



Montana Department of  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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December 26, 2012

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City of Lewistown, Kevin Myhre, 305 West Watson Street, Lewistown, MT 59457

Ladies and Gentlemen:

To comply with the Administrative Rules of Montana, 17.4.607(2) and 17.4.609(2), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), prepared the enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA). The attached EA is for the land application of grease trap waste and sump pumpings in Fergus County, Montana.

The purpose of the EA is to inform the public of the proposed action and to present DEQ's findings on the proposal. Persons wishing to comment have until the close of business on January 25, 2013, to submit written comments concerning the proposal. DEQ will not make a final decision until after the comment period has ended. A complete color copy of the EA may be reviewed on DEQ's website at <http://deq.mt.gov/ea/septicpumpers.mcp>

If you wish to comment on this proposed action during the comment period, please do so in writing by mailing your comments to the Waste and Underground Tank Management Bureau, Solid Waste Program, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901, or by E-mail to mailbox [wutbcomments@mt.gov](mailto:wutbcomments@mt.gov).

Sincerely,

Bob McWilliams  
Environmental Science Specialist  
Waste & Underground Tank Management Bureau

Enclosure: EA – Fergus County / City of Lewistown

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**  
Permitting and Compliance Division  
Waste and Underground Tank Management Bureau  
Solid Waste Section  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)**

**SECTION 1.0 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Fergus County and the City of Lewistown submitted a joint application for approval of a site for the land application of grease trap waste and car wash sump waste on 30 acres of property at the Municipal Airport (hereinafter referred to as the property) in Lewistown. At the present time, the property is being used for the production of wheat. Land application will occur at this site on an as-needed basis.

**Purpose of the Environmental Assessment:**

In accordance with 75-1-102, Montana Code Annotated (MCA), the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) is procedural and requires the “adequate review of state actions in order to ensure that environmental attributes are fully considered by the legislature in enacting laws to fulfill constitutional obligations; and the public is informed of the anticipated impacts in Montana of potential state actions.” According to MEPA, environmental assessments (EAs) are the procedural documents that communicate the process agencies follow in their decision-making. An EA does not result in a certain decision, but rather serves to identify the potential effect of a state action within the confines of existing laws and rules governing such proposed activities so that agencies make balanced decisions. The MEPA process does not provide regulatory authority beyond the authority explicitly provided in existing statute.

The Septage Disposal and Licensure laws and rules establish the minimum requirements for the land application of grease trap wastes and car wash sump waste. The EA is the mechanism that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) uses to: 1) Determine whether a proposed land application site meets the minimum requirements for compliance with the current laws and rules and is therefore licensable as proposed; 2) Assist the public in understanding the licensing laws of the Septage Disposal and Licensure program; 3) Identify and discuss the potential environmental effects of the proposed land application activity if it is approved and becomes operational; 4) Discuss actions taken by the applicant and the enforceable measures and conditions designed to mitigate the effects identified by DEQ during the review of the application; and 5) Seek public input to ensure DEQ has identified the substantive environmental impacts associated with the proposed land application of grease trap waste and sump waste at the proposed location.

