

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Note: Instructions to DNRC staff for preparing this EA can be found at:
http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/eis_ea.html

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:* Allied Waste Services of North America, LLC
1501 Rodgers
Missoula, MT 59802

2. *Type of action:* Application For Beneficial Water Use Permit 76M 30019451

3. *Water source name:* Groundwater

4. *Location affected by project:*

N2 Section 16, E2NE Section 17, S2 Section 9, Missoula County

5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*

Allied Waste Services submitted an Application For Beneficial Water Use Permit to DNRC seeking approval from the State of Montana to divert 420 gpm up to 20.0 acre-feet per year for commercial purposes from a groundwater well. The applicant proposes to use water diverted from this well for dust control at the BFI landfill in Missoula. The well will be used to fill up to five 4000-gallon water trucks a day, which will spray the road system and dumping areas at the landfill. The landfill is located in the W2 of Section 9 and the NENE of Section 8, both in T13N, R19W. The requested period of diversion is January 1 through December 31 annually. The use of groundwater for dust abatement will benefit the applicant and citizens of Missoula through controlling air pollutants. If the applicant meets the criteria for issuance of a permit, found in MCA 85-2-311, the State of Montana will grant a provisional water right permit for the above stated amount of water and purpose.

6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

None.

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity - *Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.*

The source of supply is groundwater diverted from a 120 foot deep well. The groundwater aquifer from which the well diverts water is 100 to 110 feet below the ground surface. The groundwater aquifer is locally confined, and is below cemented sand, gravel and clay layers. Due to the confined condition of the aquifer it is not hydraulically connected to surface water, and no impact to surface water sources will occur

Determination: No impact.

Water quality - *Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.*

The proposed groundwater appropriation is from a deep locally confined aquifer that is not hydraulically connected to any surface water. There will be no impact to surface water sources from pumping this well.

Determination: No impact.

Groundwater - *Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.*

The proposed groundwater appropriation is from a deep confined aquifer that is not hydraulically connected to any surface water. There will be no impact to surface water sources from pumping this well. The applicant proposes to divert up to 20.0 acre-feet per year for dust control purposes. This will not impact groundwater quantity (supply). The applicant calculated volumetric flux of the groundwater aquifer within a 1/4 mile radius zone of influence from pumping the well. Approximately 5,829 acre-feet of groundwater will flow through this area each year, while the applicant is only requesting an appropriation of 20.0 acre-feet. Drawdown in neighboring wells will be approximately 0.30 feet at a distance of 1320 feet from the applicant's well. This amount of drawdown will not adversely impact other groundwater users from exercising their groundwater rights. There were no sources of potential groundwater pollution identified.

Determination: No impact.

DIVERSION WORKS - *Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.*

The proposed groundwater appropriation was demonstrated to not affect surface water, therefore, there will be no impacts to stream channels, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas or dams. The proposed appropriation will cause 0.30 feet of drawdown in neighboring wells 1320 feet away, which will not limit other groundwater users from diverting water through their wells or construction of new wells in the area. The total amount of water to be diverted annually equals 0.35% of the total amount of groundwater available to other water users.

Determination: No impact.

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."*

The proposed appropriation of groundwater will not impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species. The applicant proposes to divert groundwater from a deep confined aquifer that is not hydraulically connected to any surface water. The pumping of 420 gpm from the applicant's well will not cause a decrease in the amount of water flowing in any surface water sources in the project vicinity.

If the State of Montana approves the proposed groundwater use there will be no impact on existing vegetation, including rare or sensitive plant species. The place of use for dust control is already a developed landfill site and that all existing vegetative cover is manipulated by the operation of the landfill.

The water diverted from the groundwater well will be used to fill up to five 4000-gallon water trucks per day. These trucks will spray the road system and dumping areas in the landfill to control dust. This will limit air pollutants and will provide a benefit to human and natural resources in the vicinity of the landfill.

Determination: No impact.

Wetlands - *Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.*

This project does not involve any development of wetland areas, including dredging or fill activities. Pumping the groundwater well will not have an impact on surface water and wetlands near the project site.

Determination: No impact.

Ponds - For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.

No ponds are involved with the proposed project.

Determination: No impact.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE - Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.

The proposed use of a groundwater well for dust control will not cause a degradation of soil quality, or alteration of soil stability. The site is already developed as a landfill and water use will be limited to only 20 acre-feet per year for dust control. The amount of water applied to the ground surface will not be sufficient enough to cause any changes to soil stability or moisture content. The soils irrigated are not heavy in salts and saline seep is not a concern. Moisture content of the soil will be controlled through the use of the water trucks to the benefit of the applicant.

Determination: No impact.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS - Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.

Existing vegetation at the project site is limited those areas where active dumping is not occurring and the site was reclaimed with native grasses. The remainder of the site is bare soil requiring the application of water for dust control. Soil disturbance at the project site is part of the ongoing operation of the landfill, and potential for vegetation to become established is minimal. The project site is owned by the Allied Waste Services of North America, LLC and control of noxious weeds will be the responsibility of the landowner.

Determination: No impact.

AIR QUALITY - Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.

Adverse air quality impacts from increased air pollutants are not expected as a result of this project. The water will be diverted using submersed electric pumps and applied to the ground with water trucks. The purpose of the project is to limit airborne dust from operation of the landfill.

Determination: No impact.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.

The proposed use of groundwater to for dust control will not cause degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project. The site is already developed and no additional ground disturbance will be required to complete the proposed project.

Determination: No impact.

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - *Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.*

None identified.

Determination: No impact.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

Determination: No impact.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.*

Determination: No impact.

HUMAN HEALTH - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.*

Determination: No impact.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*

Yes ___ No XX If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination: No impact.

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - *For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.*

Impacts on:

(a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity? None identified.

(b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? None identified.

- (c) Existing land uses? None identified.
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? None identified.
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? None identified.
- (f) Demands for government services? None identified.
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? None identified.
- (h) Utilities? None identified.
- (i) Transportation? None identified.
- (j) Safety? None identified.
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None identified.

2. Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:

Secondary Impacts None identified.

Cumulative Impacts None identified.

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures: N/A

4. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider: N/A

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative N/A

2. Comments and Responses

3. Finding:

Yes ___ No XX Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

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

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Jim Nave

Title: Water Resource Specialist
Date: 3/30/2006