



San Luis Obispo County

Department of Planning and Building Environmental Division

DATE: October 26, 2006

TO: **FROM:** Department of Planning and Building
County Government Center, Rm. 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT REPORT**

PROJECT TITLE: Corral de Piedra Land Co. (Cold Canyon Landfill) Conditional
Use Permit

PROJECT APPLICANT: Corral de Piedra Land Co.

RESPONSES DUE BY: November 27, 2006

The County of San Luis Obispo will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the Environmental Impact Report prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

PLEASE provide us the following information at your earliest convenience, but not later than the 30 day comment period which began with your agency's receipt of the NOP.

1. NAME OF CONTACT PERSON. (Address and telephone number)
2. PERMIT(S) or APPROVAL(S) AUTHORITY. Please provide a summary description of these and send a copy of the relevant sections of legislation, regulatory guidance, etc.
3. ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION. What environmental information must be addressed in the Environmental Impact Report to enable your agency to use this documentation as a basis for your permit issuance or approval?
4. PERMIT STIPULATIONS/CONDITIONS. Please provide a list and description of standard stipulations (conditions) which your agency will apply to features of this project. Are there others that have a high likelihood of application to a permit or approval for this project? If so, please list and describe.
5. ALTERNATIVES. What alternatives does your agency recommend be analyzed in equivalent level of detail with those listed above?
6. REASONABLY FORESEEABLE PROJECTS, PROGRAMS or PLANS. Please name any future project, programs or plans that you think may have an overlapping influence with the project as proposed.

7. RELEVANT INFORMATION. Please provide references for any available, appropriate documentation you believe may be useful to the county in preparing the Environmental Impact Report.
8. FURTHER COMMENTS. Please provide any further comments or information which will help the county to scope the document and determine the appropriate level of environmental assessment.

The project description, location, and the probable environmental effects are contained in the attached materials.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to John McKenzie at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Signature



John McKenzie
Project Manager

Telephone: (805) 781-5452

email: jdmckenzie@co.slo.ca.us

Reference: California Administrative Code, Title 14, Section 15082



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
INITIAL STUDY SUMMARY - ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST**

(ver 2.1) Using Form

Project Title & No. Corral de Piedra (Cold Canyon Landfill) Conditional Use Permit
ED06-126 (DRC2005-00170)

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: The proposed project could have a "Potentially Significant Impact" for at least one of the environmental factors checked below. Please refer to the attached pages for discussion on mitigation measures or project revisions to either reduce these impacts to less than significant levels or require further study.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards/Hazardous Materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Circulation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wastewater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services/Utilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the Environmental Coordinator finds that:

- The proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- The proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.
- The proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

John McKenzie

Prepared by (Print)

Signature

Date

Ellen Carroll,
Environmental Coordinator

Reviewed by (Print)

Signature

(for)

Date

Project Environmental Analysis

The County's environmental review process incorporates all of the requirements for completing the Initial Study as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The Initial Study includes staff's on-site inspection of the project site and surroundings and a detailed review of the information in the file for the project. In addition, available background information is reviewed for each project. Relevant information regarding soil types and characteristics, geologic information, significant vegetation and/or wildlife resources, water availability, wastewater disposal services, existing land uses and surrounding land use categories and other information relevant to the environmental review process are evaluated for each project. Exhibit A includes the references used, as well as the agencies or groups that were contacted as a part of the Initial Study. The Environmental Division uses the checklist to summarize the results of the research accomplished during the initial environmental review of the project.

Persons, agencies or organizations interested in obtaining more information regarding the environmental review process for a project should contact the County of San Luis Obispo Environmental Division, Rm. 200, County Government Center, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93408-2040 or call (805) 781-5600.

A. PROJECT

DESCRIPTION: Request by Cold Canyon Landfill, Inc. for a Conditional Use Permit to allow for a 46-acre expansion of an existing landfill operation. This request includes the following significant changes:

- 1) Existing **landfill** would expand
 - a. the existing "Resource Recovery Park" (which includes a Public Drop-Off facility, construction and demo debris recycling (expansion proposed), household hazardous waste drop-off, universal and electronic waste processing and recycling) from 2 to 4 acres,
 - b. increase landfill volume/ capacity from 6.09 to 12.9 million cubic yards;
 - c. Increase disposal operation area by 46 acres (existing overall facility size would change from 121 to 209 acres).
- 2) Existing **composting facility** would extend hours from 8 am - 3 pm to 7 am - 4:30 pm, expand compost volume from 300 to 450 tons per day; expand acceptable compost materials to include food waste from residential/ industrial/ commercial sources and additional ag by-products; expand compost area from 14 to up to 25 acres for storage and processing; and
- 3) Existing **material recovery/sort facility** would reclassify from Recycling Center to Large Volume Processing Facility to allow for commercial recyclables and additional residential recyclables, expand from 120 tons/ day to 400 tons /day; increase hours of operation would change from 8 am – 4:30 pm to 7 am – 10 pm that would accommodate a second shift, and enlarge facility; add pole barn to cover material storage area.
- 4) Public entrance location would be moved approximately 2,800 feet to the southeast on Highway 227.
- 5) The expansion will result in up to 41 additional employees.

