



United States
Environmental
Protection Agency
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Solid Waste
and Emergency
Response (5101)

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Mustard Plants Helping to Clean Up Site

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Brownfields Success Stories

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. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 220 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots 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.

An obscure plant is taking a lead role in cleaning up a long-idle, inner city Trenton, New Jersey industrial site.

Located within 50 feet of a densely populated residential area and across the street from an elementary school, Trenton's Gould National Battery site was home to commercial lead-acid battery manufacturers from the mid-1930s to the early 1980s. Throughout the 1980s, the property was host to a manufacturing plant for Magic Marker Industries and its famous felt tip pens. In 1989, Magic Marker filed for bankruptcy and abandoned the site, leaving its structures prey to decay and neglect.

To assist the City in restoring this and other sites abandoned during the decline of its manufacturing base, EPA awarded Trenton \$200,000 under its

Brownfields Initiative in September, 1995. Gould Battery is one of four sites the City is targeting as part of its Brownfields Pilot, chosen because of the property's continued impact on the community. To determine the site's level of contamination, the Pilot conducted a preliminary site assessment and a site

investigation using a \$109,408 grant from the State's Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund program. It is hoped that this site investigation will be completed in 1998.

In the same year as EPA's brownfields grant, Phytotech, a research corporation developing

new methods of site remediation, approached the City about conducting a demonstration cleanup project on the Gould site. This innovative company is experimenting with a new soil cleanup technique called *phytoremediation*, in which plants (or trees) are used to extract lead and other heavy metals from the ground. In the case of the Gould site, Indian Mustard plants are being used.

Community members joined City and State officials in the first planting of Indian Mustard seeds on the lead-contaminated Gould site in April, 1996. Initial tests prove that lead levels on the property have already been reduced.

The City, as part of its Pilot program, hired Isles, Inc., a Trenton-based non-profit organization, to involve and educate local neighbors in the cleanup and reuse of the Gould site. Eager to participate, community members joined City and State officials in the first planting of Indian Mustard seeds on the Gould site in April, 1996. Initial tests prove that lead levels on the property have already been reduced. A second season of planting began in April, 1997. Through the efforts of the Brownfields Pilot, the City, the community, and the Indian Mustard plant, the Gould site will one day return to productive use.

JUST THE FACTS

- Gould Battery is one of four sites the City is targeting as part of its Brownfields Pilot.
- The Pilot conducted a preliminary site assessment and a site investigation using a \$109,408 grant from the State's Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund program.
- A new soil cleanup technique called *phytoremediation*, in which plants (or trees) are used to extract lead and other heavy metals from the ground, is being used on the Gould site.

Contacts:

City of Trenton
(609) 989-3509

U.S. EPA - Region 2
(212) 637-4314

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