



Par for the Course: Brownfields Pilots Provide Communities with More Greens

GOLF COURSES STORY

Across the U.S., brownfields are being turned into greens: more specifically, golf course greens. Restoring brownfields into golf courses is a fast-growing trend, and several of EPA's Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots offer prime examples. Currently, three Assessment Pilots include golf courses in their site redevelopment plans; these Pilots' efforts will help leverage more than \$33 million to transform approximately 600 acres of vacant and abandoned sites into new, pristine golf courses and create more than 35 jobs.

Usually part of a larger-scale recreational development project, golf courses created on urban brownfields sites tend to be targeted toward low-income residents residing in those brownfields communities, who may have few available recreational options. These golf courses can provide area residents with an outdoor, scenic activity that brings the community together in a positive atmosphere, as well as beautifying and enhancing the landscape of the area. Garry Waldeck of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management stated that "these urban recreational areas, including golf courses, provide additional recreational alternatives and can increase community pride."

continued ▶▶

JUST THE FACTS:

- Brownfields Pilot assessments on the former Button Hole site in Providence, Rhode Island, led to a \$90,000 cleanup effort and a \$3 million golf course redevelopment.
- A \$19 million cleanup and golf course redevelopment effort in Houston, Texas is expected to create 35 full-time jobs and generate \$22,000 per year in property taxes.
- Using leveraged funding from local government and private sources, a brownfield in Hammond, Indiana will be redeveloped into a 120-acre, 18-hole adult golf course and clubhouse.

Currently, three of EPA's Brownfields Assessment Pilots include golf courses in their site redevelopment plans; these Pilots' efforts will help leverage more than \$33 million to transform approximately 600 acres of vacant and abandoned sites into new, pristine golf courses.

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

In the spring of 1999, the Golf Foundation of Rhode Island approached the state regarding its desire to redevelop the 25-acre Button Hole site, a state-owned brownfield, into an affordable golf course for nearby residents and youths. The state accepted this proposal and included the project in its State of Rhode Island Brownfields Assessment Pilot. A former gravel pit, the Button Hole site is located in Providence and lies adjacent to the Woonasquatucket River, a metals recycling plant with numerous environmental violations, and several multifamily housing complexes. Because of its proximity to the metals recycling plant, the site was thought to have environmental contamination. The Pilot funded \$30,000 site assessments that revealed low levels of lead and arsenic at a small portion of the site. As a result, 10,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil were excavated and encapsulated onsite in accordance with state regulations.

Leasing the site to the Golf Foundation for one dollar per year, the State of Rhode Island agreed to fund the approximately \$90,000 cleanup effort. The Pilot also assisted the Golf Foundation in creating the golf course development plan. Through private donations, the Golf Foundation is funding the \$3 million redevelopment. The driving range and training center opened to the public in August 2000, and is already tremendously popular with local residents. Remaining portions of the site, including a 9-hole golf course and clubhouse, are currently being developed. The golf course is also part of the \$13 m i l l i o n Woonasquatucket Greenway Project, which includes development of an adjacent park and bike trail that will connect the area to downtown Providence. The Brownfields Pilot will focus on additional sites included in the Greenway Project.

In Houston, Texas, a former municipal landfill unused since 1979 has similar potential for recreational use. Located in a disadvantaged area of the city, the 450-acre 1110 Holmes Street site lies within the City of Houston Brownfields Pilot target area. In 1997, prior to the Pilot's involvement, the owner of 422 acres of the site selected EnCap Golf LLC (EnCap) to redevelop the site into two 18-hole golf courses. As part of the arrangement, the owner leased the site to EnCap for 99 years and agreed to finance cleanup activities, while EnCap agreed to fund environmental assessments and redevelopment activities.

EnCap conducted site assessments in 1997 and 1998 that found low levels of a methane gas mixture created by the breakdown of the former landfill. In 1998, the property owner and EnCap

CONTACTS:

(For Providence, Rhode Island):
EPA Region 1
(617) 918-1209

(For Hammond, Indiana):
EPA Region 5
(312) 353-3161

(For Houston, Texas):
EPA Region 6
(214) 665-7382

Visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>



continued ►►

enlisted the Houston Pilot to help coordinate with inter-governmental agencies to secure various permits and assist with community outreach. The Pilot acted as a liaison for the \$77,000 purchase of an adjacent city-owned brownfields property to include as part of the redevelopment project. The Pilot continues to assist the project by updating and requesting support from the stakeholders involved, as appropriate. The property owner funded the installation of a \$1.5 million landfill gas extraction system in Summer 2001, while EnCap anticipates the completion of both golf courses by July 2001. In addition to the golf courses, the site will include a clubhouse, a practice and training facility, a pitch-and-putt course, maintenance facilities, cart paths, and access roads. It is expected that assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment activities will total approximately \$19 million. Further, it is estimated that approximately 35 full-time operations and maintenance jobs will be created and that the city will receive \$22,000 per year in property taxes.



Similarly, the City of Hammond, Indiana's Birstow site, a 97-acre abandoned brownfield previously used to dump steel mill slag waste, has been targeted for redevelopment into two separate golf courses. As part of the city's overall George Lake Watershed Restoration Project, the Birstow project is generally referred to as the "Diamond in the Rough" and is considered a catalyst for the development of the entire surrounding area. Abandoned in 1972, the property was secured by Lake County in 1978 because of delinquent taxes, and donated (under a conditional deed to redevelop the site into a golf course) to the City of Hammond in 1998. Prior to the Pilot's award, the city began the first phases of activity, including conducting site assessments and cleanup, and redeveloping a 36-acre portion of the site into a driving range, which opened October 1999, and a 9-hole youth golf course and clubhouse, which opened April 2000.

The Hammond Brownfields Pilot was awarded to conduct site assessments and community outreach activities during the second phase of this redevelopment project. Approximately \$175,000 of Hammond's \$200,000 Pilot grant will be used to conduct site assessments of the remaining property, with the remainder dedicated to community outreach. Using leveraged funding from local government and private sources, the remaining property, as well as a portion of the adjacent South Basin area, will be redeveloped into a 120-acre, 18-hole adult golf course and clubhouse. The Pilot also plans to facilitate activities to protect and enhance the surrounding sensitive wooded and lakefront areas. Following site assessments, cleanup and redevelopment activities are scheduled to begin simultaneously in 2001; all of these activities are expected to total more than \$11.5 million. The second course is tentatively scheduled to open to the public in the spring of 2003.

For more information regarding these Pilots contact the appropriate EPA Region, EPA Region 1 at 617-918-1209; EPA Region 5 at 312-353-3161; or EPA Region 6 at 214-665-7382.