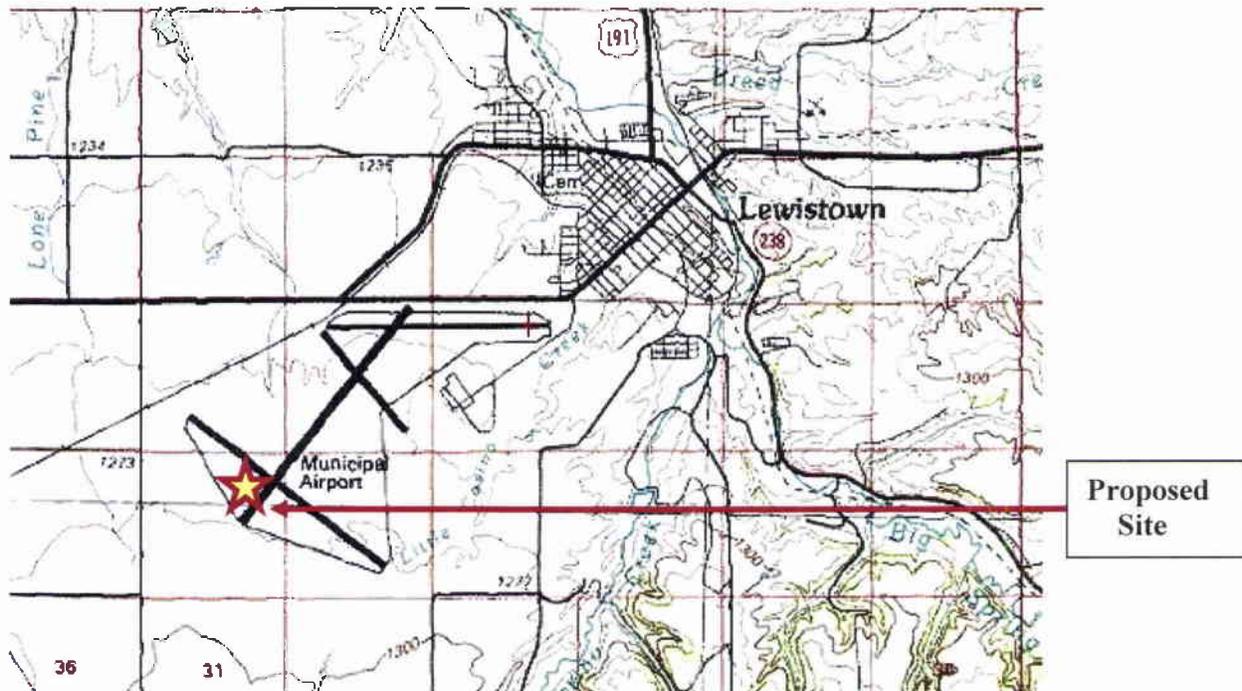
**Benefits and Purpose of Project:**

The land application of grease trap waste and car wash sump waste is an economical and environmentally sound practice. A properly managed land application program provides benefits to agricultural land by the addition of organic matter and nutrients to the soil without adversely affecting public health. The land application of grease trap waste and car wash sump waste at this site will add nutrients, moisture, and improve the soil tilth for the continued production of the wheat crop.

**Site Location and Setback Requirements:**

The proposed land application site is located in the NE1/4 of Section 30, Township 15N, Range 18E, MPM, Fergus County, Montana, at the Lewistown Municipal Airport (Figure 1.1). Of the 160 acres of property available, only 30 acres will be used for land application.

**Figure 1.1: Proposed Land Application Site Location**



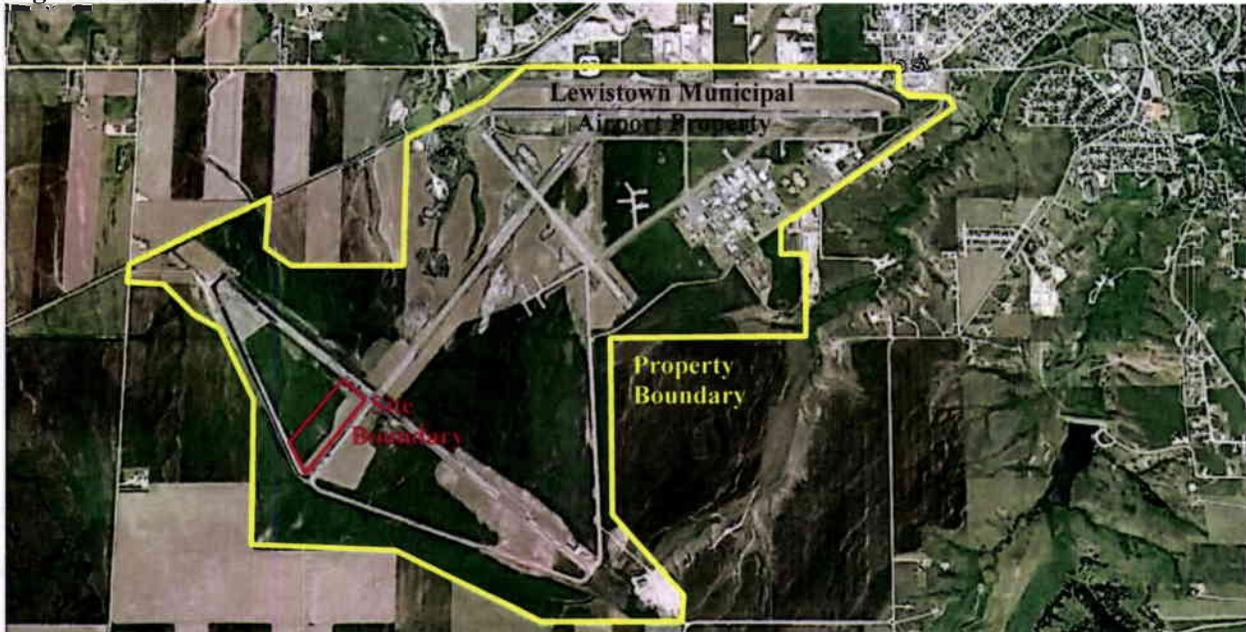
In accordance with the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM), the setbacks noted in Table 1.1 must be maintained during land application activities.

