

May 2, 2006

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Pursuant to the Administrative Rules of Montana, 17.4.609, the following Environmental Assessment has been prepared by the Department of Environmental Quality concerning Blaine County Commissioners and Hill County Commissioners Motor Vehicle graveyard.

The purpose of the Environmental Assessment is to inform all interested governmental agencies, public groups or individuals of the proposed action and to determine whether or not the action may have a significant effect on the human environment. This Environmental Assessment 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 within the allotted time.

Sincerely,

Bruce W. Meyer
Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Program
(406) 444-2835 or e-mail at brmeyer@mt.gov

Enc.

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901
(406) 444-4400**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Division/Bureau: Permitting & Compliance \ Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Program

Project or Application: Blaine County Commissioners, Chinook, MT - A proposed county motor vehicle graveyard.

Description of Project: Blaine County Commissioners located at Chinook, Montana, have submitted a county motor vehicle graveyard license application to this department for review. The proposed county motor vehicle graveyard will be situated in Blaine County. The legal description of the facility is in Section 1 Township 32 North, Range 17 East, and Section 6, Township 32 North, Range 18 East, M.P.M. Blaine County. The facility is approximately 250 acres in size.

Benefits and Purpose of Proposal: Blaine County Commissioners are proposing to establish a county motor vehicle graveyard at the Unified Disposal Landfill site just west of Chinook, MT. As required by the Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Act, all county motor vehicle graveyards must be shielded from public view. "Public view" is defined as any point six (6) feet above the surface of the center of a public road from which the junk vehicles can be seen.

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

Alternative #1. Not to establish and license a facility at this location.

Alternative #2. To establish and license a facility at a location other than the one proposed in the license application. This would require the applicant to find and acquire by purchase or lease a different parcel of property for the proposed usage.

Alternative #3. To establish and license a facility at the proposed location.

A listing and appropriate evaluation of mitigation, stipulations and other controls enforceable by the agency or another government agency: Automotive fluids **must be** drained from the vehicles prior to the vehicle being placed in storage. All fluids removed from the vehicles must be captured over an impermeable surface, properly containerized, and properly stored for reuse, recycling, or proper disposal. This is a management method intended to alleviate the potential for groundwater contamination. This is a license condition enforceable by the agency.

CFCs (Freon) **must not** be released to the environment. This is a federally enforceable requirement and is enforced by the U.S. EPA.

Recommendation: N/A

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

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis: Based on the information submitted for review with the license application, it is the preliminary determination of the department that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will provide an adequate review for this proposal.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction: Blaine County Commissioners and the Blaine County Junk Vehicle Director.

Individuals or groups contributing to this EA: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; United States Department of Agriculture

EA prepared by Bruce W. Meyer

Date: May 2, 2006

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			xxx
4. Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality			xxx			xxx
5. Aesthetics				xxx		xxx
6. Air Quality				xxx		
7. Unique, Endangered, Fragile or Limited Environmental Resources				xxx		
8. Demands on Environmental Resources of Water, Air, and Energy				xxx		
9. Historical and Archaeological Sites				xxx		xxx

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

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS: Upon closure of the facility and removal of the junk vehicles the aesthetics of the site will return to their original state.

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			xxx
4. Agricultural or Industrial Production				xxx		
5. Human Health				xxx		
6. Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities				xxx		
7. Quantity and Distribution of Employment			xxx			xxx
8. Distribution of Population				xxx		
9. Demands for Government Services			xxx			xxx
10. Industrial and Commercial Activities				xxx		
11. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals				xxx		xxx

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

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS: N/A

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT: The impacts will be minor for local and state tax base and tax revenue due to the size of the facility. The quantity and distribution of employment will be minor to none because of the number employed. The demands for government services will be minor to none and will be covered by county staff and state staff.

BLAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

General Comments

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality licenses and regulates county motor vehicle graveyards under the authority of the Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Act (75-10-501, MCA) and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM 17.50.201).

To be eligible for licensing, a proposed county motor vehicle graveyard must:

- 1) Be in compliance with all existing zoning ordinances on the date the license application is submitted to the department.
- 2) Be capable of being shielded from view of any existing public road. If the license application is approved, the applicant must construct all necessary shielding prior to licensure.
- 3) Not create any adverse environmental impacts.

