

**Press Release 01 October 2007**

## **New Report Shows npower do Not Need Lake**

A report commissioned by Save Radley Lakes calls upon RWE npower to abandon its plans to destroy Thrupp Lake at Radley, together with the mindset that is driving them to destroy a beautiful lake for the sake of the disposal of a few hundred thousand tonnes of pulverised fuel ash (PFA) during the final years of operation of a dying power station. The report examines the problem faced by Didcot A power station, and finds that, by adopting more sustainable and less environmentally damaging alternative measures, the power station can do without Thrupp Lake and still be able to maintain power generation “24/7” throughout the coming years before the it closes, sometime between now and December 2015.

The report, commissioned by Save Radley Lakes, and written by three professional scientists, Dr Richard Riggs, Dr Basil Crowley and Dr Ian Kemp, argues that RWE npower have exaggerated the need to have Thrupp Lake for ash disposal. They point out that, under the EU Large Combustion Plant Directive, Didcot A power station can only operate for 20,000 hours after 1 January 2008 before it closes sometime before 1 January 2016. In that time, the power station can produce at most only 1.6 million tonnes of PFA, which works out at a very modest 200,000 tonnes per year when averaged over the eight year period. Even if the power station closes earlier than 2015, annual amounts of ash produced will remain manageable, and “24/7” operation can be guaranteed by using the onsite stockpile, which they have been using since the beginning of 2005. This can store somewhere between 300,000 and 400,000 tonnes of ash and can therefore readily cope with fluctuations in ash production over each year. Moreover, the neighbouring landfill site has contracted to take nearly 100,000 tonnes of ash per year on a monthly basis, and npower has recently commissioned plant capable of processing up to 125,000 tonnes of ash per year to render it suitable for the manufacture of concrete and cement.

The authors have also looked at Didcot’s recent ash disposals, and conclude that, in the 13 months between April 2005 and May 2006, the power station disposed of over half a million tonnes of PFA, nearly a third of total maximum amount that they could produce in the next *eight* years. They explain that this clearly demonstrates the enormous resourcefulness of the power company, a resourcefulness that could be directed more positively, and that, despite what was told to the County Council in July 2006, power station operations are not under threat from an overflowing stockpile.

The report explains how recycling PFA helps the environment in other ways: from saving the extraction of primary aggregates from the countryside to offsetting significant amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> production through the manufacture of concrete or bricks, for which here is a significant anticipated demand. The authors accuse npower of not having thought out their waste management, but have simply gone for the easy option, while assuming that they would have no trouble getting the required permissions. What has happened since is just the result of their having to justify that choice.

The report also calls upon government to do more, through its taxation and regulatory policies, especially those that are supposed to protect the environment, to promote the recycling of power station ash and to prevent travesties, like the one unfolding at the Radley Lakes, from occurring in the future.

The full report (SRL/PFA/001) can be downloaded from  
[www.saveradleylakes.org.uk/documents/documents/SRLReports.htm](http://www.saveradleylakes.org.uk/documents/documents/SRLReports.htm)

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