

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

PERMITTING & COMPLIANCE DIVISION

Community Services Bureau

Waste Management Section

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November 17, 1998

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Tom Ellerhoff, Department of Environmental Quality, Helena, MT 59620

✓ Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Complex, Helena, MT 59620

Documents Section, State Library, Capitol Complex, Helena, MT 59620

State Historic Preservation Office, 225 N. Roberts, Helena, MT 59620

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Pursuant to the Administrative Rules of Montana, 17.4.607(2) and 17.4.609(2), the following Environmental Assessment has been prepared by the Department of Environmental Quality concerning the proposed Granite Class III Burn Site and Registered Yard Waste Composte Facility. The proposed facility is located in the NW¹/₄ of the NW¹/₄ of Section 24, Township 7 North, Range 14 East, M.P.M., Granite County, Montana. Generally, the site is located approximately 1 mile north of the Town of Philipsburg at the Philipsburg Roll-off Container Site.

The purpose of the Environmental Assessment (EA) is to inform all interested governmental agencies, public groups, and individuals of the proposed action and to determine whether or not the action may have a significant effect on the human environment. This EA will be circulated for a period of thirty (30) days at which time a decision will be made as to our future action.

If you care to comment on this proposed action, please do so in writing, within the allotted time.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Rick Thompson in cursive.

Rick Thompson

Solid Waste Licensing Program

Encl: Environmental Assessment
I:PBURG.LTR

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
PERMITTING & COMPLIANCE DIVISION
Lee Metcalf Building, Helena, Montana 59620
(406) 444-4400

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Division/Bureau:

Permitting and Compliance Division\Community Services Bureau, Solid Waste Program.

Project or Application:

The Granite County Solid Waste Disposal District (District) has made application for a Class III Burn System at the Philipsburg Container Site. The District will also operate a registered compost facility at the proposed burn site. The proposed facility is located approximately one (1) mile north of Philipsburg and is adjacent to the closed Philipsburg County Class II Landfill. The facility is anticipated to burn approximately 500 cubic yards (cy) of clean wood waste and compost 100 cubic yards (cy) of yard waste per year.

Description of Project:

Location: The proposed Class III burn system is located on a .275-acre parcel which is currently utilized by the District as a roll-off container site. Specifically, the site is located in the NW¼ of the NW¼ of Section 24, Township 7 North, Range 14 West, M.P.M. Granite County, Montana. (Figure 1. Area Map and Figure 2. Site Map)

Operation Plan Description: The proposed Class III burn system will service the Town of Philipsburg and surrounding areas of Granite County. Only clean wood waste, such as tree limbs will be accepted. Site attendants will be responsible for monitoring the materials being placed in the burn pile. Burning will be conducted once a year. Prior to burning, the District will apply for, and must obtain a Conditional Open Burning Permit from the DEQ - Air and Waste Management Bureau. After a sufficient "cooling" period following a burn, the ash will be placed in the container site and transported to the BFI Class II Landfill in Missoula for final disposal. There will be no on-site burial of the ash.

The proposed compost area will accept lawn clippings and leaves from area residents and composting will be accomplished by the windrow method. The District has committed to operating the facility according to applicable State regulations. The finished compost will be used for landscaping by the county, the towns of Drummond and Philipsburg as well as the residents of the area.

The operating hours for the facility will be consistent with those for the currently operating container site. Therefore, the facility will be open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and will be under the supervision of a District site attendant.

