

June 16., 2025

Mark White
Public Works Director
101 West 5th Street
Spencer, IA 51301

SUBJECT: Sanitary Disposal Project Inspection
SDP Permit #74-SDP-02-76P, Palo Alto County

Dear Mr. White:

Enclosed is a copy of the report resulting from the November 15, 2024, inspection of the Northern Plains Regional Landfill near Graettinger, IA. The report is believed to be self-explanatory.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at 712-262-4177.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Christian, Environmental Specialist Senior
Jennifer.Christian@dnr.iowa.gov
Field Services and Compliance Bureau

Field Services and Compliance Bureau

JC:lw

C: -Becky Jolly, PP&ES, E&WMB, ESD, DNR, Des Moines
-Linda Schaller, spencerlandfill@rvtc.net
-Mark White, mwhite@spenceriowacity.com

Enc: -Inspection report

S25/74np0616-ins.docx

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Sanitary Disposal Project Inspection

Permit #74-SDP-02-76P

Page 2

Facility Name: Northern Plains Regional Landfill	County: Palo Alto
Facility Operator: Dan Chism	
Address : 3032 420 th Ave, Graettinger, IA 51342	Phone: 712-859-3185
Responsible Authority: City of Spencer	
Responsible Official: Mark White	
Address: 101 W 5 th Street, Spencer, IA 51301	Phone: 712-580-7200
Date This Inspection: November 15, 2024	Waste Amount: 90,330 tons (through October 2024)
Date Last Inspection: October 25, 2023	

At the Time of this Inspection:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facility personnel present: Nathan Lawson • present fill location: D-1(until end of November 2024) • future fill location: E-1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • surface conditions: muddy • ambient temperature: 40 degrees Fahrenheit • wind direction and speed: SE 7 mph |
|--|---|

Yes – compliance achieved; No – compliance not achieved, N/A – not applicable or not observed; PND – previously noted deficiency

I. Documents and Record Keeping:

Yes	No	N/A	PND	Item	Yes	No	N/A	PND	Item
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Permit and Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Storm Water Permit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Permit Amendments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. ERRAP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Permit Special Provisions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. DOP, LCP, HMSP, CPCP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Permit Required Reports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Leachate volume record
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. quarterly solid waste report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. LCSPE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. water quality monitoring report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. SWA & SWAC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. semi-annual engineer's report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Financial Assurance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. gas monitoring report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. other					

II. Operating Procedures:

Yes	No	N/A	PND	Item	Yes	No	N/A	PND	Item
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Fill Cover	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Special Waste Handling
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. daily	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Recycling Activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. intermediate (7-day)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Scavenging & Vector Control
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. final (60-day)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Litter Control
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Fill Elevations (adequate surveying)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. fences
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Control of Face	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. hand picking
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. width	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Staffing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. slope	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. operators/personnel
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. dumping location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. incoming waste
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Compaction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. operator certification
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Drainage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. Equipment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. cover erosion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. operation/ maintenance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. ponding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. backup availability
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. drainage structures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13. Road Adequacy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. dikes, berms & terraces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14. Monitoring Wells
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. tile lines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15. Adverse Weather Operations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. ditches					16. On-Site Facilities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Leachate Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. perimeter fence/gate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. system operation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. signs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. head measuring device operation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. separation distances
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. seepage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17. Other

AUTHENTICATION

INSPECTOR	Name: Jennifer Christian 	Date: 6/16/25
REVIEWER	Name: Tom Roos 	Date: 6/16/25

General Description:

I. Record Keeping:

1. **Permit and Plans** — The current landfill operation permit was issued on March 4, 2021, and will expire on March 4, 2026. The engineer associated with this facility is Jim Thiesse, PE.
2. **Permit Amendments** — All permit amendments have been issued and are in compliance.
3. **Permit Special Provisions** — The comprehensive planning area for this facility includes all cities, and the unincorporated area in Emmet County; all cities, excluding West Bend, and the unincorporated area in Palo Alto County; all cities, excluding Fonda and Gilmore City, and the unincorporated area in Pocahontas County; the City of Whittemore in Kossuth County; the Cities of Superior and Terrill in Dickinson County; the City of Bode in Humboldt County; the City of Spencer in Clay County and the unincorporated area in Clay County.
4. **Permit Required Reports: a. quarterly solid waste report; b. water quality monitoring report; c. semi-annual engineer's report; d. gas monitoring report; e. other** — All permit required reports have been submitted and received by the Department.
5. **Storm Water Permit** — General Permit #1 for "Storm Water Discharge Associated with Industrial Activity" provides coverage for discharges through March 10, 2028. There have been no storm water violations or runoff concerns at this facility.
6. **Emergency Response and Remedial Action Plan** — The ERRAP has been updated upon permit renewal and is incorporated in the current operation permit.
7. **Development & Operation Plan, Leachate Control Plan, Hydrologic Monitoring System Plan, Closure Post Closure Plan** — These plans have been approved by the Department and have been incorporated as required operating conditions of their permit.
8. **Leachate Volume Record** — This facility provided records of leachate hauled off-site for treatment and disposal from documentation that is kept at the scale house. These records show a total of 5,257,738 gallons of leachate have been removed since January 2024 thru October 2024 and treated at the Spencer Wastewater Treatment Facility as approved under the current treatment agreement. 55,360 gallons have been recirculated into the landfill during the month of June.
9. **Leachate Control System Performance Evaluation** — The LCSPE has been submitted as required.
10. **Special Waste Authorization & Special Waste Acceptance Criteria** — All special waste profiles are maintained at this landfill. Authorizations for 2024 include sump press material, wastewater treatment sediment and medical waste.
11. **Financial Assurance** — The financial assurance requirements for calendar 2024 were found to be adequate. The documentation was received on March 28, 2024, and is on file.
12. **Other** — None.

