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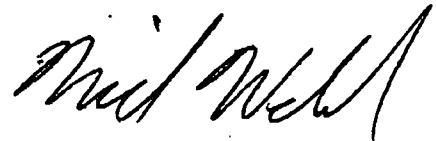
TO: Barbara Hoditschek
FIRM: New Mexico Environment Dept.
FAX NO: 505 827 1544
FROM: Michael Welch
DATE: 8/14/96

Number of pages, including this cover memo: 2

Ms. Hoditschek:

Following please find the EI Digest
writeup on the Triassic Park landfill project.
Thanks for your help in putting the
piece together.

Sincerely —



If transmission is incomplete or unclear, please call Arlette at: 612/831-2473

NEWS IN PERSPECTIVE

More Airspace on the Way

Just when you thought the hazardous waste management industry had maxed out on capacity, up shows another group of trend-buckers looking to dig a landfill. Gandy-Marley Inc. plans to follow hard on the heels of Waste Control Specialists (see company profile, page 24) by opening a new facility. New Mexico Environment Department officials hint that Gandy-Marley will receive a final permit for an 8-million-cubic-foot landfill, coyly dubbed the Triassic Park Hazardous Waste Disposal Facility, well before summer's out. Company vice president Larry Gandy says pursuit of a Toxic Substances Control Act permit will commence as soon as the RCRA permit shows up, despite the fact that industry fundamentals continue to show weakness. Commercial hazwaste landfills in the United States and Canada took in 25 percent less waste last year than they did in 1994 (see "Hazardous Waste Landfills 1996," *EI Digest*, April 1996).

The site 43 miles east of Roswell, New Mexico, currently features two land farms for underground-storage-tank soil cleanup waste and solid oil-field remediation waste. The company has no intention of digging an 8 million-cubic-foot hole right away, but construction on landfill cells of yet-to-be-determined sizes will begin in earnest as soon as the company receives its final permit. Gandy says the facility ultimately will feature landfilling, volume reduction and solidification capabilities. Drum handling, drum storage and roll-off capabilities are also in the plans. The facility, Gandy says, will be able to receive 121,000 gallons of hazardous waste per day and store the equivalent of 1,000 55-gallon drums. The space set aside for the landfill covers 100 acres. "It's not as large as some, but we're going to try to go for a full-blown [facility]," Gandy says.

The site sits 600 feet above a bed of Triassic red clay. Gandy maintains that the New Mexico Environment Department will not require the company to monitor groundwater. "There's no groundwater to monitor," he says. The company will monitor the vadose (unsaturated) zone "as a contingency plan."

Surprisingly, the company has kept its plans from reaching some of the best-connected ears in the industry. Joan Berkowitz, managing director at the Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm Farkas Berkowitz & Co., admitted when contacted recently that the Gandy-Marley project was news to her. And though she knows exactly how gelatinous the ground under the industry is these days, Berkowitz refuses to discount Gandy-Marley's

chances for success. "People with a contrarian point of view who have fire in their bellies can succeed," she says. "In an oversaturated retail market dominated by Sears how did Wal-Mart make it?"

The fact that the landfill sector is hobbled by overcapacity comes as no surprise to Gandy. "When we started the project six years ago, the hazardous waste industry was looking pretty good, but it doesn't look so good now," he freely admits. "There's some extra airspace out there, spread out through the country." Gandy explains his company has continued to pursue the project because "New Mexico needs its own landfill."

He doesn't see competition with nearby Waste Control Specialists as a major factor. "WCS is targeting the Fortune 500 businesses," he notes. "We're looking to try to provide the smaller businessman in New Mexico with an economical place to dispose of his stuff properly."

NMED Secretary Mark Widler declines to say whether he plans to approve the permit for the facility, but he does state flatly that the site is "excellent." And if the company can meet the department's technical standards, "We'll be quite happy to issue the permit," Widler says. He adds that the project enjoys popular and political support in Roswell as "a form of economic development."

According to Barbara Hoditscheck, the RCRA program manager for NMED, determining whether or not the state needs the landfill isn't part of review process. But, she says, "If you talk to the large-quantity generators in New Mexico, they say the costs associated with disposal and transportation outside the state are very high."

Deke Moore evaluates TSDs for Rinchem, a New Mexico environmental and remedial services firm. "I'm not sure that the volume of waste in New Mexico is enough to warrant [a landfill in the state]," he says. Available data suggest not. According to the EPA's *Biennial Report*, there are only 60 large-quantity generators in New Mexico. And in 1993 virtually all of the hazardous waste they produced was managed on site; only 7,349 tons — one truck per day — was shipped off site. Toxic Release Inventory data for 1994 show that less than 50 tons of TRI waste was transferred off site for disposal.

But EI research also shows that landfills draw regular business from as far away as 1,000 miles, and Triassic Park likely will not have to depend on its home state for waste. Time may tell Gandy-Marley that its most valuable asset is a regulating agency that seems willing to make it easy for the company to get into business. Time will also tell whether or not taking advantage of that opportunity was a profitable idea. Δ

— M.W.