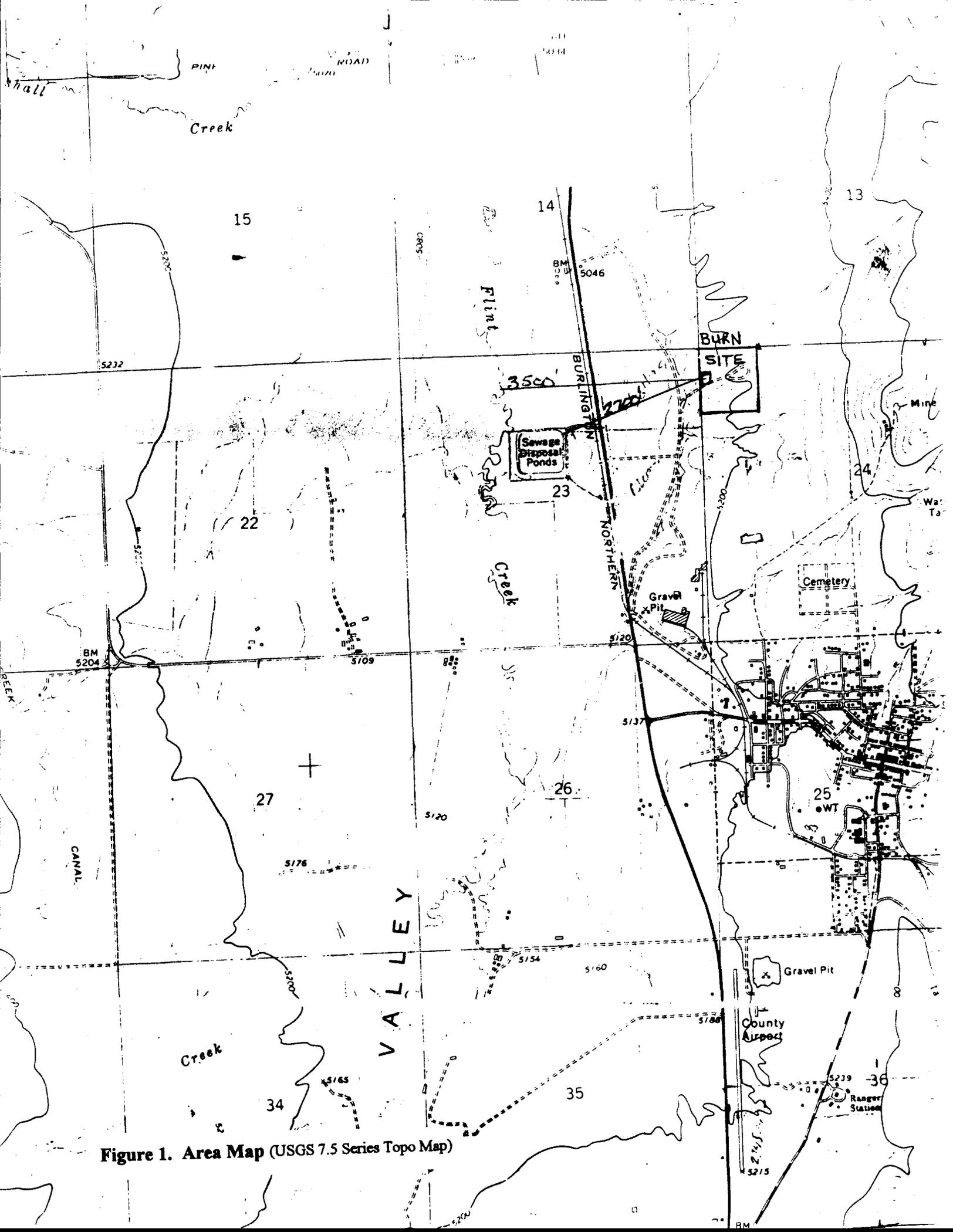


Figure 1. Area Map (USGS 7.5 Series Topo Map)

