

Trash Talk  
There is no Such Thing as a Free Dump!  
By Randy Cookson

While this column generally examines the how and why of recycling and composting, this week will take a turn and look at the disposal of bulky items, i.e. furniture, carpeting, tires and other “fee” items accepted at the Gray Transfer Station. In June of 2002, the Gray Town Council implemented disposal fees for items previously disposed of at the facility at no charge, or more accurately, no additional charge to the disposer as this was covered through taxation. The Town Council recognized the hardship this may impose and instituted a twice a year clean-up weekend, giving individuals the opportunity to dispose of their accumulated items at no cost, though with limits. The requirements for eligibility are simple; be a Gray resident or Gray Property owner, have a valid 2007 Transfer Station permit, bring only material generated within the Town of Gray, and do not bring any commercially generated waste. Be prepared to show evidence of your residency so staff can protect your tax dollar by being certain you are not covering the costs of those who are not eligible for this event. Trash disposal is an expensive part of the town budget and staff does not want you to pay for others waste.

The first of the two clean-up events this year will be Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 20th, 21st and 22nd, coinciding with Earth Day for obvious reasons. While this event does assist in allowing residents to dispose of unwanted items, it is important to note that there are limits. For instance, construction debris, whether residential or commercial, is not included in the category of free disposal. Usual disposal fees are still charged for this type of debris. Carpeting, mattresses, sofas, recliners and other stuffed furniture, as well as televisions and computer monitors are all accepted with no fees. Though there is no set limit on quantity of these items, it is necessary to be realistic. If you show up with more than could be expected from a typical household, facility staff has the duty to deny free disposal.

Remember, it is still not free; the cost for disposal is covered by your tax dollar. Also passenger tires, whether on the rim or dismounted are not charged with a limit of four per household for the weekend. Freon units, i.e. refrigerators, freezers, dehumidifiers, are accepted at no cost during this time with a limit of two per household. Yard waste such as leaves, grass and brush are still charged items. Metal items with the exception of Freon units are accepted at no cost all the time, during regular operating hours. Paints and hazardous materials will not be accepted during this time. There is a household hazardous waste collection scheduled for August 25th, the Saturday of the late summer clean-up. Watch for details as they will be forthcoming. Please remember that even though many refer to this as a Free Dump Weekend, this does not mean anything goes. Items still need to be placed in their proper area to ensure that the Town can get rid of this material at the lowest cost with the least adverse environmental impact possible. This is one of the busiest times of year at the facility and staff will assist you as soon as and as much as possible, your patience is greatly appreciated. Individuals cleaning the roadside or picking up illegally dumped material may receive a waiver regarding limits

and items for which they would normally be charged, please see an attendant prior to bringing this material in. Together we can keep Gray clean and this is one opportunity for you to do your part.