

The county's Ben Lomond landfill is expected to reach capacity in 1988-89. Though the county recently acquired about 100 more acres of land at the Buena Vista landfill site near Watsonville, Chelone pointed out that it's only a matter of time before the entire site is filled to capacity.

County planner deGrassi agreed its time is limited, giving the landfill 20 more years at the present rate of dumping. "Once that one's full, it's going to be real hard to find a replacement," he said.

Unlike Chelone, though, deGrassi is optimistic about the future of recycling in Santa Cruz County. "I think it's the kind of thing that's here to stay," he said.

Started just over two years ago, the Live Oak Curbside Recycling program was a requirement in Central County Garbage's contract with the county signed in 1982. It began with the idea that if it worked, it would be expanded to encompass a larger area.

So over the next several months, deGrassi said, the county will be looking not only at expanding the program within its present service area, but outward toward La Selva Beach in the more densely populated areas.

In the long run, the county would like to hire a large-scale contractor to handle all its recyclables from headquarters at the Buena Vista landfill. One advantage is that smaller recyclers would no longer have to cart their materials over the hill. However, that project is still at least a year away from fruition, deGrassi said.

Though less committed than deGrassi to grassroots recycling, Chelone said he is trying to get a buy-back center for recyclables started by sometime this summer in the Aptos/Soquel area. It would be similar to the program Central County Garbage now operates in the San Lorenzo Valley.

Such a program in the Mid-county area might step in where the Ecology Action Recycling Center leaves off. Now located on 17th Avenue, near Brommer Street, in Live Oak, the center has been in operation for 10 years, but is tentatively scheduled to close its doors in the fall.

Half of Ecology Action's present \$42,000 contract with the county hinges on its collection services, and half on education, deGrassi said. Members work at publicizing such programs as Live Oak Curbside Recycling. One way of doing that is to increase public

awareness by talking one person in a neighborhood into recycling.

"It's the kind of thing that, you see your neighbor do it and you start doing it," deGrassi said.

Ecology Action has sold its land because the majority of the board feels the non-profit corporation should concentrate on education, said Gary Wilens, Ecology Action's operations manager and a member of its board of directors.

His dream is to convince everyone in Live Oak to use his services.

Chelone is all for recycling, but he thinks a burn-for-energy plant is the way to go. He envisions Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey counties getting together on such a project, which could be conveniently located in Moss Landing near PG&E's power plant.

Chelone said he's not familiar with all the technical aspects of such plants, but he understands that they are clean-burning and non-polluting. Huge magnets are used to separate metals from garbage, and the garbage is burned to produce energy that's sold to PG&E.

"No matter what, you can't recycle everything," he said. "You're going to have to throw something away, so why waste the land?"