**Table 1.1: Land Application Site Setback Requirements:**

ARM Reference	Setback Requirements
17.50.809(1)	Pumpings may not be applied to land within 500 feet of any occupied or inhabitable building.
17.50.809(2)	Pumpings may not be applied to land within 150 feet of any state surface water, including ephemeral or intermittent drainages and wetlands.
17.50.809(3)	Pumpings may not be applied to land within 100 feet of any state, federal, county, or city-maintained highway or road.
17.50.809(4)	Pumpings may not be applied to land within 100 feet of a drinking water supply source.
17.50.809(6)	Pumpings may not be applied to land with slopes greater than 6%.
17.50.809(8)	Pumpings may not be applied to land where seasonally high ground water is 6 feet or less below ground surface.

Figure 1.2 shows the proposed site location in reference to the locational features. The area proposed for land application will be located greater than 500 feet from any occupied or inhabitable building, greater than 150 feet from a state surface water, greater than 100 feet from any state, federal, county, or city-maintained road, and greater than 100 feet from any drinking water supply. The site is located at the Lewistown Municipal Airport and is greater than 6,600 feet from the primary runway and 1,200 feet from the end of a secondary runway.

**Figure 1.2: Proposed Site Location Setback Boundaries:**



**Site Climate:**

The climate in the area proposed for land application is typical of the semi-arid regime in the Lewistown area. Table 1.2 provides a summary of monthly climate information. The winters in the Lewistown area are long and moderately snowy; the summers are hot and dry. The majority of precipitation falls during the months of May thru July, while February is the driest month. The average annual precipitation is approximately 17.66 inches.

**Table 1.2: Monthly Climate Summary:**

<b>LEWISTOWN FAA AP, MONTANA (244985)</b>													
<b>Period of Record Monthly Climate Summary</b>													
<b>Period of Record: 1/ 8/1896 to 12/31/2005</b>													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Max. Temperature (F)	32.1	35.7	42.0	54.1	63.5	71.6	81.3	80.4	69.2	58.6	44.3	35.8	55.7
Average Min. Temperature (F)	9.8	12.5	19.1	28.5	37.0	44.5	49.6	48.2	39.6	31.3	20.6	13.3	29.5
Average Total Precipitation (in.)	0.74	0.65	1.00	1.28	2.81	3.52	1.93	1.62	1.49	1.13	0.74	0.76	17.66
Average Total Snowfall (in.)	11.0	7.3	10.3	8.5	3.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.8	6.9	10.1	62.8
Average Snow Depth (in.)	4	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1

