

January 21, 2026

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 December 3, 2025, 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

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**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Sanitary Disposal Project Inspection**

Permit #74-SDP-02-76P

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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: December 3, 2025	Waste Amount: 61,739 tons (through October 2025)
Date Last Inspection: November 15, 2024	

At the Time of this Inspection:

- facility personnel present: Nathan Lawson
- present fill location: E-2
- future fill location: F-1
- surface conditions: frozen, snow covered
- ambient temperature: 12 degrees Fahrenheit
- wind direction and speed: NW 20 mph

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

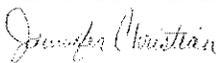
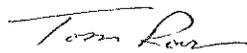
I. Documents and Record Keeping:

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
				a. quarterly solid waste report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. LCSPE
				b. water quality monitoring report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. SWA & SWAC
				c. semi-annual engineer's report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Financial Assurance
				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
				a. daily	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Recycling Activities
				b. intermediate (7-day)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Scavenging & Vector Control
				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
				a. width	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Staffing
				b. slope	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. operators/personnel
				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
				a. cover erosion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. operation/ maintenance
				b. ponding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. backup availability
				c. drainage structures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13. Road Adequacy
				1. dikes, berms & terraces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14. Monitoring Wells
				2. tile lines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15. Adverse Weather Operations
				3. ditches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	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
				a. system operation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. signs
				b. head measuring device operation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. separation distances
				c. seepage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17. Other

AUTHENTICATION

INSPECTOR	Name: Jennifer Christian 	Date: 1/21/26
REVIEWER	Name: Tom Roos 	Date: 1/21/26

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 3,401,268 gallons of leachate have been removed since January 2025 thru October 2025 and treated at the Spencer Wastewater Treatment Facility as approved under the current treatment agreement. 11,460 gallons have been recirculated into the landfill during the months of June and July.
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.
11. **Financial Assurance** — The financial assurance requirements for calendar 2025 were found to be adequate.
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.
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 1,347 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 E-2 is receiving waste until the spring of 2026, and will start placing the two foot of fluff layer in F-1 as soon as possible now that it has been approved.
4. **Compaction** – The L John 545 Compactor is providing adequate compaction and the John Deere 850 L dozer is used as backup.
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.
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 which was ¼ full during the inspection. 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. The 10 foot perimeter fence was extended along the south property boundary to west towards the Hwy 4 right-of-way.
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.

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.

CONCLUSIONS

During the inspection, this facility appeared to be in compliance with their permit and applicable regulations. The construction of the new cell has taken longer than anticipated but was finally complete during the inspection. Iowa DNR Environmental Engineers Senior, Mike Smith, was informed of my final inspection of the new cell.

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.