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BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM FACT SHEET

General Facts about the SWRPC Program:

- SWRPC has managed a Brownfields Assessment Program since 2003, helping municipalities and the private sector understand real or perceived contamination of vacant or underutilized properties.
- The Brownfields Program is managed by SWRPC staff with the help of a Brownfields Advisory Committee, and a pool of environmental consultants contracted by SWRPC.
- The Brownfields Program has committed funds to perform assessment services for a number of brownfields sites including auto repair shops, a former thermometer factory, a former rail yard, green space abutting an auto salvage yard, a paper sludge dumping site, and a former armory.
- The latest grant awarded to SWRPC covering the period 2007 - 2010 was in the amount of \$400,000 towards brownfields assessment activities.



SWRPC Brownfields Forum

Nominations and Selections of Brownfield Sites:

- Assessment funds and services are available to eligible brownfields located in any of the 35 contiguous towns in the Southwest Region of New Hampshire.
- A nominated property does not have to have known contamination on site - only perceived or suspected contamination. Brownfields assessments allow prospective owners to perform due diligence testing of a site prior to purchasing or redeveloping a site.
- SWRPC's assessment grants address any mixed hazardous or petroleum-related contamination.
- Brownfields nominations can be submitted by anyone.
- Brownfields nominations require the current owner to agree to participate in the program as well as the owner's permission to access the site.
- In selecting a brownfields site for funding, some of the criteria that the Brownfield Advisory Committee considers are the level of threat to public health and safety, the liability of the property owner for any possible contamination, the readiness of redevelopment plans, the development potential of the site, and other enhancements to quality of life (greenspace, recreation, community character, etc.)

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Brownfield Site Assessments, Clean-up and Site Development:

- A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) is the first assessment step for any site. It is used to determine the likelihood that some form of environmental contamination is present at the site. The ESA includes a visual assessment, interviews with past and present owners, a search for any environmental liens, a review of historical documents, a search of federal, state, and local databases regarding contamination at or near the site, and a number of other investigations. Findings in a Phase I report will determine whether or not further site investigation is warranted (ie Phase II ESA). Some brownfields projects conclude after completion of a Phase I ESA. In those cases environmental consultants typically find that there isn't likely to be the presence of serious contamination on the property.
- Phase II ESAs include a more thorough review of conditions at the site including performance of soil borings and collections of soil samples, installation of monitoring wells and collections of groundwater samples, and analysis of samples. Phase II ESAs allow for a more comprehensive report of what contaminants are present on the property and the level of contamination. If contaminant levels are above state standards, investigations are likely to contain a recommendation for a Phase III Environmental Site Assessment and Remedial Action Plan. Many brownfields projects conclude after completion of a Phase II ESA and a finding that contaminant levels are below state standards.
- The Phase III Investigation and Remedial Action Plan is, typically, the final stage of the SWRPC Brownfields Assessment Program. Phase III Investigations may consist of the additional collection of soil and groundwater samples and continued investigation of any anomalies discovered during the Phase II ESA. The Remedial Action Plan consists of a Soils and Materials Management Plan for off-site disposal or on-site reuse of impacted soils, suggestions for ongoing groundwater monitoring, a list of permit requirements needed to engage in remedial actions, and suggestions for the use of institutional controls such as activity and use restrictions. Completion of a Phase III Investigation and Remedial Action Plan triggers necessity of on-site cleanup.
- Parties that have been found not liable for contamination are eligible for a covenant not to sue from the Environmental Protection Agency or the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. The covenant is valid under certain conditions including reasonable steps that current owners/purchasers must take in order to stop the current release or prevent future release of contaminants on the property.
- There are a number of low-interest rate revolving loans available for clean-ups and eligibility for those loans varies. It is most important for current property owners that may be held liable for contamination, to determine their eligibility for these loans prior to determining their participation in the SWRPC Brownfields Program.
- The SWRPC Brownfields Program cannot provide funds for site clean-up or redevelopment, but we are capable of referring property owners and prospective purchasers to opportunities and resources. SWRPC can use program funds to market properties in the program as well as redevelopment planning activities.