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Solid Waste Management in American Samoa

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ABSTRACT

The Territory of American Samoa (population of about 55,000) in the South Pacific is in the process of improving its solid waste management system on Tutuila Island. Currently, American Samoa is implementing a new collection system and is expanding its landfill. The design of both of these systems was prepared based on the local conditions and on modern solid waste management practices. Substantial data acquisition preceded the design efforts for the collection system and for the landfill expansion in order to provide a firm foundation for the designs. A waste characterization study was conducted to support the entire solid waste management plan for Tutuila. A recent and comprehensive process was conducted to procure collection services for the island, including the development of performance specifications and of extensive reporting requirements to aid in the management of wastes. The design of the landfill extension included sub-surface investigations and other studies in order to develop a landfill facility that would protect the island's delicate environment and that would be affordable. Education and training in solid waste management was also seen as an important element and, consequently, has been used during the planning process and implementation of both the new collection system and the landfill expansion.

INTRODUCTION

American Samoa comprises a group of seven islands in the South Pacific Ocean, lying at approximately longitude 170° west and latitude 14° south. The main and largest island, Tutuila, has an area of 137 km². The majority of the population (about 55,000) live on the main island. The island is located in the tropical zone and on average receives about 315 cm of rain per year; the average temperature is about 29°C.

The government of the island consists of an executive branch headed by the Governor, legislative branch, and judicial branch. The island is a territory of the United States. The solid waste management (SWM) system was formerly administered by the government through the Public Works Department. In 1994, the responsibility for