

Date and time: Monday February 22 2016 1:30 - 2:45 pm

Weather: Pr 0 mm; RH 49%; BP 102.4 kPa; overcast; calm; T -1° C

Activity: A tour of TRY Recycling in London ON.

From the air, TRY Recycling appears to be a disorganized jumble of mounds and ponds, but I was surprised to learn how well organized and efficiently run it is.



In the view reproduced above, Clarke Road divides the TRY property into a general receiving area to the west, with its scaling office (green roof) located just inside the main gate and a materials processing area to the east. At the scaling office, every incoming truck is weighed before proceeding to its destination, whether for yard waste, used building materials (most from demolitions), scrap metal or whatever. After depositing their loads, trucks pass over the scales once again, the difference in weights being recorded in the office. The facility operates under a Ministry of the Environment Certificate of Approval. Reports of materials received and products shipped out are sent to the Ministry at regular intervals.

Arriving at the scaling office, I was met by Rick Vandersluis, Manager of the facility. One of the first things Rick explained to me was that TRY deals mostly with industrial waste materials, mainly from the demolition of houses and buildings: bricks and construction blocks, fragmented cement, scrap lumber and wood waste, earth fill and so on. The only domestic materials handled by TRY are those big brown bags of yard waste that London residents fill up each spring and fall. These are fed into a very impressive composting operation, as shown in the IMAGES below.

The first mound we passed on our tour of the facility was a veritable mountain composed mainly of scrap wood and scrap metal. Even though it collects both scrap metal and electronics, TRY does not process them directly, but farms them out to firms that specialize in such processing. Sorting of materials in this pile is carried out by hand, with some six labourers employed in the job. As we watched, a visitor was emptying scrap lumber from the bed of his pickup truck nearby. TRY also takes in household and other individual deliveries. But even these vehicles have to go through the weighing process.

As we proceeded, threading our way through a cordillera of miniature mountains, we passed large stormwater ponds enclosed by earthen berms. I wondered if TRY also recycled water, too. The answer turned out to be “Yes” when we came to a huge composting mound, an Everest of earth, yard waste and wood chips. A front end loader rammed into the base, retrieving a bucket of steaming material to be taken to a second mound that was turned periodically to keep the microbes busy. Rick jumped out of the truck to plunge a thermometer into the smaller mound. “We never let the temperature get above 55° F and we turn it over every 15 days.”

Wood that is delivered to the TRY yards has three separate destinations: It is first fed through a chipper that cuts the wood into pieces of various sizes. Pieces in the 6” range end up in various heating applications, including the boilers of greenhouses in Leamington. Finer chips, 1/2” or less, end up as bedding for cattle. The remainder enters the composting operation or ends up in the city’s landfill site, known as W12A. Being interested in things entrepreneurial, I felt obliged to ask if TRY was self-supporting or needed some kind of government assistance. “We turn a profit every year,” he said. The company is owned by Londoner Jim Graham.

We also passed an area littered with a jumble of concrete blocks. I wondered what fate these would meet. “We have a crushing machine that turns the concrete into road aggregate,” (i.e. gravel). A finer product of the crushing operation is called “foundry sand”, being shipped to the St Mary’s Cement company to make a mix for portland cement.

In discussions during our tour, I learned that London’s Blue Box program sends the contents of hundreds of thousands of blue boxes (filled with metal and plastic containers, cardboard, and newsprint) not to TRY, but to a different location called the MRF or Municipal Recycling Facility. Apparently Toronto has nothing like the TRY facility. Two such facilities were started but competed so intensely with lower and lower tipping fees, that they drove themselves out of business. TRY’s tipping

fee is \$50. This is the cost per truck of depositing materials at the facility. If Try Recycling could be called an industrial operation, the domestic operation, called the Municipal Recycling Facility (or MRF) serves the people of London and will be visited in a near-future issue of *The Newport Forest Bulletin*.

The TRY Recycling website may be found at: <<http://tryrecycling.com>>

We have been sent the following alarming article: On Nature's Death Row: Ontario's Vanished 'Carolinian' Forest:

<<http://theyee.ca/News/2016/02/04/Ontario-Carolinian-Forest/>>

IMAGES: (courtesy of Jim Vandensluis' cellphone)



A conveyor belt carries material destined for landfill from a feed pile of mixed construction materials from which all the wood, concrete and metals are recovered. The power shovel sits atop the mound, roaring like some antediluvian beast.



A small mountain of scrap wood and metal awaits processing at the beginning of the recycling process. Materials in this pile are hand-sorted, with the wood, for example, being directed to the pile shown below.





Completed compost is conveyed to a mound that awaits delivery to various end-users. Note steam caused by microbial heat generation.