**Site Operation and Maintenance:**

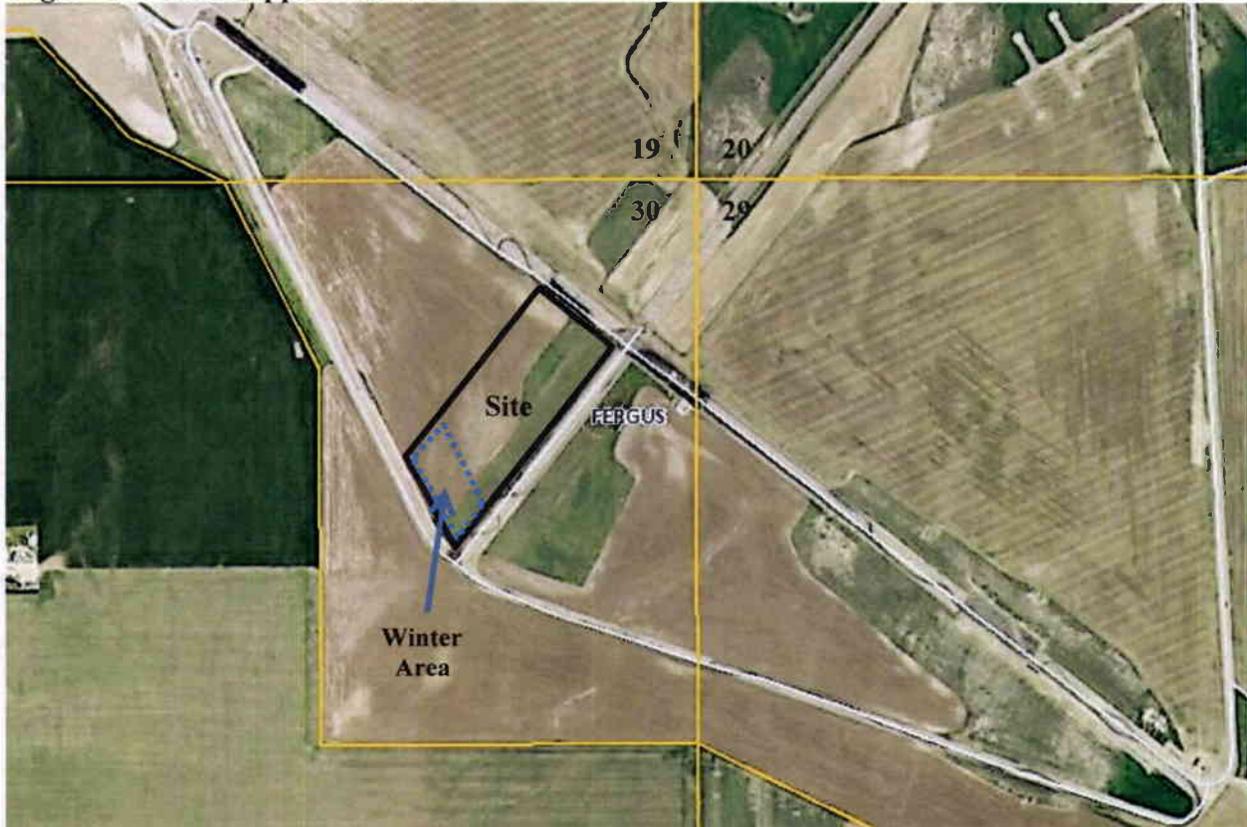
The land application of grease trap waste and car wash sump waste is considered the beneficial use of a waste product when the material is applied in accordance with the laws and rules governing land application. The operational requirements for land application are outlined in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3: Land Application Site Operational Requirements:**

<b>ARM Reference</b>	<b>Site Restrictions/Requirements</b>
17.50.809(10)	All non-putrescible litter must be removed from the land application site within 6 hours of application.
17.50.810(1)	Pumpings may not be applied to flooded, frozen, or snow covered ground if the pumpings may enter state waters.
17.50.811(3)	Pumpings may be applied only if the person first performs one of the following vector attraction and pathogen reduction methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• injection below the land surface so no significant amount remains on the land surface within one-hour of injection;</li><li>• incorporation into the soil surface plow layer within 6 hours of application;</li><li>• management as required by 17.50.810 when the ground is frozen</li></ul>

The acreage available for land application will be divided and will be rotated on an annual basis, so that parcels used one year will be inactive the next year (Figure 1.3). This rotation allows the vegetation or crop of choice to utilize the moisture and other nutrients added from the land application process. When the ground is frozen, the grease trap waste will only be land applied on the south end of the property.

**Figure 1.3: Land Application Site**



The waste will be land applied using a dispersive mechanism, consisting of either a spreader bar or a splash plate, and will be incorporated into the soil surface plow layer within six hours of application. The dispersive mechanism applies the waste in a wide, thin, even layer at a beneficial rate.