Processing and storing of hazardous wastes has not changed and is limited to household sources. Approval of this expansion would add approximately 37 years of life/capacity to the landfill. The project is located at 2268 Carpenter Canyon Road (Highway 227), approximately one mile southeast of Corbett Canyon Road, approximately five miles south of the City of San Luis Obispo, in the San Luis Obispo planning area

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER(S): 044-171-014, 044-261-014,
044-261-047, 044-261-048

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT # 4

B. EXISTING SETTING

PLANNING AREA: San Luis Obispo, Rural

LAND USE CATEGORY: Public Facilities, Agriculture

COMBINING DESIGNATION(S): None

EXISTING USES: Vineyard, grazing, landfill sort facility, undeveloped

TOPOGRAPHY: Nearly level to moderately sloping

VEGETATION: Grasses , oak woodland , vineyards

PARCEL SIZE: 206 acres

SURROUNDING LAND USE CATEGORIES AND USES:

<i>North:</i> Agriculture; undeveloped, residential	<i>East:</i> Agriculture; residential, agricultural uses, undeveloped
<i>South:</i> Agriculture; agricultural uses, residential, undeveloped	<i>West:</i> Agriculture; residential, agricultural uses, undeveloped

C. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

During the Initial Study process, several issues were identified as having potentially significant environmental effects (see following Initial Study). Where possible, mitigation measures will be applied to potentially significant impacts in an effort to reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

History

On October 1, 1991, a Final EIR was prepared by ERCE for the Cold Canyon Landfill Expansion, which was subsequently approved by the Planning Commission. It considered the following twelve environmental issues: geology/soils, water resources, air quality, traffic and circulation, biology, litter and disease vectors, visual resources, low level nuclear waste, land use, hazardous/infectious materials, cancer risk, and noise.

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST**

1. AESTHETICS - Will the project:	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) <i>Create an aesthetically incompatible site open to public view?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) <i>Introduce a use within a scenic view open to public view?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. AESTHETICS - Will the project:	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
c) <i>Change the visual character of an area?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) <i>Create glare or night lighting, which may affect surrounding areas?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) <i>Impact unique geological or physical features?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) <i>Other: _____</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting. The project will be visible primarily from Highway 227, a major public roadway and will be silhouetting against ridgelines as viewed from the Highway. Other heavily traveled public roadways where the project will be visible is from Price Canyon and Corbett Canyon Roads. The landfill is in a rural portion of the county and is surrounded primarily by large lots with single-family residences, in addition to a small amount of agricultural activities (e.g., vineyards, grazing). Oak woodlands and chaparral habitats are found on the surrounding hillsides.

The previously approved expansion allowed for a 490-foot elevation cap and a volume capacity of 6.09 million cubic yards over a 117-acre parcel. Previous approvals include the existing landfill, a sort facility, and compost facility.

The San Luis Obispo Area Plan includes the following Vision Statement:

This plan's vision for the future includes continued opportunities for economic vitality and growth, along with the opportunity to maintain the environmental attributes that have themselves contributed to the area's historically healthy economy. The community's excellent living environment and educational opportunities can act to attract or retain businesses providing high quality job opportunities for local residents, enabling them to afford housing within the area, while also enhancing local tax revenues needed for public services.

The planning area should maintain a rural character in harmony with agriculture, business, recreational, environmental and residential opportunities.

San Luis Obispo Area Plan Goals relating to visual aspects are as follows:

2. Protect and, where it has been degraded, enhance wildlife habitat areas.
3. Protect the scenic values of natural landforms.
4. Protect important historic or archaeological resources.
6. Focus urban development within established urban and village areas.
7. Devote the remainder of the planning area to a "greenbelt" consisting of production agriculture and low-density development. (Also see Framework for Planning).
15. Encourage economic development balanced with the natural resources that enhance the natural beauty and character, and supports the social and environmental health of the planning

area.

