



Press Release 21 July 2008

County Council Decision may Finally Save the Radley Lakes

A decision today by Oxfordshire County Councillors on a planning application at Sutton Courtenay means that Thrupp Lake at Radley is likely to be saved permanently from destruction, say campaigners. The Lake was due to be filled with ash from Didcot 'A' Power Station. A new planning permission will allow Waste Recycling Group (WRG) Ltd, who operate the Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site next to the power station, to take and store up to 400,000 tonnes of surplus ash that might otherwise have been destined for Thrupp Lake. This should mean that Thrupp Lake will not now be needed for ash disposal.

RWE npower, who operate the power station, put their controversial scheme to dispose of pulverised fuel ash (PFA) in Thrupp Lake on hold in February this year, but refused to rule out destroying the Lake at some time in the future. Today, County Councillors granted permission to WRG Ltd to stockpile 400,000 tonnes of ash from the Power Station at its Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site. The Landfill Site is right next to the Power Station, and the ash can readily be moved there without using public roads. WRG will use the ash for engineering purposes and restoration of the landfill site in the future. The stockpile forms part of a series of changes to the existing arrangements at the Landfill Site, designed to meet technical requirements and changing waste disposal needs. Under European legislation, the power station has to close by the end of 2015. This stockpile should be adequate to meet the power station's ash disposal needs until then.

Dr Basil Crowley, Chairman of Save Radley Lakes, said:

"This is extremely good news indeed. We have been campaigning for three years, with massive support from the community, to save Thrupp Lake. We have always said that it there ought to be a better way of disposing of Didcot's ash than dumping it in a County Wildlife Site. It now seems that an alternative has been found. WRG Ltd and RWE npower have obviously worked hard to come up with this solution, and great credit is due to them for that. As far as we can see, the stockpile at Sutton Courtenay will take all the ash that might otherwise have gone into Thrupp Lake. There seems to be no need at all now for Npower to destroy the Lake. This is an excellent outcome."

Paul Green, Senior Development Manager with Waste Recycling Group, said:

"We are working with Npower to explore the possibilities for taking ash from Didcot Power Station. The County Council's decision today on our planning application clears the way for discussion on this scheme to be progressed."

"If it makes sense for both parties, we can get a supply of ash which we can use in our operations in the years ahead, and that means we won't have to bring in large amounts of other material by road. Npower meanwhile could have a local outlet for ash which minimises environmental impacts.

"I would also like to commend the Save Radley Lakes group for their positive approach. Their input helped to shape our thinking on how we might assist with Didcot's ash disposal needs."

The campaign to save Radley Lakes was backed by a very large number of local people: 11,500 people signed a petition opposing the plans. The campaign also attracted cross-party political support. Dr Evan Harris, the local MP, shared a platform with prospective Parliamentary candidates Nicola Blackwood (Conservative), Chris Goodall (Green Party) and Richard Stevens (Labour) at a public meeting, attended by over two hundred people, in Abingdon's Guildhall on 9 February 2008. All four politicians argued very forcefully that the Lakes should not be sacrificed to become an ash dump.

Commenting on news that the new plan to allow Waste Recycling Group Ltd to stockpile ash from Didcot power station has been approved, which will ensure Thrupp Lake, Radley is permanently saved from destruction, Local Liberal Democrat MP and active supporter of the Save Radley Lakes campaign, Dr Evan Harris, said:

"I am delighted at this development, which should finally ensure that Thrupp Lake has a long and healthy future for local people to enjoy.

"I welcome WRG Ltd and Npower working together to find a solution that protects a beautiful and important county wildlife site.

"The Save Radley Lakes campaigners also deserve great praise for their positive campaign - not simply opposing the threat to Thrupp Lake but also working constructively to find less environmentally damaging solutions to the problem of disposing of ash from Didcot power station."

Save Radley Lakes hopes that it will now be able to work with the interested parties, including Npower, over the long-term development and management of the Radley Lakes as a wildlife and community resource.

[Ends]

For further information contact: Marjorie White on 01235 216428 or 01235 530174,
or visit www.saveradleylakes.org.uk.