## **SECTION 2.0 – ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

### **Solid Waste Section Roles and Responsibilities:**

The DEQ Solid Waste Section is responsible for ensuring activities proposed under the Solid Waste Management Act, the Septage Disposal Licensure Act, and the Motor Vehicle Disposal & Recycling Act are in compliance with current regulations. A land application site must first be approved by the county in which the site is located before the request for licensure is submitted to the Solid Waste Section for review and approval. Each licensee is responsible for following the Administrative Rules of Montana for Cesspool, Septic Tank and Privy Cleaners and other restrictions and requirements put in place by the county in which the land application site is located.

### **The following provides a description of reasonable alternatives whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider:**

A decision by DEQ is triggered when the applicant upholds the request for licensure of the proposed activity at the proposed location. The applicants however, may at any time choose to withdraw the application by exercising the “no action” alternative. If the ‘no-action’ alternative is chosen, the applicant could seek to locate a land application site elsewhere.

**Alternative A:** The "no action alternative". Under this alternative, a final decision by DEQ is not required because the applicant will have chosen to withdraw the application for licensure of the land application site. By withdrawing the application from consideration by DEQ, the applicant could seek an alternative site for the proposal. Although it is plausible, the applicant’s selection of this alternative is unlikely. Rather, the applicant will likely continue the request for approval of the proposed activity at the proposed site.

In the absence of the applicant’s selection of the ‘no-action’ alternative, and prior to DEQ’s final decision, two other possible alternatives were considered during the preparation of this EA.

**Alternative B:** Under this alternative, DEQ denies the new disposal site application because the applicant failed to provide information needed to address any deficiencies identified during the review of the application and/or the public comment phase. Deficiencies could be due to an unforeseen shortfall in meeting site setback or locational requirements, licensing criteria, regulatory criteria or legal issues, or the ability of the applicant to mitigate a potentially substantial impact to human health or the environment. If denied, the applicant could locate, investigate, and apply for a license at another site suitable for the proposed activity. The decision to deny the application is unlikely because DEQ has found the application complete for public consideration.

**Alternative C:** Under this alternative, DEQ approves the land application site as proposed. Several factors support the viability of this option:

1. This site meets all of the requirements of the Septage Disposal Licensure Act.
2. The site is fenced, rural county/city property; and,
3. All activities will be performed in accordance with an approved Operation and Maintenance Plan (O&M) and verified by periodic inspections by DEQ and/or Fergus County personnel, so the effects on human health and the environment are minimized.

In consideration of these alternatives, the potential environmental impacts of Alternative C were evaluated for the proposed project based on the information provided and DEQ’s research on the area surrounding the proposed site. The results of DEQ’s evaluation of potential environmental impacts related to the proposed facility are summarized in Section 3.0.

### **SECTION 3.0 - EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS**

This section evaluates the potential environmental effects that may occur on the physical and human environment if the land application site is approved. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 identify the physical and human elements that may be affected by licensure of the proposed site. Each table is followed by a discussion of the potential impacts to the resources that might be affected by the proposal. Generally, only those resources potentially affected by the proposal are discussed. If there is no effect on a resource, it may not be mentioned in the appendix.

Direct and indirect impacts are those effects that occur in or near the proposed project area and might extend over time. Often, the distinction between direct and indirect effects is difficult to define, thus in the following discussion, impact or effect means both types of effects.

Cumulative impacts are restricted to the net effects of the proposed project because no other known projects are proposed in this area. Secondary impacts are induced by a direct impact and occur at a later time or distance from the triggering action. No secondary impacts are expected.

**TABLE 3.1 - IMPACTS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

<u>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</u>	Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Attached
1. SITE TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY & SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY & MOISTURE:				✓		✓
2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY & DISTRIBUTION:				✓		✓
3. AIR QUALITY:				✓		
4. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OR LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:				✓		
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:				✓		✓
6. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY & QUALITY:			✓			✓
7. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:			✓			✓
8. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE:				✓		✓
9. AESTHETICS:				✓		✓
10. AGRICULTURE:			✓			✓

**CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS** — The cumulative effects of the proposed land application site are minor. The production rates of the wheat crop will increase from the addition of nutrients and other organic matter from the materials. Because the site is actively farmed, the proposed activity is consistent with the day to day activities of farming and ranching and will not cause a change in the overall aesthetics or agricultural use of properties in the area. There are no recognized secondary effects.

