

# Green Valley is pastoral scene for

**BY JOYCE BUDD**  
Staff Correspondent

**SEVEN VALLEYS** — From all outward appearances, Green Valley is still a peaceful, pastoral farming area, a rustic haven in southwest York County's North Codorus Township.

Rows of orchard trees and contours of grain and hay pattern the rolling hills, and cows graze the stream-sliced meadows.

But a bitter, a suspicious, a gnawing frustration hangs like a pall of smog over the residents of this farm valley.

After a long, uncertain year, the battle still rages between residents of Green Valley and the operators

of a proposed hazardous chemical burial site.

After more than a year of public hearings, hours of research, endless meetings, expensive legal arrangements, the fate of the dump site remains in limbo in the courts of the land.

Residents of the area became outraged during the summer of 1980 when they learned that a permit to dump hazardous chemicals had been issued to Sunny Farms, Ltd., a York subsidiary of Stabatrol, Inc., based in Norristown. Another York firm, Liqwacon, was to lease a portion of the site for their own storage of hazardous materials.

Sunny Farms had previously operated a solid waste landfill, which was shut down in 1976 by the state's Department of Environmental Resources, following numerous citizen complaints. Listed among the violations were illegal open fires and disposal of liquid hazardous wastes.

What especially angered the residents was the issuance of the chemical dumping permit to a known violator of dumping laws on land that they say is laced with old iron ore mines and on known earthquake-prone ridges high above the farmland valley.

The wastes were to be mostly in solid or sludge form, encapsulated in barrels, and stored between a "sandwich" of soil-cement lined with polyethylene.

With a potential threat of chemical pollution to their water supplies and farmland, residents of Green Valley and the surrounding area banded into two citizens groups, OUCH, or Opposing Unnecessary Chemical Hazards, and an auxiliary, MAD, Mothers Against the Dump.

Headed by valley resident Steve Marsh, R1 Seven Valleys, and a steering committee core of other neighbors adjacent to the proposed hillside dumping site, OUCH began an intensive campaign of public awareness activities, fund raising for legal defense, and hydrological and geological studies.

In their research through bureaucratic and governmental channels, OUCH learned that Stabatrol was involved in several other dump-site squirmishes across Pennsylvania. They in-

cluded Elwin Farms in Fayette County, which was in court over zoning, Grove Landfill in Cumberland County, where traces of arsenic and chromlum were reported to be found in nearby streams, and Lyncott Corp. in Susquehanna Co., also under fire from the community.

On November 14, 1980, Waste Management, Inc., based in Chicago, and reportedly the largest hazardous waste disposal firm in the country, acquired Stabatrol and its various sites in Pennsylvania.

In March, 1981, OUCH petitioned DER to suspend the dumping permit earlier granted to Sunny Farms. Shortly thereafter, DER suspended all permits held by Stabatrol owned by Waste Mgmt. in Pennsylvania for "operational and design violations."

That suspension included the Lyncott site, with the city of Binghamton, N.Y., 31 miles away asking for shutdown after they documented pollution in the groundwater in the area of the city's water supplies.

As the battle continued between the citizens groups and the firms aiming at using their dumping sites, the controversy became an expensive, complicated jumble of lawsuits.

In April of 1981, the federal Environmental Protection Agency determined that Sunny Farms would be granted an "interim status," based on their claimed continuous operation at the North Codorus site.

OUCH in turn argued that the token construction done to acquire

the interim status permit was neither continuous or legal, "moving ground from one side of the place to the other," claimed one spokesperson, and filed suit against the EPA decision.

In early summer, York county courts upheld a township ordinance requiring a 500-yard dumping site setback buffer zone from the nearest residence. That decision is being appealed to Commonwealth court by the site operators.

Then, just recently, OUCH petitioned for third party status on the lawsuit pending between North Codorus Township and the Liqwacon firm. Liqwacon had earlier filed suit against the township for rejecting its subdivision plans for their dumpsite.

A granting of third-party status would assure OUCH representatives of being notified of upcoming hearings, and would permit their testimony. Currently, members of the the citizens' group usually learn of a hearing just hours before it's opening.

OUCH also petitioned for the revocation of Sunny Farms permit from DER, which has lain dormant for a year. On the basis of their past operations, at the now closed Lyncott site in Susquehanna County, OUCH claims that Stabatrol, now Waste Management, should not be allowed to operate in the state of Pennsylvania at all.

Although the original Stabatrol firm was ordered to dig out and clean up the materials at Lyncott, the new owner, Waste Management, claims it should not

be responsible before it purchases operations.

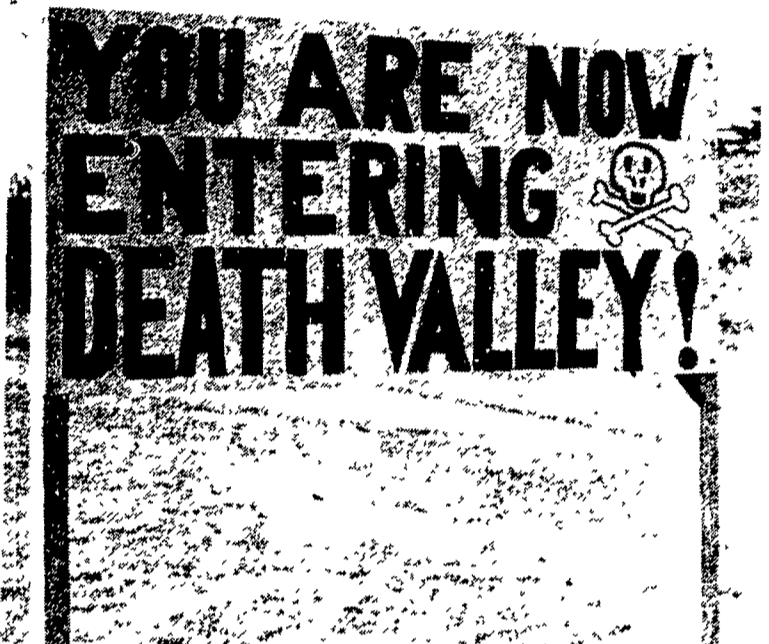
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Citizen sentiment against a proposed York County hazardous waste burial site still runs high, as these silent sentinels at the end of Green Valley offer their protest.

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