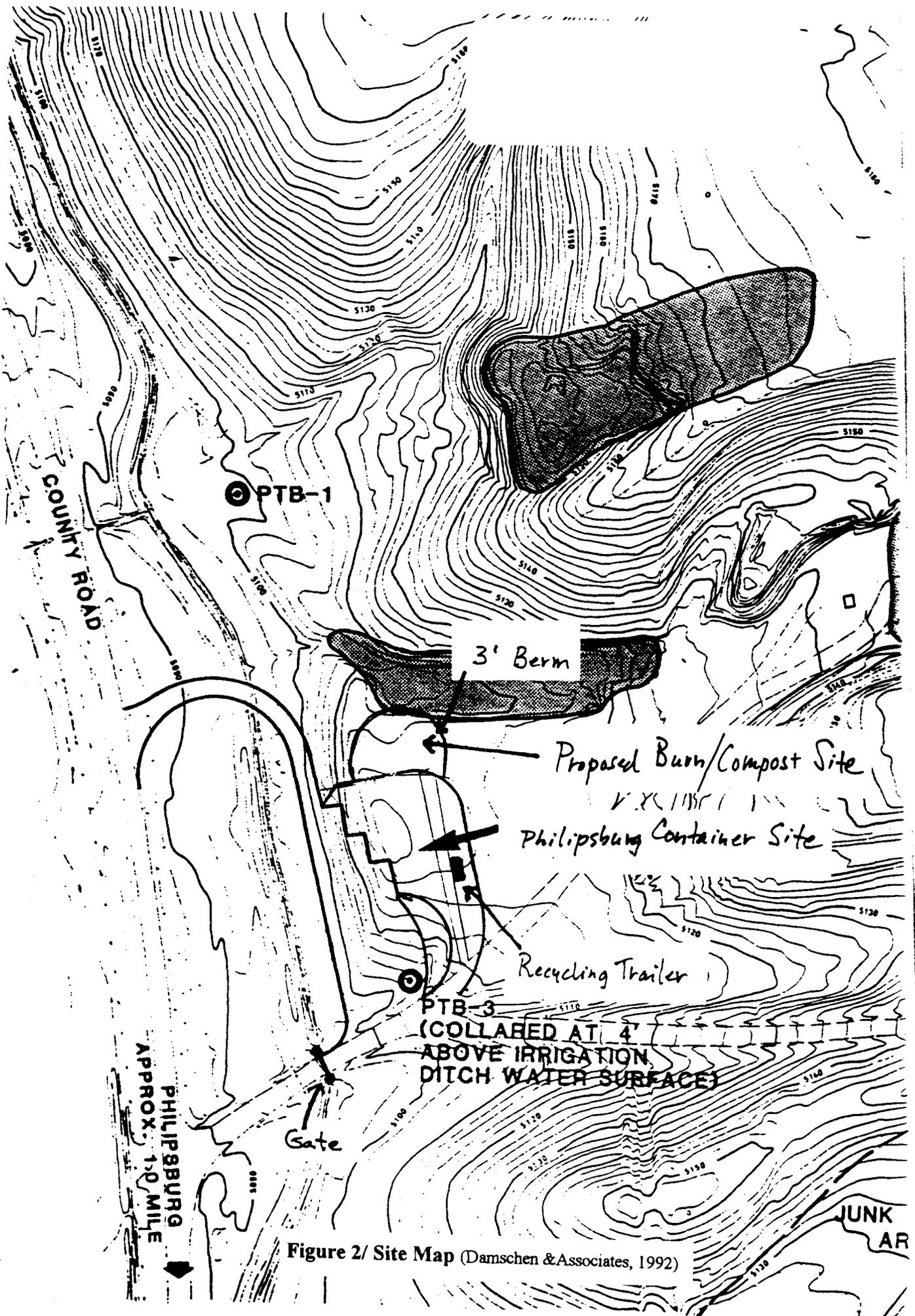


Figure 2/ Site Map (Damschen & Associates, 1992)

The attendant will inspect the burn pile on a frequent basis to ensure that it does not become contaminated with inappropriate materials. The attendant will also supervise the salvaging of use-able wood from the burn pile. Salvaging at licensed solid waste management facilities is expressly prohibited unless the owner\operator demonstrates that it can be conducted in a manner protective of human health and the environment, ARM. 17.50.510 (8). If it is determined that salvaging of wood waste at the facility cannot be conducted as required, the Department will rescind the District's permission to conduct salvaging at the proposed facility.