**TABLE 3.2 - IMPACTS TO THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

<u>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</u>	Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Attached
1. SOCIAL STRUCTURES & MORES:				✓		
2. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS & DIVERSITY:				✓		
3. DENSITY & DISTRIBUTION OR POPULATION & HOUSING:				✓		
4. HUMAN HEALTH & SAFETY:				✓		✓
5. COMMUNITY & PERSONAL INCOME:				✓		
6. QUANTITY & DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:				✓		
7. LOCAL & STATE TAX BASE REVENUES:				✓		
8. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:				✓		
9. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES & PRODUCTION:				✓		
10. ACCESS TO & QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL & WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:				✓		
11. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS & GOALS:				✓		
12. TRANSPORTATION:				✓		✓

**CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS** — There are no cumulative effects recognized from the use of the proposed land application site. The proposed site is located on county/city property that is actively farmed. There are no recognized secondary effects.

## SECTION 3.1 - POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED LAND APPLICATION SITE ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS (See Table 3.1)

### 1. Site Topography, Geology, and Soil Quality – Stability & Moisture

The soil types at the proposed land application site are classified as the Danvers-Tamaneen clay loams, Doughty-Sipple loams, and Sipple loam (Figure 3.1).

The majority of the site is covered by the Danvers-Tamaneen clay loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes. The Danvers-Tamaneen soils consist of clay loam, silty clay, and gravelly loams, and are well drained with a low to moderate available water capacity and moderately low to moderately high permeability. The Doughty-Sipple loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes, cover the southwest corner of the site and consist of loam, clay loam, silty clay loam, and gravelly loams. The Doughty-Sipple soils are well drained with a moderate available water capacity and moderately high to high permeability. The southern end of the site is covered by the Sipple loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes, which consist of loam, clay loam, silty clay loam, and very gravelly loam. The Sipple loams are well drained with a moderate available water capacity and a moderately high permeability. The average depth to the water table for all these soils is greater than 80 inches.

### 2. Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution

Based on the information in the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG), Groundwater Information Center (GWIC) database, there are approximately 15 water wells located within one-mile of the site. Because the GWIC database locates wells by section, all wells in the sections containing the site (T15N, R18E, Section 30) and those surrounding the sites (T15N, R18E, Sections 19, 20, 29, 31, and 32, and T15N, R17E, Sections 24, 25, and 36) were included in this analysis. Some of these wells may be located greater than one mile from the land application site. The approximate locations of these wells are shown in Figure 3.2. Table 3.3 summarizes the well information by section. The data used to create this table are collected by MBMG from well drillers' records and are not verified for accuracy. The wells in the area of the proposed site are typically greater than 300 feet deep and have static water levels of greater than 30 feet below ground surface.

Figure 3.1: Soils Map



#### Legend

-  Approximate Site Boundary
- 58 Danvers-Tamaneen clay loams, 0-2% slopes
- 75 Doughty-Sipple loams, 0-2% slopes
- 183 Pits, gravel
- 205 Sipple loam, 0-4% slopes

