



Tipsheet from Inside the Investigation: Georgia Gee

General tips on environmental investigations:

- **Build a timeline**
 - This is always my first step. I begin building a timeline and adding to it as the investigation progresses.
 - Make sure to link the sources as you go!

- **State databases have hidden gems**
 - For this investigation I downloaded hundreds of documents from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
 - If you have leads on a site, go straight to the state database for the health and environmental department.

- **Stay organized!**
 - Keep track of who you have spoken to, the page number of documents – every detail could be important and save you a lot of time when you are putting together your story.

- **Speak to experts and academics throughout**
 - Academics are often always keen to talk about their research or help you figure out the meaning of yours. Include them early in the process!

- **Archival documents can be key, and sometimes only found at the local library**
 - Old newspaper clippings and photographs really helped me to build the Trash School story. To find them I had to visit the local library and search for hours on their archive. Without this, the story would not have come together!

- **Go on the ground and talk to community members**
 - There is no replacement for on the ground reporting. Documents reveal the facts but community members reveal the real impact. Go and spend time in the community.