

RE: Landfill Use and Fees

All Kiowa County Residents:

There are considerable changes occurring at the Kiowa County Landfills and I would like to review these to make sure that all the residents in Kiowa County are informed. There have been several news paper articles regarding the landfills in the past year, as we have been confronted with new state requirements and few affordable options to be able to comply with the state regulations. I will try to condense the information in a way that you are able to understand the position that the County has taken.

In the past there were approximately 20 small landfills in Colorado that took in less than 20,000 pounds of garbage annually. It was determined that these landfills did not pose a significant threat to the environment, so they were given waivers in order to avoid having to comply with the same stringent regulations that the larger landfills operated by. In 2016 the state regulatory agency, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), decided that they would no longer provide waivers to the small landfills and they would have to comply with the same regulations as the larger landfills or close. Some of the waivers that were revoked were for lining the landfill and also for groundwater monitoring among others. CDPHE offered to assume the cost of closure for any small landfill that chose to close and for those that chose to remain open they offered to drill the monitoring wells and assume the cost of monitoring for 5 years. The cost of closure for Eads Landfill is approximately \$325,000 over a 30 year period, approximately \$10,800 per year. The cost of running one compliant landfill is estimated at \$150,000 to \$250,000 per year. In 2016, we operated both the Eads and Haswell Landfills for a combined amount of \$82,000. It is not difficult to do the math and see that we were facing an impossible situation.

In the past two years the Commissioners have had many meetings with CDPHE, our landfill consultant and the engineer to try to determine what was the best choice for Kiowa County that we could afford. Honestly, there was little "choice" involved. CDPHE dictates what we can do and we have little control over the cost. We determined early on that there would be no way to operate two compliant landfills much less the costs to bring them up to the standards the State has set, so the choice to close the Haswell Landfill was made. Kiowa County will have no more cost involved with the Haswell Landfill as the State has assumed that cost. We have worked diligently to find a way that we could keep the Eads Landfill open. The other option presented to us was to close both landfills and set up a transfer station where the trash would be dropped off and then hauled to a regional landfill. The closest regional landfill to Eads is in Otero County. It was estimated that it would cost a minimum of \$170,000 per year to operate a transfer station if we could haul to Lamar so if we had to haul our waste to Otero County the cost would nearly double. Since this is not an affordable option for us, and it would give us no control over the cost, we decided to keep Eads Landfill open and try to operate with a very limited budget.

Early in 2018, we signed a Compliance Order on Consent with CDPHE, which basically took all of the areas that we are out of compliance and made a schedule of when we agreed to come into compliance. This is a legally binding agreement with the State and we could be fined if we do not meet the scheduled commitments. Following is a list of items that we are required to do, most within a two year period;

Compactor (extends the life of Landfill from 2 to 10 years)	\$146,000 / \$1000 per month
Daily cover (soil or alternate)-Tarp System	\$2,700 every 1 - 3 years
Update Design and Operations Plan – Engineer	\$50,000 every 5 years
Scale System (NTEP Approved)	\$54,000 approx 10 year life

Liner	\$250,000 per 1 acre cell
Two full-time landfill employees (with benefits)	\$90,000 per year (combined)
Recycling (E-waste and tires)	\$11,000 per year

Without the cost of the liner we are looking at \$130,000 plus regular expenses of fuel, fees, repairs, supplies, training, recycling, testing and monitoring. This will be approximately \$50,000 per year for a total of \$185,000 minimum. Bookkeeping for the landfill is not included in the cost but with the reporting and fees, that will be an additional expense for the County. Once we have to line a cell that cost will go up \$250,000 for however long a one acre cell will last us (possibly 8 years).

There is a lot of detail that I am unable to go into in a short letter, but I think you can see that we must have revenue to be able to keep a landfill open in Kiowa County. We will try to get grants or low interest loans to help with the cost of liner and any other large ticket items but unfortunately we can't count on grant funds. The bottom line is the residents of Kiowa County have to pay for waste disposal, whether it is through taxes or fees, and whether we have a landfill or haul to a regional landfill. We are currently the only landfill in the state that does not charge for waste disposal.

Kiowa County's assessed value has declined for the past three years so we have to make major budget cuts to be able to operate so this only makes a bad situation worse. No business or person can continue to spend more than they make. The Commissioner's current plan is to try to keep one landfill open, charge fees, apply for grants, recycle when possible, and make every effort to extend the life of our current landfill.

I would like to offer this information just to make sure that you see this in perspective. Kiowa County elected officials are the lowest paid elected officials in the State of Colorado. Our Commissioners are paid even less as they have personally opted to take only 80% of the State required salary for their positions. Our employees are among the lowest paid county employees in the state.

I have included a fee schedule for the landfill. and a list of acceptable and not-acceptable waste. Beginning in January, you will be able to purchase a prepaid card to be used whenever you take waste to the landfill. We will accept the prepaid cards or credit cards only at the landfill. The County will no longer provide dumpsters in Towner, Sheridan Lake, Brandon, Chivington, Haswell and Arlington. Residents living in those towns will have to contract with a provider or dispose of their waste themselves. Fees for the residents with current trash service will likely increase.

The Commissioners understand that this will be an impact on all residents of Kiowa County and they are asking for your cooperation and understanding during this transition period. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me at 719-438-5810 or email kiowaco100@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Tina Adamson

Kiowa County Administrator