Figure 3.2: Well Locations

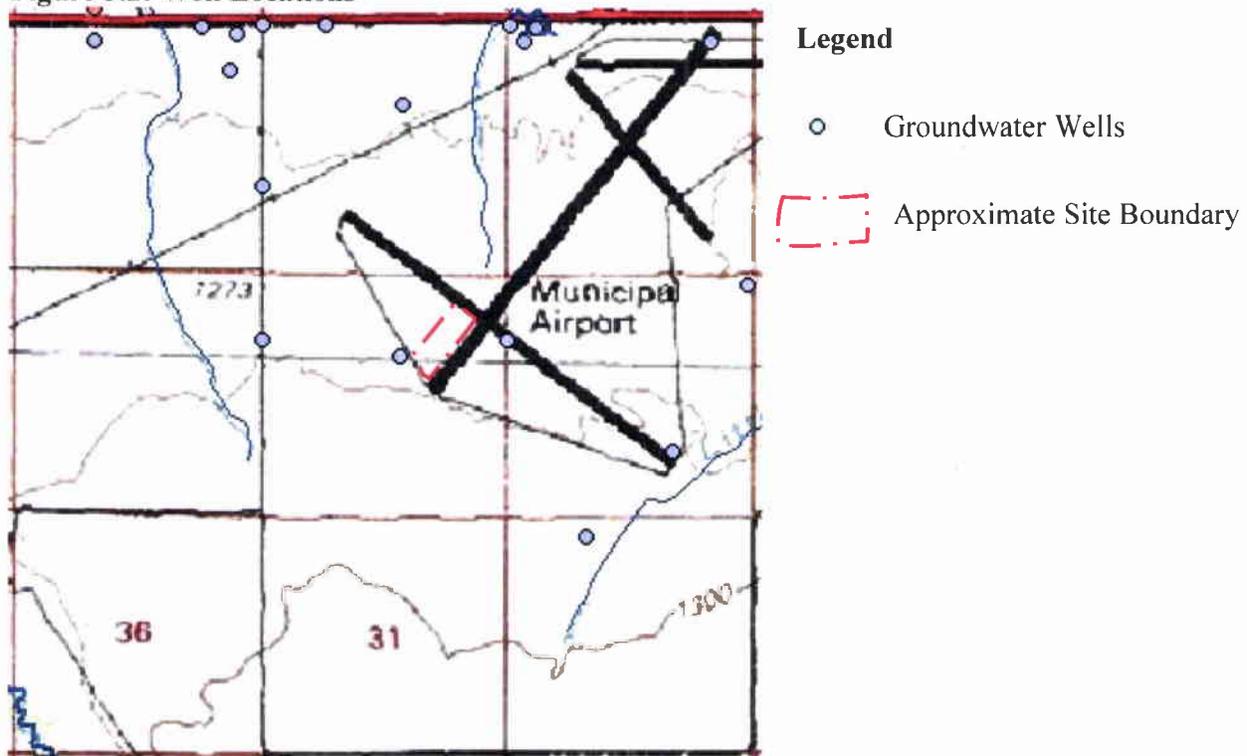


Table 3.3: Summary of Nearby Wells

Township, Range, Section	Number of Wells	Total Depth (ft bgs)			Depth Water Enters (ft bgs)			Static Water Level (ft bgs)			Yield (gpm)		
		Min	Max	Ave	Min	Max	Ave	Min	Max	Ave	Min	Max	Ave
T15N, R17E, S24	4	150	480	317.5	240	450	323.3	17	65	33	8	20	16
T15N, R17E, S25	0	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
T15N, R17E, S36	0	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
T15N, R18E, S19	2	160	300	230	140	270	205	65	90	77.5	20	40	30
T15N, R18E, S20	4	10	1200	321.8	31	31	31	20	26	23	12	22	17
T15N, R18E, S29	2	420	600	510	400	560	480	90	108	99	80	100	90
T15N, R18E, S30	2	48	380	214	260	260	260	16	220	118	8	12	10
T15N, R18E, S31	0	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
T15N, R18E, S32	1	80	80	80	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	20	20	20
All	15	10	1200	303	31	560	292.3	16	220	63.9	8	100	30.2

The total depth column is the depth drilled, which may be deeper than the bottom of the well as completed. Depth water enters is shallowest depth at which water enters the well bore. Static water level is the level of water measured in the well at the time of installation. Yield is the amount of water the well is expected to be capable of producing as reported by the well driller. Total depth, depth water enters, and static water levels are reported in feet below ground surface. Yield is reported in gallons per minute.

### 5. Terrestrial, Avian, and Aquatic Life and Habitats

There are no wetlands or permanent surface water bodies located on the proposed site. Because no continuously active aquatic systems exist within the boundary of the proposed site, it is unlikely that there is any significant aquatic life or habitat anywhere on the site. Therefore, the impact to aquatic

species is negligible. An intensive survey was not performed to verify the presence of, or impact to, terrestrial or avian species within the land application site, because the site is actively used for the production of wheat. However, there is adequate acreage of similar habitat available adjacent to the site to accommodate any species that may be forced to relocate. Consequently, any terrestrial or avian species will likely relocate to the adjacent locations.

#### **6. Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality**

The vegetation cover, quantity and quality of the land and its crop will be enhanced by the application of grease trap waste and sump pumpings. The land application of grease trap waste and sump pumpings provide benefits to agricultural land by the addition of organic matter and nutrients to the soil. The land application of grease trap waste and sump pumpings at this site will add nutrients, moisture, and improve the soil tilth for the continued production of the wheat crop.