The department has made the preliminary determination that the applicant is in compliance with the existing zoning ordinances as of the date of the submittal of the application and can effectively shield the proposed facility from all public roads in the area. The purpose of the Environmental Assessment is to determine if the proposed county motor vehicle graveyard can be established without posing significant adverse environmental impacts.

Potential Impacts on Physical Environment

1. Terrestrial & aquatic life habitats
4. Vegetation cover, quantity and quality

The proposed site of the county motor vehicle graveyard is approximately 250 acres in size. This facility will be located just west Chinook, MT. The legal description of the facility is Section 1 Township 32 North, Range 17 East, and Section 6, Township 32 North, Range 18 East, M.P.M. Blaine County. The property is naturally shielded from the public roads.

This county motor vehicle graveyard will be located at the county Unified Disposal landfill which is located just west of Chinook, MT. Agriculture land lays on the south, east and west sides of the county motor vehicle graveyard. The north side is adjacent to US Highway 2. Most of the surrounding area would serve as habitat for birds and small mammals.

The establishment of a county motor vehicle graveyard should not disturb and displace any of the vegetation and wildlife habitats within the proposed location. The impacts caused by the county motor vehicle graveyard should not be significant to the area's ecosystem, because the facility is an active landfill.

2. Water quality, quantity, and distribution

There are domestic wells in the area for public use. This information was obtained from the Ground Water Information Center at Montana Tech of the University of Montana.

This proposal is reasonably expected to not have any impacts on the quality, quantity, and distribution of the ground water with the above management practices in place.

3. Geology and soil quality, stability, and moisture

The U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service classifies the soils in the vicinity of the site as Judith River Formation. Havre Testing Labs, Inc was hired to determine the existing soils stratum. The following is a quote from their findings. "The proposed area is situated in the Judith River Formation which is covered in this area by about twenty feet of glacial till. The fill area is in a coulee which cut through the till and exposed the underlying formation with subsequent valley fill and soil formation. The slopes are quite stable with no evidence of rapid mass wasting. Exposed Judith River Formation appears on the steeper hillsides with resultant soil creep. A sandstone shelf marks the top of the Judith River Fm. here. This shelf outcrops about half way up the bank on both the North and South side. Difficulty would be encountered in excavating this material and should be avoided."

Waste anti-freeze, gasoline, and lubricating oils contain petroleum distillates, heavy metals, and possibly toxic compounds. If improperly disposed of, these fluids can cause surface and groundwater degradation. The county requires the fluids to be removed before the junk vehicles are hauled into the county motor vehicle graveyard. Some residual lubricating oils and anti-freeze may drip from the vehicles stored at the facility. This residual dripping is not expected to be significant or result in heavy soil accumulations.

5. Aesthetics

The county proposes to use the natural lay of the land to shield the junk vehicles from public view. The site is located at the Unified Disposal Landfill just west of Chinook, MT. An onsite evaluation by department personnel determined the junk vehicles would be shielded from public view.

"Public view" is defined as any point six (6) feet above the surface of the center of a public road from which the junk vehicles can be seen.

9. Historical and archaeological sites

The State Historic Preservation Office conducted a cultural resource file search for Blaine County

Commissioners. Based on the State Historic Preservation Office file search, "We feel that there is a low likelihood cultural properties will be impacted. We, therefore, feel that a recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during this project we would ask that our office be contacted and the site investigated."

Potential Impacts on Human Environment

3. Local & state tax base & tax revenue

7. Quantity and distribution of employment

The issuance of a county motor vehicle graveyard license will allow the Blaine and Hill County Commissioners to collect junk vehicles to be stored in a mandated free county motor vehicle graveyard.

The establishment of a county motor vehicle graveyard may create an additional labor requirement and may result in additional employment. This employment and the employment requirements for the support services of this yard may provide a neutral to positive employment impact for the community.

9. Demands for governmental services

The issuance of a county motor vehicle graveyard license will require administrative and inspection services of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Blaine County Junk Vehicle Program personnel.

11. Locally adopted environmental plans and goals

The establishment of a county motor vehicle graveyard at this location does **not** conflict with any existing zoning ordinances as certified by Haley Gustitis, Blaine County Planner, Blaine County, Chinook, MT.

Effect on Adjoining Landowners and Land Uses **Other Site-Specific Information**

Information gathered for the preparations of this Environmental Assessment reveal that directly adjacent to the proposed location is agricultural tracts of lands. The management practices of proper waste disposal and shielding the junk vehicles from public view will minimize any impacts to adjoining landowners and land uses.