II. Operating Procedures:

1. **Fill Cover: a. daily; b. intermediate (7-day); c. final (60-day)** — Daily cover consists of auto shredder residue as listed in the current permit. Intermediate cover consists of dirt and the stockpile available is more than adequate. Daily, intermediate and final cover appeared to be sufficient during the inspection. The majority of the closed portions of the landfill have well established vegetation and appear to be in good condition. The east side of cells C, D1 and D2 were prepped and seeded in 2023 but it was not effective. The soil was prepped once again and will receive seeding in the spring of 2025. Silt fence has been installed.

A handheld thermal image camera has been used to detect any hot spots due to fires that have happened in the previous few years. There was a total of six small fires during 2024, some due to lithium batteries.

2. **Fill Elevations (adequate surveying)** — The elevation maps are updated each year with use GPS on the compactor as well as surveying equipment. As of today, the elevation is approximately at 1,353 feet.
3. **Control of Face: a. width; b. slope; c. dumping location** — The working face is being well managed and receiving appropriate cover. Currently, cell D1 is being finished. They will then start filling in the southwest corner of E1, to finish this area that received the flood waste. Once this is completed, waste will be deposited in the northwest corner of E1 and will work their way south.
4. **Compaction** — A 850L Compactor is providing adequate compaction. During the flood, this facility rented an additional compactor as well as a dozer and operators from Clay County. This was necessary due to the extreme amount of flood waste they were receiving.
5. **Drainage: a. cover erosion; b. ponding; c. drainage structures – 1. dikes, berms & terraces, 2. tile lines, 3. ditches** — This facility has no issues with storm water drainage.
6. **Leachate Control: a. system operation; b. head measuring device operation; c. seepage** — The lined leachate lagoon is functioning properly and there were no concerns during the inspection. During the inspection, staff were in the process of repairing a leachate line that had been leaking and allowing ground water to also enter lift station #2.
7. **Special Waste Handling** — No concerns.
8. **Recycling Activities** — Scrap metal continues to be removed from the working face and placed into a roll off container. This facility utilizes two trailers for recycling of tin, cardboard, paper and plastics. One trailer is located in Graettinger and the other is located in Ruthven. They are emptied every two weeks and hauled to Shamrock Recycling in Emmetsburg, IA.
9. **Scavenging & Vector Control** — No concerns.
10. **Litter Control: a. fences; b. hand picking** — Permanent and portable fencing is utilized to capture windblown litter in addition to hand picking. All hand-picking hours are logged into a spreadsheet which is provided during the inspection. Windblown litter was not observed during the inspection.
11. **Staffing: a. operators/personnel; b. incoming waste screening; c. operator certification** — During the inspection, this facility has five full-time on-site certified landfill operators- Dan Chism, Linda Schaller, Nate Lawson, Wade Alesch and Cody Hoffman. All certifications expire on June 30, 2025.

12. **Equipment: a. operation/maintenance; b. backup availability** — This facility has adequate equipment to operate this landfill given the current waste material type and waste volume. A list of all equipment is up to date and kept on site.
13. **Road adequacy** - The internal roads are adequate for the landfill operations and are in good condition. During the inspection, construction was taking place to the south and southeast of the scale house. Concrete was being poured to the east of the scale, parking area for the scale house and in front of the shed.
14. **Monitoring wells** — This facility's monitoring wells appear to be in good shape.
15. **Adverse weather operations** — There were no operational concerns regarding adverse weather conditions given the present location of the working face, and traffic flow to the working face.
16. **On-site facilities: a. perimeter fence/gate; b. signs; c. separation distances** — The signs posted at this facility were in excellent condition. This facility intends to install an eight-foot fence along the south perimeter in 2025.

CONCLUSIONS

During the inspection, this facility appeared to be in compliance with their permit and applicable regulations. Throughout the flood clean up, the staff at this landfill put forth a tremendous amount of time, effort and dedication to ensure the increased amount of waste was disposed of properly. Constant communication took place between myself and landfill manager Dan Chism and Spencer Public Works Director Mark White.

In conclusion, this landfill project appears to be operating in compliance with the rules and its operation permit. The staff continues to be knowledgeable, efficient and organized and should be commended for their hard work. There were no violations observed during the inspection.