Benefits and Purpose of Proposal:

The establishment of a Class III burn system will act as a collection and burn area for untreated wood wastes in order to reduce the volume of wood wastes being placed in the Philipsburg Roll-Off Container Site. This proposed action would ultimately lead to a reduction in transportation costs to the District for the shipping of wastes to the BFI Class II Landfill in Missoula.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider:

Alternative I - No Action: Currently, the District has a Class III Landfill and Burn Site in Drummond. By choosing the no action alternative, the District would either transport wood waste to Drummond for burning or continue shipping it to the BFI Missoula landfill.

Alternative Site II - Proposed Project: In order to operate an efficient container site, the District is seeking to license a Class III Burn Site. By operating a burn site and compost facility, the District hopes to reduce the amount of bulky wastes being placed in the container site for transportation to Missoula. By reducing the amount of wastes being hauled to the BFI Missoula landfill, the District hopes to realize a reduction in transportation costs.

A listing and appropriate evaluation of mitigation, stipulations and other controls enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

The proposed facility must meet the minimum requirements of the Montana Solid Waste Management Act and the rules promulgated under that Act. In addition, the following stipulations would be imposed as conditions of licensure:

1. Open burning may only be conducted upon receipt of a Conditional Open Burning Permit from the Department.
2. No permanent disposal of solid waste on site.

Recommendation:

The recommendation of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (Department) is to request input from the public regarding the proposal. In lieu of adverse comment indicating environmental problems that have not been heretofore identified, the Department proposes to license the burn site as a Class III solid waste management system.

If an EIS is needed, and if appropriate, explain the reasons for preparing the EA:

At this stage of the Montana Environmental Policy Act process (MEPA), an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not indicated and the EA is an adequate document to address the potential impacts of the proposed facility.

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis:

The Department finds that the operation of the proposed facility will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Potential environmental impacts to surface water resources, terrestrial and aquatic life, vegetation and other aspects of the physical environment are expected to be minor, if any, for the proposed burn site. The Environmental Assessment is therefore an adequate document to address the potential impact of the proposed facility.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction:

Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Air and Waste Management Bureau; and the Granite County Sanitarian.

Individuals or groups contributing to this EA:

Application for a Solid Waste Management System License - Granite County Solid Waste Refuse Disposal District.

EA prepared by:

Rick Thompson - Community Services Bureau, Solid Waste Management Program.

Date:

November 17, 1998

Table 1. POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	Maj	Mod	Min	None	Unkn	Att
1. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitat				XXX		XXX
2. Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution				XXX		XXX
3. Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture				XXX		
4. Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality				XXX		XXX
5. Aesthetics			XXX			XXX
6. Air Quality			XXX			XXX
7. Unique, Endangered, Fragile or Limited Environmental Resources				XXX		
8. Demands on Environmental Resources of Water, Air, and Energy			XXX			XXX
9. Historical and Archaeological Sites				XXX		XXX

*Maj = Major; Mod = Moderate; Min = Minor; Unkn = Unknown; Att = Attached

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS: The overall impact of the proposed licensing action is anticipated to be **minor**. The permanent inclusion of wood waste burning operations at the Philipsburg Roll-Off Container Site should be minor and temporary due to the nature of wastes to be burned on the site and the seasonal restrictions placed on open burning by the Department and other state agencies.

Table 2. POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

	Maj	Mod	Min	None	Unkn	Att
1. Social Structure and Mores				XXX		
2. Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity				XXX		
3. Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue				XXX		
4. Agricultural or Industrial Production				XXX		
5. Human Health						
6. Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities				XXX		
7. Quantity and Distribution of Employment				XXX		
8. Distribution of Population				XXX		
9. Demands for Government Services			XXX			XXX
10. Industrial and Commercial Activity				XXX		
11. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals				XXX		XXX

*Maj = Major; Mod = Moderate; Min = Minor; Unkn = Unknown; Att = Attached

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS: The licensing of the Class III Burn site at the Philipsburg Roll-Off Container Site is anticipated to have minor impacts on the human environment. The site being located next to an existing solid waste management facility operated by the County should not significantly degrade aesthetics of the area.

Evaluating The Potential Impact Of The Proposed Solid Waste Management System On The Environment.

