

Pima County Tangerine Landfill
Status Update
June 2008

What is happening at the Tangerine Landfill?

The Tangerine Landfill is nearing its capacity and may close as early as January of 2009, but probably no later than June 2009. Until the landfill closes, commercial and residential customers can continue to use the landfill during regular business hours.

Why does the landfill have to close? Can't it be expanded?

The landfill cannot be expanded beyond its current size. As a landfill gets higher, the area at the top used for disposal of waste gets smaller and smaller (picture a pyramid) and eventually is no longer effectively useful. As the area gets smaller it also becomes more hazardous to operate because people, cars, trucks, and heavy equipment are all in close proximity and the potential for accidents increases. The landfill cannot be expanded to the sides for two reasons: 1) sufficient land isn't available and 2) the area is designated a floodplain and the State will not approve horizontal landfill expansions in a floodplain.

Is the County going to build a new landfill?

The County does not have any plans to build a new landfill. There is no funding for the construction of a landfill, nor does the County own sufficient land for such a project. These days most landfills are built on large amounts of land (say several hundred acres) and that much property just isn't available.

What about constructing a transfer station?

A transfer station is a site where waste is accepted, collected, and then hauled in larger quantities to a landfill. Currently the County operates transfer stations at Ryan Field and Catalina. The County does not plan to build a new transfer station. There is insufficient land available at the Tangerine Landfill to build a facility. Typically, a small transfer station requires about 10 acres of land. Less than 2 acres of vacant land remain at Tangerine, and building a facility on top of the landfill is not feasible due to cost and physical constraints. There are no funds available for construction of a transfer station.

What happens at the Tangerine Landfill after it's closed?

The County will continue to use the Tangerine Landfill for final disposal of waste collected at the Catalina Transfer Station. Once that is no longer possible due to capacity limitations (anticipated to be several years in the future), the landfill will be officially "closed" in compliance with environmental regulations. The County is exploring the possibility of developing a methane gas collection system to generate electricity at Tangerine. Any public use of the closed landfill site would require substantial investment

beyond the \$9 million cost already estimated for a basic closure which would not allow for any future public use.

Where will I be able to take my household waste?

Residents will continue to be able to use the Catalina and Ryan Field transfer stations. In addition, the County operates a landfill in Sahuarita, the City operates the Los Reales landfill and several commercial haulers operate throughout Pima County and will pick up household waste for a fee. Waste Management Inc. currently operates a transfer station on Ina Road (just west of I-10); although the Waste Management facility currently only accepts commercial waste, they have expressed an interest in expanding to accommodate residential drop-offs. The Cactus Landfill, operated by Allied Waste in Pinal County at Hwy 79 & Deep Wells Ranch Rd in Florence, accepts waste from residential haulers. Other companies have also expressed interest in developing a new landfill with the closure of Tangerine, including a private company planning a landfill just north of the Pima/Pinal county line off I-10.