

**RECLAIMING HISTORIC WETLANDS BY EXHUMING AND CONSOLIDATING  
LANDFILLS AT THE FORMER K.I. SAWYER AIR FORCE BASE NEAR GWINN,  
MICHIGAN**

Landfills are normally closed using the presumptive remedy of constructing a cover or cap over the refuse. An alternative to capping a landfill was implemented at the former K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base near Gwinn, Michigan. Landfill 2 operated from 1955 to 1962 where material consisting of construction debris, fly ash and household waste was disposed of by filling in a low-lying wetlands area adjacent to Silver Lead Creek. Silver Lead Creek is a high quality trout stream. In lieu of capping, the contents of Landfill 2 consisting of approximately 140,000 cubic yards of material was exhumed and relocated to Landfill 1. The former contents of Landfill 2 were utilized as grade fill to improve surface drainage as a component of closing Landfill 1. Landfill 1 was being capped during the same time period with an 18-inch thick sandy soil and vegetative cover. The excavation at Landfill 2 exposed the original stream bank and historic wetlands. Organic rich sediment was left in place for seed bank material in order to reestablish wetland plant species. Landfill 2 was relocated to Landfill 1 for approximately \$200,000 less than it would have cost to cap the landfill with a soil cover. Future savings will be realized because the cost of maintaining and monitoring a closed landfill has been eliminated.