

# Fate of chemicals at golf course argued

By Alice Collins  
staff writer

The four barrels of chemical waste and 25 yards of earth dug up from a burial site on the Franklin Hills Country Club are still on the club grounds awaiting disposal.

An investigator for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) earlier had reported that the unearthed materials had been removed by an industrial waste hauler to a licensed disposal site.

DNR Investigator Tom Laird said Friday, "I had been misinformed that they had been disposed of. But after I contacted the president of the country club, he told me they still had it."

Although the DNR has tested the materials and determined that they pose no health threat to residents in nearby Franklin, Village President John Ver-

don indicated Friday that he was impatient with the delay in the removal.

The club had to wait for test results before having the materials removed, said Laird. A licensed disposal site can't accept materials until it knows what it's receiving, he added.

The exclusive private club is on the northeast corner of Inkster and 13 Mile in Farmington Hills.

Homeowners in the southwest corner of Franklin near the club had been concerned since they learned of the burial site that some toxic substances might have leaked into the wells that supply their water.

"I'M NOT as concerned as I was before they (the DNR) released their report of the tests they made," said Verdon. "But, nevertheless, I haven't had a report from them yet. We only know what we've read in the newspaper."

The barrels are "still in the maintenance building at the club and a big mound of earth covered with plastic is still sitting on the grounds where it was dug up," he added.

The DNR on Sept. 2 released the results of analyses made on samples taken from the four barrels indicating a high concentration of only one suspected substance — a herbicide commonly used on lawns to control dandelions.

In addition, tests showed only harmless traces of another herbicide, zinc and arsenic, according to the DNR.

Tests on a sample of water taken from a well on the club grounds by the Michigan Health Department indicated that none of the chemicals found in the barrels had reached the water, according to John Hesse of that department.

VERDON SAID Friday that he has talked with Hesse, "who feels comfort-

able that all the tests were done properly. And I agree with his observations.

"The liquid stuff they tested came right out of the barrels," said Verdon. "If by some remote chance some material did seep through the clay soil into any of our wells, it would be so diluted as to not pose any threat."

Based on the results of the tests already made, Hesse said the health department would not be testing any private wells in nearby Franklin.

Verdon added that, "Under the circumstances, the village won't be making any tests either. But we will be sending our engineers the DNR report (when received) and get their opinion on the sufficiency of the tests."

"If our engineers don't agree, of course we'd ask for additional tests and take our own samples," he added.

THE DNR was informed of the possi-

ble chemical dump by striking Franklin Hills greenskeepers. After DNR personnel failed to locate the suspected burial site, they asked the country club to point it out.

Club officials hired a construction firm to open the pit and remove the barrels under the supervision of the DNR. The greenskeepers turned over a list of materials they suspected were in the barrels.

Tests ruled out several of those substances, according to Laird.

Laird said the country club has requested advice from the DNR on how to and where to dispose of the barrels, earth and other debris all buried in the pit about 3 1/2 years ago.

SINCE it's been determined that it is not hazardous, "they've asked if it must

be disposed of at all."

Laird said the club's letter has been turned over to the water quality division of the DNR, the proper department to respond.

Verdon was at the club site when the excavation took place. He said he continued to see the dirt mound still there despite reports that all had been removed.

Verdon sent Franklin Police Chief Ed Glomb to the club last week to see if the barrels were still there. He found them in the maintenance building, Verdon said.

Verdon said he would be sending a letter to the DNR informing officials that the materials were still at the location and asking the department to "advise us when they would be removed."

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