The following is a detailed explanation concerning the previous pages' comments on the potential impacts on the proposed solid waste management system on the environment (see Tables 1 and 2). In other words, the categories marked "attached" will be addressed in the subsequent pages. An overall impact of the proposed licensing action for each category will follow.

I. Potential Impacts on the Physical Environment.

1. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats and 4. Vegetation Cover, Quality, Stability and Moisture.
The proposed Class III burn site \ compost facility is located on a valley terrace, a remnant of an alluvial fan, the source of which lies east in the Flint Creek Range. The proposed .275 acre site is part of the closed Philipsburg Class II Landfill and roll-off container site. The native vegetation which comprises of range type grasses and forbes has gone through a long period of disturbance due to the operation of the Class II landfill. The primary wildlife found in the area are deer, birds, small mammals, reptiles, and invertebrate populations.

Potential Impacts - No additional impacts on the wildlife and vegetation in the area is anticipated. This assessment was made based on the relatively small area to be occupied by the proposed facilities (.20 acres), as well as the disturbance caused by present and past activities at the site.

2. Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution.

There are two coulees to the south of the roll-off container site and the proposed burn site. Flint Creek is located approximately 3,500 feet to the east of the site across State Highway 1. The approximate depth to ground water is approximately forty (40) feet below ground surface.

Potential Surface Water Impacts - The potential on the local water system is related to surface water run-off from the facility that could potentially enter the coulees to the south or Flint Creek to the west. No impacts are anticipated as the access roads to the container site (to the west) and the County Junk Vehicle Grave Yard (to the south) serve as barriers to storm water leaving the site. A three (3) foot berm will also be constructed on 80% of the downhill slope to control storm water drainage from the site.

Potential Ground Water Impacts - Because the burn site will only be used for the temporary storage of waste and the ashes will be removed after each burn event, no significant impact to the ground water resources in the area is anticipated.

5. Aesthetics.

The proposed solid waste management facility is located 1 mile north of Philipsburg off State Highway 1. It will be easily visible from the highway as there are no topographical features to conceal it.

Potential Impacts - The impacts to the aesthetics of the area are anticipated to be minor. If properly operated, the facility will not generate any wind blown litter as clean wood waste is fairly bulky and not easily moved by wind action. The operator must also monitor incoming loads to ensure that the facility does not become contaminated with Group II wastes such as metal and painted wood.

6. Air Quality.

In order to burn the untreated wood waste at the site, the District must apply for, and receive Conditional Air Quality Bureau Open Burning Permits, and follow all air quality rules and regulations. It should be noted that the issuance of a burning permit is not guaranteed, if air quality problems occur in the area of a Class III burn

system. If blowing ash poses a problem at the proposed site in the future, appropriate steps must be taken to correct this.

Potential Impacts - Impacts from the burning of clean wood waste at the facility are anticipated to be minor. Open burning in Montana is restricted to the spring, summer, and early fall months of the year when good air dispersion in the western valleys is common. Therefore, the air quality of the surrounding area should be minimally impacted if the burns are conducted as required by the DEQ.

8. Demands on Environmental Resources of Water, Air and Energy.

The operation of any solid waste management facility would require the consumption of energy, particularly equipment fuels.

Potential Impacts - Permitting this site may have minor positive effects on the environmental resources because it will reduce the amount of fuel used for waste hauling and the space demands on the local roll-off container site. The reduced hauling will also reduce the amount of wear and tear on local roads.

9. Historical and Archaeological Sites.

Potential Impacts - No impacts are anticipated as the proposed site is part of the closed Philipsburg Class II Landfill and presently open roll-off container site. Any findings of historical or archaeological significance would have been discovered over the past 20 years of operations at the facility.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. Demands for Governmental Services.

The proposed burn site \ compost facility will require periodic inspections by Departmental personnel and the County Sanitarian. The solid waste management license for this facility must be renewed annually.

11. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals.

The proposed site is in compliance with local government zoning and ordinances.

References

Closed Philipsburg Class II Landfill, DEQ File, Closed July 24, 1994..

Application for Solid Waste Management System License. Granite County Refuse Disposal District, June 1998.