general loss of upland and wetland habitat is the Habitat Plan (discussed in Section 2.8) that will convert the mobile home park to pine barrens and stream/wetland corridors creating a major east-west linkage. Wetlands will be replaced with higher quality wetlands but more importantly they will function within the framework of the overall Habitat Plan. The landfill itself will be converted to pine barrens, initially with currently closed portions, but eventually most of the landfill after final closure, including the proposed Eastern Expansion. As a result, the loss of both habitat and lands proposed for future acquisition by APBPC will be temporary. Roughly 250 acres of restored and enhanced pine barrens, pitch pine forest, and wetland habitat will become part of the Pine Bush.

Therefore, no permanent cumulative impacts to the ecology of the Pine Bush or APBPC goals will occur as a result of the project and implementation of the mitigation. Furthermore, the potential for any further expansions into Preserve lands is eliminated by virtue of a proposal to transfer title and deed of all remaining City-owned lands to the west and north of the landfill, which have been the subject of alternative landfill expansion proposals, to the State or The Nature Conservancy. Additionally, the City will not accept waste for landfilling at the Rapp Road site beyond the capacity of the proposed Eastern Expansion. The City may accept waste at Rapp Road should the facility be converted to a transfer station in the future. This would be for an alternative involving off-site transport and disposal.

6.2 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

The Eastern Expansion will provide landfill space for the ANSWERS communities for another 6-7 years at the current daily rate of disposal. This will not result in additional capacity that would spur growth. The solid waste disposal issue facing these communities after this expansion, should it be approved, has not as yet become an important growth factor. Ultimately, the increase in solid waste management costs may have some impact on where people and businesses choose to locate. For the ANSWERS communities the costs are likely to increase significantly, depending on the long-term solution.