



CMC Chair's Briefing – CMC Appointments and Performance Target Progress at Otter Lake Landfill

STAFF AND CMC MEMBER UPDATE

The Otter Lake Community Monitoring Committee (CMC) has a new part-time environmental consultant, **Phil MacKenzie**, a professional engineer and the owner of MacKenzie Solar Limited, Halifax. He replaces **Scott Morash**, a valued member of the CMC staff who helped us navigate the regulatory world of the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change and monitor HRM's progress toward the department's compostable waste target. By March 31, 2026 compostable solid waste by mass entering the Otter Lake landfill is not to exceed 10%. With an appointment effective until Oct. 31, 2026, Mr. MacKenzie will continue to chart HRM's efforts.

The two-year terms of HRM's three volunteer members of the CMC came up for renewal Nov. 30. **Tekena Warikubu** and **Christa Schnare** each opted to accept another two-year appointment, which HRM Regional Council made effective until Nov. 30, 2027. **Hailey MacKinnon**, the third appointee, was unable to make another 24-month commitment. The HRM volunteer recruitment process is expected to name her replacement soon. *See OtterLakecmc.ca for the full list of CMC members.*

Part-time CMC staff reappointed for new one-year terms, effective until Oct. 31, 2026, were **Jason Timms**, the social media technician and **Betsy Chambers**, the communications consultant.

ATTEND AND BE HEARD

Public input is now a fixed CMC agenda item.

Come to a meeting and be heard.

Dates of future meetings available by email inquiry at cmc.hwrs@gmail.com or by consulting the CMC website, otterlakecmc.ca, where agendas are posted two weeks in advance.



A recent Saturday at Cell 7B, Otter Lake Landfill's working face, shows idle machinery awaiting the start of the workweek. The white metal screens, vaguely resembling hockey nets, are portable litter fences that move in conjunction with bulldozer operations to protect against flying debris. On windy days, the litter fences are vital.

PERFORMANCE TARGET PROGRESS

HRM is closing in on its objective, CMC's outgoing environmental consultant, **Scott Morash**, advised the CMC in his final report. However, he added, compostable waste, as a percentage of the overall solid waste by mass going into the Otter Lake Landfill has yet to reach the 10% mark set by the Department of Environment and Climate Change. The compliance deadline is March 31, 2026.

In 2023, the department made attaining and sustaining the 10% limit on compostable waste the condition for making its authorized December 2022 deactivation of the front-end processor and waste stabilization facility permanent. HRM has estimated \$2 million in annual savings from the stoppage. Previously, the FEP and WSF had retrieved and stabilized organic matter from waste before it was buried at the Otter Lake facility. HRM remains optimistic the 10% target will be achieved through its waste diversion efforts.

Strum Consulting, hired by Mirror Nova Scotia, the landfill operator, to supervise the quarterly performance audits, found the weighted compostable waste percentage for May was 8.5%. In August the results were 11.31%.

Jordan Vallis, HRM's Manager of Engineering and Contract Services, Solid Waste Resources, advised the CMC's October meeting that *"to date, we are actually under 10%."* He pointed out the average for the first two quarterly audits this fiscal year is 9.90%. The November 2025 and February 2026 audits are yet to come.

Citing figures from the HRM Compliance Report of April 20, 2025, Mr. Morash noted for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, the total weighted average per cent of compostable materials entering the Otter Lake landfill was 12.41%. The figure became 11.64% for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024, and then 11.50% for the fiscal year ending March 2025.

Compostable waste disposal practices, Mr. Morash said, are influenced by a range of factors, from public awareness to power outages and natural disasters. He could not predict if HRM will meet its 10% compliance target by the end of next March, but he stated the trend was going in the right direction.

Reg Rankin

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CMC Chair