#### **7. Unique, Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resources**

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program indicated the Hoary Bat, Whooping Crane, Iowa Darter, and Pale-spiked Lobelia are listed as species of concern. Designation as a species of concern is not a statutory or regulatory classification. Instead, these designations provide a basis for resource managers and decision-makers to make proactive decisions regarding species conservation. There are no wetlands or permanent surface water bodies located on the proposed site. An intensive site survey was not conducted to verify the presence of, or impact to, sensitive, unique, endangered, or fragile species within or adjacent to the proposed land application site because the site is currently used for the active production of wheat. Therefore, due to the limited development and human population adjacent to the proposed site, there is adequate acreage of similar habitat available in the vicinity to accommodate any species that may be forced to relocate.

#### **8. Historical and Archaeological Site**

A cultural resource file search was conducted for the sites. Records indicate there have been no previously recorded sites within Section 30, T15N, R18E. The State Historic Preservation Office feels there is a low likelihood cultural properties will be impacted and therefore a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during operations at this proposed site, the State Historic Preservation Office will be notified immediately.

#### **9. Aesthetics**

This site is on farming land and not located on a prominent topographical feature. It is not visible from a highly populated area. The application of grease trap waste and sump pumpings are similar to the day to day activities of farming and ranching and will not cause a change in the aesthetics of the area.

#### **10. Agriculture**

Agricultural activities in the area consist primarily of farming and grazing lands. Grease trap waste and sump pumpings will be land applied so that the wheat grown on the site can use the nitrogen being land applied. Land application sites are rotated on an annual basis to facilitate the production of crops that will utilize the nutrients contained in the waste. The impacts on agricultural production due to the proposed land application of grease trap waste and sump pumpings at this site will be minor.

**SECTION 3.2 - POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED LAND APPLICATION  
SITE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENTS (See Table 3.2)**

**4. Human Health & Safety**

The grease trap waste and sump pumpings will be land applied at the site on an as needed basis. The grease trap waste will be incorporated into the soil surface plow layer within 6 hours of application. There are no additional health or safety concerns when the site is operated in accordance with the Septage Disposal and Licensure laws.

**12. Transportation**

The land application site will be accessed off of Airport Road. Airport Road currently supports local automobile and truck traffic to several businesses including heavy equipment associated with them. The site will be used on an as needed basis by pumpers and will not cause a significant increase in traffic on Airport Road.

## **SECTION 4.0 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Evaluation of mitigation, stipulations, and other controls enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

The proposed land application site and O&M plan must meet the requirements of the Montana Septage Disposal and Licensure Law, Air and Water Quality Acts and other Montana environmental laws and regulations as well as County ordinances. Obtaining a license from DEQ and remaining in compliance with the regulations should minimize any adverse environmental effects. The licensee must also operate the site under the guidelines of the approved O&M Plan. The licensee's failure to operate within the constraints of the approved O&M Plan will result in citations by DEQ. Continued or persistent failure to abide by the regulations and the O&M Plan will result in Enforcement action, which may include penalties and revocation of the site.

### **Recommendation:**

The DEQ recommendation is to distribute the EA to adjacent landowners and interested persons to satisfy the public notification and participation requirements of MEPA.

### **Findings:**

DEQ finds that there would be little or no impacts to the physical and human environment if the grease trap waste and car wash sump wastes are treated in a manner consistent with the rules and regulations. Therefore, an EA is the appropriate level of analysis and an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. This treatment option is a beneficial reuse of a waste product.

### **Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have over-lapping jurisdiction:**

Fergus County Environmental Health

### **Individuals or groups contributing to this EA:**

Mr. Kevin Myhre/City of Lewistown  
Montana Natural Heritage Program  
Montana Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office  
Natural Resource Information System

### **REFERENCES:**

Western Regional Climate Center, 2215 Raggio Parkway, Reno NV 89512-1095  
Montana Tech of the University of Montana, 2012, Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, Groundwater Information Center, <http://mbmgwic.mtech.edu/>  
United States Department of Agriculture, 2012, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Web Soil Survey, <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>

### **EA prepared by:**

Bob McWilliams and Martin Van Oort - DEQ Permitting and Compliance Division, Waste and Underground Tank Management Bureau, Solid Waste Section

**Date:** December 26, 2012