

BROWNFIELDS SUCCESS IN NEW ENGLAND

FORMER OX-YOKE ORIGINALS SITE

PISCATAQUIS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, MAINE



Property Details

Property Address:	24 W. Main Street, Milo, ME 04463
Property Size:	27 acres
Former Uses:	Wood manufacturing, ammunition production, firearms cleaning products and accessories
Contaminants Found:	Oil/petroleum from USTs, lead, oils and solvents from storage containers
Current Use:	Hardware Store
Current Owner:	Razor Rock, LLC

Project Partners

Ox-Yoke Farms (Razor Rock, LLC), Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP), Town of Milo, Ransom Environmental Consultants, Inc.

Funding Details

Brownfields Assessment Grant (2009): \$40,000 used of a \$200,000 Hazardous Substances Assessment grant

Project Highlights

- Performed comprehensive assessments that identified environmental risks and liabilities and areas where subsequent cleanup was needed
- Determined a reuse for a dormant brownfield that provided the greatest community benefit
- Reused existing downtown infrastructure while preserving undeveloped land
- The first phase of redevelopment transformed the building into a new, 12,000-square-foot hardware and sporting goods store
- Created over five full-time jobs and will likely leverage over \$250,000 in private redevelopment funding

Drivers for Redevelopment: Though this site had been productive for more than 100 years, it had sat dormant since 2005, when Ox-Yoke Originals ceased its ammunition manufacturing and firearms cleaning products operations. With poverty and unemployment rates in Piscataquis County higher than state averages, finding a reuse for the property was seen as a priority to help stimulate the local economy. In 2008, an arson-related fire destroyed several of Milo's downtown businesses, including a True Value Hardware store; soon afterward, the owner of the Ox-Yoke site contacted the Town Manager as well as PCEDC to determine how the dormant site might best be reused. Input from the community suggested a new hardware store for the property's main building.

Property History: This property has been active since the turn of the 20th century, when it was developed and operated by The American Thread company. Initially, the company built wooden spools for yarn on the site, and moved into other areas of wood manufacturing over the next 75 years. The property was sold to Basketville, Inc. in 1976, as a basket manufacturing operation that continued for 22 years. In 1988, Ox-Yoke Originals purchased the site for its ammunition manufacturing, and firearms cleaning supplies and accessories operations. The company closed its doors in April 2005, and a preliminary environmental assessment was performed by the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) in 2007. In November of that year, the site was purchased at auction by Razor Rock, LLC, a private developer.

Project Results: While underground storage tanks on the property were removed by FAME prior to purchase by Razor Rock, LLC, subsequent assessments funded through the Brownfields grant confirmed that no residual contamination remained. Those assessments also identified portions of the 27-acre property where redevelopment could proceed immediately, and other areas where further cleanup would be needed. This allowed the Three Rivers Hardware and sporting goods store to open in one of the site's main buildings. Other areas of the site will be cleaned up as part of subsequent redevelopment plans or have restrictions on their future use. Redevelopment of this site has already generated more than five full-time jobs, and will likely leverage over \$250,000 in private funding as redevelopment continues. The property's reuse has also put this once-dormant site back on the town's tax roles.

Project Timeline

1900-1976	Site used for the manufacture of wood products by the American Thread Co.
1976-1988	Site purchased by Basketville, Inc, for basket manufacturing
1988-2005	Site purchased by Ox-Yoke Originals for ammunition manufacturing, as well as firearms cleaning products and accessories
2005	Ox-Yoke Originals shuts down operations
2007	Site purchased by a private developer
2009	PCEDC uses its EPA Brownfields grant to perform environmental assessments
2010	Three Rivers Hardware/Sporting Goods opens on the site