Article 9 of the County's LUO for the San Luis Obispo planning area includes areawide "Highway corridor design standards". These standard apply to the following uses: residences, residential accessory structures, residential access roads, signs, and certain agricultural accessory structures. These corridor standards apply to specific areas within the following public view corridors that are outside of urban areas: Highways 101, 227 and 1; Los Osos Valley Road, O'Connor Way, Orcutt Road, and Prefumo Canyon Road. For projects that fit into the above-mentioned criteria, standards would apply relating to road setbacks, ridgetop development, slope limitation, preserving landmark features, limit building height and color, provide for landscaping, and protect biological habitats.

The previous EIR evaluated the current facility for visual impacts and identified potentially significant visual effects from the public roadways identified above.

Impact. The project proposes to expand the existing landfill by 46 acres to the southeast. Final volume capacity will double, increasing from 6.09 million cubic yards to 12.9 million cubic yards. Maximum height of the previous project will increase from 490 feet to 500 feet mean sea level (MSL), which will also extend into the expansion area. This will further result in a permanent alteration of landform. During the course of operation and over most of the life of the project, active working areas may be highly visible from public roadways and silhouette against the ridgeline. Extension of hours of operation (primarily the sort facility) may introduce additional night lighting in a rural environment. Ultimately, the landfill will be covered with small shrubs and grasses (no trees to avoid potential root puncture of protective cover/liner).

Mitigation/Conclusion. The Land Use Ordinance includes several standards relating to screening for the recycling aspects of the project. Due to the potentially significant impacts to public views of the landfill expansion, a viewshed analysis from public highways and major roads shall be prepared by qualified persons and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Development of ratings and recommendations for the assignment of aesthetic values to protect views from Highway 227, Corbett Canyon Road and Price Canyon Road, and to identify other, if any, potentially significant key viewing areas.
2. Mapping of the Highway 227, Corbett Canyon Road and Price Canyon Road viewshed, and the viewshed(s) of other key viewing areas, if any.
3. Discussion of all related county ordinance provisions relating to visual resources (e.g., goals, Highway Corridor Design Standards, screening requirements, etc.)
4. Recommendation and discussion of adequate and feasible mitigation measures, if any, to ensure that visual resources are adequately protected.

2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES
- Will the project:

	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) <i>Convert prime agricultural land to non-agricultural use?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) <i>Impair agricultural use of other property or result in conversion to other uses?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

- Will the project:

	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
c) Conflict with existing zoning or Williamson Act program?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting. Project Elements. The project area is bordered on the north by existing vineyards and on the east and south by grazing areas. The area around the subject development is within the Agriculture land use category. The soil type(s) on the subject property include:

Arnold loamy sand, (5 - 15 % slope). This gently to moderately sloping soil is considered moderately drained. The soil has low erodibility and low shrink-swell characteristics, as well as having potential septic system constraints due to: poor filtering capabilities. The soil is considered Class IV without irrigation and Class IV when irrigated.

Arnold loamy sand, (15 - 50 % slope). This moderately to very steeply sloping soil is considered moderately drained. The soil has low erodibility and low shrink-swell characteristics, as well as having potential septic system constraints due to: poor filtering capabilities. The soil is considered Class VII without irrigation and Class is not rated when irrigated.

Lodo clay loam, (30 - 50 % slope). This steeply to very steeply sloping soil is considered very poorly drained. The soil has moderate erodibility and moderate shrink-swell characteristics, as well as having potential septic system constraints due to: steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock. The soil is considered Class VI without irrigation and Class is not rated when irrigated.

Lodo clay loam, (50 - 75 % slope). This very steeply sloping soil is considered very poorly drained. The soil has moderate erodibility and moderate shrink-swell characteristics, as well as having potential septic system constraints due to: steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock. The soil is considered Class VII without irrigation and Class is not rated when irrigated.

Pismo loamy sand, (9 - 30 % slope). This gently to steeply sloping soil is considered Very poorly drained. The soil has low erodibility and low shrink-swell characteristics, as well as having potential septic system constraints due to: steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock. The soil is considered Class VII without irrigation and Class is not rated when irrigated.

Salinas loam, (0 - 2 % slope). This nearly level sloping soil is considered not well drained. The soil has moderate erodibility and low shrink-swell characteristics, as well as having potential septic system constraints due to: slow percolation. The soil is considered Class III without irrigation and Class I when irrigated.

Xererts-Xerolls-Urban land complex, (0 - 15% slope). This nearly level to moderately sloping soils is poorly drained. The soil has unrated erodibility and unrated shrink-swell characteristics, as well as having unrated septic system constraints. The soil is considered Class is not rated without irrigation and Class is not rated when irrigated.

