

An Overview of Land Revitalization

“Brownfields cleanup and redevelopment has grown to become one of the greatest environmental and economic stories of the past decade... and I’m pleased that the Environmental Protection Agency can be a partner in this effort.”

—EPA Administrator
Stephen Johnson
November 2006

As part of its mission to protect human health and the environment, EPA is dedicated to revitalizing all types of contaminated land for productive reuses. Cleaning up and reusing contaminated properties can protect the environment, reinvigorate communities, jump-start local economies, preserve greenspace, and prevent sprawl. Revitalized land can be reused in ways that offer the greatest local benefit— from creating public parks and restoring local ecosystems to commercial and residential redevelopment projects.

The Agency’s land revitalization efforts emphasize that cleanup and reuse are mutually supportive goals and consideration of anticipated property reuse should be an integral part of EPA’s cleanup decisions. Whether a property is a Superfund site, an operating waste disposal site, a petroleum facility, a former gas station, or an abandoned industrial facility, EPA believes that environmental cleanup and the beneficial reuse of land across all Agency programs must be achieved.

The Agency’s land revitalization efforts place an emphasis on:

- Promoting effective tools that address barriers to land revitalization;
- Developing land revitalization statistics, measures, and outcomes;
- Conducting land revitalization public outreach;
- Providing training;
- Enhancing government coordination to promote land revitalization; and
- Building strong land revitalization partnerships.

EPA’s Brownfields Program

EPA’s Brownfields Program has been instrumental in furthering the Agency’s land revitalization goals. The Program’s grants and technical assistance give communities, states, tribes, and other stakeholders the resources they need to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields.

A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. It is estimated that there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the U.S.



Bird-watchers at the Hoquarton Interpretive Trail, built on a former brownfield in Tillamook, Oregon.

What are the Goals of the Brownfields Program?

- **Protecting the Environment**
Addressing brownfields to promote the health and well-being of America’s people and environment.
- **Promoting Partnerships**
Enhancing collaboration and communication essential to facilitate brownfields cleanup and reuse.
- **Strengthening the Marketplace**
Providing financial and technical assistance to bolster the private market.
- **Sustaining Reuse**
Redeveloping brownfields to enhance a community’s long-term quality of life.

Brownfields Funding

Assessment

Funding to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfields. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 to assess a site contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, or other contaminants and up to \$200,000 to address a site contaminated by petroleum. Three or more eligible entities may apply together as a coalition for up to \$1 million to assess a minimum of five sites.

Cleanup

Funding to carry out cleanup activities at brownfields. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 per site, which may be used to address

sites contaminated by petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants, or other contaminants.

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Grants

Funding to establish revolving loan funds to make loans and subgrants to clean up brownfields. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$1 million or coalitions of eligible entities may apply together for up to \$1 million per entity. The fund “revolves” by lending to public and private borrowers in order to finance environmental cleanup activities at brownfields, and then using loan repayments to provide new loans.

Job Training

Funding to establish environmental cleanup and health and safety training programs for residents of brownfields-affected communities who are seeking new skills and career opportunities. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 to develop training programs that help clean up brownfields, spur economic development, and produce highly qualified environmental technicians.

Technical Assistance

Funding to agencies and organizations for innovative training, research, and technical assistance projects that support brownfields revitalization.

State and Tribal Response Programs

Financial assistance to states and tribes increases their capacity to oversee and support brownfields projects.

Targeted Brownfields Assessments

Direct assistance for site-specific assessments.

What is the Brownfields Grant Application Process?

For details on the grant application process, including frequently asked questions (FAQ) and proposal guidelines, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/applicat.htm>

Other EPA Programs and Offices Working Toward Land Revitalization

Superfund

Superfund is the environmental program established to address abandoned hazardous waste sites, allowing EPA to clean up such sites and to compel responsible parties to perform cleanups or reimburse the government for EPA-led cleanups. <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/index.htm>

Underground Storage Tanks (UST)

The greatest potential hazard from a leaking UST is that the petroleum or other hazardous substance can seep into the soil and contaminate groundwater, the source of drinking water for nearly half of all Americans. <http://www.epa.gov/OUST/index.htm>

Federal Facilities

The Federal Facilities Restoration and Reuse Program works with other federal and state agencies to facilitate the cleanup and reuse of the nation’s federal facilities, including Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) sites. <http://www.epa.gov/swerrfr/index.htm>

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)

Through RCRA, EPA has the authority to control hazardous waste from

“cradle-to-grave,” including the waste’s generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal. RCRA also establishes a framework for the management of non-hazardous wastes. <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/cleanup/rcra/index.html>

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA)

Employing an integrated approach of compliance assistance, compliance incentives, and innovative civil and criminal enforcement, OECA and its partners seek to maximize compliance and reduce threats to public health and the environment. <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/about/index.html>



Depot Park in Gainesville, Florida, built on a former brownfield. Photo © 2006 Matthew Dube