

From: [Mark Yeager](#)
To: [Benton Public Comment](#)
Subject: North Benton County Citizens Advisory Committee Comments - LU-24-027
Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2025 10:17:15 AM
Attachments: [Yeager Letter to PC NBCAC 1973.pdf](#)
[North Benton County Advisory Committee Letter to Planning Commission November 1973.pdf](#)

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Dear Planning Commissioners - I am submitting the attached testimony and document in opposition to LU-24-027.

Thank you,

Mark Yeager

April 29, 2025

Chair Fowler and Members of the Planning Commission

Testimony in Opposition to LU-24-027

My name is Mark Yeager, and I live at 37269 Helm Drive in Corvallis. I have lived at this residence since 1987. I am a professional Environmental and Civil Engineer in Oregon as well as a Certified Water Rights Examiner. I have served in multiple appointments on the Benton County Solid Waste Advisory Council and the Disposal Site Advisory Committee.

I submit this testimony today to provide some context within which to consider the current proposal to build a new landfill cell south of Coffin Butte Road.

On November 5, 1973, Authur L. Tollefson, Chairman of the North Benton County Citizens Advisory Committee (NBCAC) wrote to James Davenport, Chairman of Benton County Planning Commission (letter attached):

“Let it be clearly understood that we are unalterably opposed to the long-term continuation of the use of the Coffin Butte site for its present service area. We are even more vigorously opposed to its expansion to serve a three-county area.”

Side note – the Coffin Butte dump now serves more than 23 counties.

Further, the letter from the NBCAC states: “There is a substantial body of facts relating to the unsuitability of this site and the surrounding area which have seemed so evident to us as to make any serious consideration of the Coffin Butte site utterly ridiculous, totally intolerable.”

Finally, the letter states: “Given the ecological and geological factors, the population considerations, and the aesthetic and recreational potential, Coffin Butte is far better suited to be a public park than a public dump.”

Here we are 52 years later, and the madness continues. It must stop now. You can take the first step to implement a waste management paradigm shift to a brighter future. I urge you to deny this conditional use permit.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Yeager

November 5, 1973

Mr. James Davenport, Chairman
Benton County Planning Commission

Gentlemen:

The North Benton Citizens Advisory Committee has been advised that truly serious consideration is being given to the Coffin Butte site for a regional disposal station for three counties. It is our understanding that the consideration is not based on the fact that it is a good site but more on the basis that it 1) is slightly better than two flood plain sites proposed in Benton County, 2) there has recently been a seeming lack of opposition from the residents of the Coffin Butte vicinity, and 3) it has continued to be a disposal over long-standing objections of the local residents.

Let it be clearly understood that we are unalterable opposed to a long-term continuation of the use of the Coffin Butte site for its present service area. We are even more vigorously opposed to its expansion to serve a three-county area.

We have not recently voiced our objections for the following reasons:

1. We thought everyone knew how obviously bad this site was for even a county disposal area, let alone an expanded version, else why would they have looked further?
2. There has been a long-standing commitment on the part of the Corvallis Disposal Company and the county to close the present operation as soon as another site could be found. This commitment was most recently reconfirmed to this Citizen's Advisory Committee when we were preparing our recommendations to the Benton Comprehensive Plan.
3. Although the date of closing the present operations has been delayed time after time, the people felt the commitment was made in good faith and therefore have demonstrated patience, tolerance and understanding concerning the difficulties entailed in finding an alternate site.

There is a substantial body of facts relating to the unsuitability of this site and to the surrounding area which have seemed so evident to us as to make any serious consideration of the Coffin Butte site utterly ridiculous, totally intolerable. These facts cluster into three groups which include ecological and geological considerations, and population distri-

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bution in North Benton County, and aesthetic and recreational factors.
Consider the following:

A. Ecological and Geological Considerations

1. The Planning Commission has established as a guiding principle that land should be zoned for its highest and best possible use. The North Benton Committee recommended that Poison Oak Hill just south of Coffin Butte be zoned for a minimum of 20 acres because of the shallowness of soil. The Planning staff and Commission decided that a five-acre residential zoning would be acceptable if care were taken in siting of leach fields and septic tanks. It is obvious that neither the North Benton Committee, the County Planning Staff, nor the Planning Commission would consider any higher density. The risk of pollution and other unpleasant consequences given the topography, shallowness of soil and rainfall were deemed to be too great. Coffin Butte and Poison Oak Hill are not only in the proximity but are very similar in type of soil, permeability, and steepness. It therefore seems illogical that Coffin Butte could safely absorb the runoff from the expected 182, 150 tons of solid waste per year (see Page 31. Item 4 of the feasibility study) by 1980, while adjacent areas of similar soils are deemed inadequate for more than one septic tank per five acres.
2. The disposal site as it now exists handles only 38, 190 tons per year (see Page 2, Item 2 of study) and seriously pollutes Soap Creek. If 182, 150 tons per year are placed on the site, the name of the stream might well be changed to "Sewer Creek".
3. It also appears illogical that soils which are so poor for septic tanks that the "suburban residential classification has been considered for elimination" (Page 7 of study) should be suitable for handling the leachate from the dump runoff despite the development of additional systems.
4. Nowhere in the feasibility study is there any statement that the site would be a good, or even an adequate site from a geological or ecological point of view. The report contains numerous statements which either contraindicate the use of the site, or which equivocate on key points. Other points are open to question. The following may serve as a few examples.

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- (a) The existence of three ponds high on the south slope, Artesian wells on the north, and many springs in the existing dump area strongly suggest the importance of the butte as an aquifer and the existence of large amounts of water trapped inside the hill. The report admits that it, plus the rainfall and steep slope would hamper sanitary landfill methods in the winter months. In addition, we would suggest that ground water contamination would be highly probable.
- (b) Whereas much is made of dry wells and related matters (Pages 4 and 5) the evidence of trapped water is literally ignored.
- (c) We also take exception to the statements concerning prevailing wind patterns (Page 8), because of the specific geography of the site. During the several years when burning was permitted, local residents have become experts concerning prevailing wind patterns. These consistently flow from west to east around Coffin Butte either to the north or south. The valley between the two hills in which the proposed dump would be located is a wind chute.
- (d) There are numerous other questions of great importance relating to the geology and ecology which the feasibility study does not answer - for example:
 - (1) Does the shallow highly fractured chlorite and basalt sub-rock which has been quarried for years act as an aquifer to surrounding wells?

B. Factors related to population concentrations in proximity to the disposal site.

1. Because Corvallis, North Albany, Philomath and Monroe are the four largest incorporated cities in Benton County, it is easy to assume that they also represent the four largest population concentrations. This is not the case. The Lewisburg area contains more people than Monroe, but this area is so closely tied to Corvallis that it tends to be viewed as part of the city. But the Adair-Tampico Road-Arboretum Road area