A referral response has been received from the County's Ag Commissioner's Office expressing concern over the subject development with the following concerns: additional dust, noise, odor and lighting that may affect existing or future surrounding agricultural activities; adverse changes to water quality and quantity; loss of ag potential on expansion area of which portions are considered "soils of statewide importance"; and inconsistencies with several policies of the County's Ag and Open Space Element.

Impact. The project is located in a mixed-agricultural area with agricultural activities (vineyards,

grazing) occurring in the immediate vicinity. A small vineyard exists within the expansion area. The project will result in a permanent loss of potential ag use over the expansion area. Proposed landfill/recycling activities may have a significant, indirect effect on surrounding ag lands (e.g., dust, vector introduction, etc.). Based on the response received from the Ag Commissioner's Office potentially significant impacts to agricultural resources are anticipated.

Mitigation/Action Required. Due to the potentially significant impacts to agricultural resources, additional analysis is needed by a qualified individual. The agricultural resource analysis should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Consultation with the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, County Planning & Building (Ag Preserve Program), and the California Department of Food and Agriculture.
2. A description of the existing and historical agricultural setting, uses and practices including an emphasis on the unique rainfall, climatic, topographic and vegetative characteristics of the site.
3. A description of adjacent and regional agricultural uses. "Regional" will need to be defined as a "study area" by the consultant, in consultation with the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office and the State Department of Food and agriculture.
4. A description of the agricultural suitability of the site, including soil types, soil capabilities, and the productivity of agricultural soils both for irrigated and non irrigated uses, and an analysis of crops and livestock uses suited to the site.
5. Identification and description of current and potential future water sources suitable for agricultural uses (see Water Resources).
6. Evaluation of the potential adverse impacts to agricultural capability resulting from the project.
7. Evaluation of the potential adverse impacts to the agricultural capability of adjacent or near by lands currently enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve Program, if any.
8. Evaluation of the potential for the loss of agriculturally productive soils as a result of the proposed development.
9. Evaluation of the potential for incompatibilities between adjacent agricultural operations on the site as a result of the landfill expansion.
10. Recommendation and discussion of adequate and feasible mitigation measures, if any, to ensure that agricultural resources are adequately protected.

3. AIR QUALITY - Will the project:

Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
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a) *Violate any state or federal ambient air quality standard, or exceed air quality emission thresholds as established by County Air Pollution Control District?*

3. AIR QUALITY - Will the project:	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
b) Expose any sensitive receptor to substantial air pollutant concentrations?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Create or subject individuals to objectionable odors?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be inconsistent with the District's Clean Air Plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting. The County is within the South Central Coast Air Basin, which is currently considered by the state as being in "non-attainment" (exceeding acceptable thresholds) for particulate matter (PM₁₀, or fugitive dust). The project is nearest to the San Luis Obispo Air Quality Monitoring Station. Based on the latest annual air monitoring station information (2003), state or federal standards for ozone have not been exceeded. The general trend in air quality over the last 10 years at this station is relatively flat with no exceedance of state or federal standards.

The Air Pollution Control District (APCD) estimates that automobiles currently generate about 40% of the pollutants responsible for ozone formation. Nitrous oxides (NO_x) and reactive organic gasses (ROG) pollutants (vehicle emission components) are common contributors towards this chemical transformation into ozone. Dust, or particulate matter less than ten microns (PM₁₀) that become airborne and which find their way into the lower atmosphere, can act as the catalyst in this chemical transformation to harmful ozone. In part, the land use controls currently in place for new development relating to ROG and NO_x (e.g., application of the 2003 CEQA Air Quality Handbook) have helped reduce the formation of ozone.

The proposed project was referred to the County of San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District (APCD) for review and determination of any air quality impacts potentially resulting during both the construction and operational phases of the proposed project.

The previous EIR evaluated the following air quality impacts for the existing facility: on-site vehicle emissions, fugitive dust, landfill gas, existing off-site sources, and odor. All of these would be relevant to the proposed expansion. The previous EIR identified fugitive dust as a Class I impact.

Impact. As identified by the APCD, air quality impacts during construction include: the creation of fugitive dust (PM₁₀), the potential release of asbestos during demolition and removal of pipelines, and the potential release of naturally occurring asbestos during grading/placement of fill. Operational emissions need further analysis once additional information is provided relating to vehicle and equipment emissions for each aspect of the proposed expansion. The following list of impact areas will need further evaluation.

Nearby Residences - The proposed project site is located adjacent to existing rural residential development. Residential areas are sensitive to air pollution, including both construction and operational emissions.

Fugitive Dust (PM₁₀). Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of dust, potentially affecting local residents and agriculture in close proximity to the project site. Dust complaints could result in violation of the APCD's nuisance rules. This project activity is considered having a potentially significant impact to air quality.