

# SUPERFUND

## Fact Sheet

### NORTHSIDE LANDFILL Spokane, Washington



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

November 2002

## Northside Landfill Superfund Site Update

### EPA Checkup Confirms Safe Cleanup

In September, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) completed a checkup of Northside Landfill in Spokane, Washington. The checkup confirms cleanup actions at the site continue to protect human health and the environment. The cleanup includes extracting and treating groundwater, collecting landfill gas, and monitoring the site. According to EPA Project Manager, Neil Thompson, "The site is well managed by the City of Spokane, and the cleanup is working."

EPA will review the cleanup at Northside Landfill every five years to make sure the cleanup remains effective. September's review is the second "Five-Year Review" completed since a 125-acre cover was constructed across the top of the landfill in 1993. The cover, which is made of high-density plastic topped with two feet of sand, is designed to confine waste and contaminants within landfill boundaries.

To make sure contaminant levels are decreasing in groundwater, the City of Spokane checks Northside Landfill monitoring wells every three months. Groundwater will continue to be monitored and treated

until cleanup goals are met, and groundwater is restored to drinking water quality.

According to City Project Manager, Dean Fowler, "Groundwater contamination is decreasing at a dramatic rate. Cleanup goals may be met in 20 to 30 years, which is on-target for this type of site."



*Northside Landfill as it appeared in 1993, after the landfill cover was constructed.*

## Bright Idea: City Makes Electricity From Methane

Decomposing waste in the Northside Landfill produces methane gas that is captured by a gas collection system. In 2001, the City of Spokane began using this methane to generate electricity. Today, two 750 kilowatt gas-fired turbines now hum at an on-site power plant. The City sells this "green power," generating about \$36,000 per year in revenues for City projects. "Northside Landfill is an environmentally-friendly source of power that's healthy for the environment, and helps reduce costs for the City," says Fowler.

## Site Background

The Northside Landfill Site covers 345 acres in the northwest corner of Spokane. The property is landscaped, and surrounded by chain-link fence. The City of Spokane established the landfill in 1931, and used the site for open burning until the mid-1950s. By the mid-1970s, the City began covering previously buried refuse areas with 20-foot layers of soil. The original landfill, which covers 125 acres, was closed in December 1991. Recently, to meet the need for a place to store overflow municipal waste, the City opened a new 15-acre landfill at the site, which meets all State requirements.

EPA completed an investigation of Northside Landfill in 1981. Groundwater samples indicated the presence of low concentrations of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). In 1983, VOCs were also detected in nearby private, residential drinking water wells. To protect residents, the City provided bottled water to affected homeowners until the municipal water system was extended to homes with contaminated wells, and downgradient homes.

EPA placed Northside Landfill on the National Priorities List, EPA's list of the most contaminated sites in the nation, in June 1986. In 1989, EPA selected a cleanup plan for the site, which included closure and capping of the existing landfill, groundwater treatment to help stop contamination from leaving the site, groundwater and air monitoring, a gas collection system to control landfill gas, and deed restrictions to keep people from walking across the property. Each of these items was in place by 1994. Since then, groundwater contamination has been decreasing.

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## Visit the EPA Website:

EPA Region 10 website:  
[www.epa.gov/r10earth/](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/)  
click on "Index"  
click on "N" for Northside Landfill

*For people with disabilities: Please contact Deborah Neal at 1-800-424-4372, extension 0115 (voice), if you have any special requests for reasonable accommodations. For TTY users, please call the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 and then give the operator Deborah Neal's phone number. Please provide one week notice for special requests not related to ongoing programs and services.*



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