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going out

## EVENT: DON'T DUMP IT TILL YOU TRY IT

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SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL

'Out of sight, out of mind' is the usual motto for dealings with trash, so it's not surprising that Vancouver's landfill site isn't even on most road maps. Overlooking eerie bog land in Delta, the 223-hectare complex just north of Highway 99 is usually off limits to all but workers and birds. On June 3, however, its secrets will be revealed in the annual public tour of the dump.

What sounds like the worst field trip, like *ever*, is actually a sure-fire kid pleaser. Site manager Paul Henderson's own brood enjoys trips to the dump for uncomplicated reasons: "I have young boys and they like the heavy equipment," he says.

Besides clambering onto bulldozers and compactors, paint-faced and balloon-animal-toting kids can play with smaller versions of the equipment in the communal sandbox, or just get dirty potting seedlings to take home.

Gardeners get to take away a free bag of premium compost made from last year's curb-collected yard trimmings. And birders who jump aboard the half-hour bus tour can watch swarms of owls, eagles and red-tailed hawks pick off gulls at the active dumpsite.

Enviro-geeks will be delighted to see how a greenhouse gas is finally used to heat its namesake. Since 2003, methane gas has been sucked out of the landfill's bowels and piped 2.9 kilometres down the road to generate "green electricity" (which is sold to BC Hydro at a premium) as well as heat for a giant BC Hot House tomato-growing operation with the footprint of Lighthouse Park. The net reduction of greenhouse gas in the environment is equivalent to wiping 6,000 vehicles off the road.

Those who miss the dump's open house have one other viewing opportunity: The site left some bog land untouched in exchange for the right to build higher. At the eastern end of the site, the landfill rises over the treetops and is visible from the highway.

*The Vancouver Landfill Open House runs tomorrow from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 5400 72nd Street, Delta. For more information, call 604-326-4600.*

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