

State and Tribal Response Program Highlights

EPA Funding Provided to States and Tribes to Address Contaminated Land in their Communities

REGION 1

NEW HAMPSHIRE – The Opera House Square building in downtown Claremont has been vacant for almost 25 years. Portions of the building were most recently used as a restaurant and bank. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide oversight of assessment and cleanup activities at the property. The Capital Regional Development Council provided the city a sub-grant to conduct cleanup activities, which included the removal of asbestos and lead-based paint from the building's interior. In 2019, renovations began to convert the 10,000-square-foot, three-story building into a comprehensive arts and music space only a short walk from much of the city's multi-family housing. The West Claremont Center for the Music and Arts is transforming the building into a performance and gallery venue, with space for teaching and the creation of music with a recording room. The building was also awarded \$400,000 in tax credits from the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority. This project will provide strong economic benefit to the Claremont area through increased access to arts and culture, and promote additional downtown revitalization.



Renovated Opera House Square Building.

REGION 2

ST. REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE – Like the Mohawks of Akwesasne, the Ramapough Indian Nation are a strong people in the face of adversity. In the fall of 2007, the Ramapough Nation made its initial visit to the St. Regis Mohawk reservation to meet with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe's (SRMT) Environment Division Brownfields Program. The Ramapough Nation land, located on the New Jersey and New York border, was contaminated by toxic paint sludge from a neighboring industrial facility. The Ramapough Nation gathered information from the SRMT's Environment Division on health effects, cultural losses, and how best to address this contamination and overcome the associated obstacles. In April 2014, the Ramapough Nation returned to the SRMT reservation to share their story of how they fought for their land and health by working with the industrial facility to clean up the contamination. In June 2014, members of the SRMT used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to visit the Ramapough Nation to tour the successful redevelopment of the property into a large community medicine garden and attend their "Healing of the Earth Ceremony." The collaboration between SRMT and the Ramapough Nation is a wonderful example of how tribes can stand strong against environmental contamination while protecting their culture for future generations. The SRMT Brownfields Program hopes to continue its relationship with the Ramapough Nation and apply what they learned to their own brownfield properties in Akwesasne.

REGION 3

DELAWARE – The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) is using its Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide oversight at properties across the states. Examples include:

- The Astra-Zeneca North Campus Site property in Wilmington was the location of a former pharmaceutical research and development facility that operated between 1965 and 2013. In March 2018, a remedial investigation was conducted under the DNREC VCP that revealed no contamination above legal limits and the property was ready for reuse. Redevelopment, which is set to begin at the end of 2019, will consist of a mixture of land uses including office space, commercial, a hotel, a restaurant, and residential housing.

- The Osprey Point Subdivision is located along the northern side of the Rehoboth Bay, near Rehoboth Beach. The property contains a two-story building, a paved parking lot and an 18-hole public golf course. Arsenic was the only metal found at elevated concentrations, warranting remedial action. Cleanup activities were completed at in July 2017. Transformation of the former golf course into the Osprey Point residential development is planned to begin in early 2020.

REGION 4

GEORGIA – Greensboro is a small, predominantly agricultural community located 80 miles outside of Atlanta. The former Mary-Leila Cotton Mill property is within walking distance of downtown; however, the property has been vacant for many years. The city worked with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) assess and clean up the property. The Georgia DNR used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide oversight of environmental assessments and cleanup activities. Cleanup included the removal of approximately 2,600 tons of impacted soils and transport to a Subtitle D Landfill. Within four years, 71 energy-efficient, affordable loft apartments were developed on the former mill site, nearly all of which are now occupied by working families. Historic features such as the exposed brick wall, arched windows, water tower and original wood plank flooring were preserved during construction.



Redeveloped Mary-Leila Cotton Mill property.

REGION 5

MICHIGAN – Demolished in 2015, the former Grand Rapids Press Building accommodated not only the newsroom and editorial offices of the local newspaper, but also the printing press that churned out the daily paper from 1966 through 2004. As the printed page gave way to the Internet, the Press Building went idle. In 2015, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide oversight of the Press Building’s demolition and cleanup. Cleanup activities included the removal of various metals and volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds in the soil and ground water. In 2019, the City of Grand Rapids’ Brownfield Redevelopment Authority approved approximately \$29 million to launch construction of a 200,000-square-foot Grand Rapids Innovation Park medical innovation building on the property, which will be partially occupied by Michigan State University. The project is expected to attract \$83 million in private investment and create 250 to 300 new jobs.

REGION 6

ARKANSAS – Built in 1902, the former Gus Blass Wholesale Building was a staple of downtown Little Rock until the 1980s, when it closed down and remained vacant for many decades. A developer purchased the property in 2010. The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide oversight of cleanup activities, which included the removal of underground storage tanks and asbestos. After several setbacks and years of collaboration with the public and stakeholders, the property was redeveloped in 2018. The five-story building is now home to Mulberry Flats, a 32-unit apartment building that offers both one- and two-bedroom apartments. The lower level of the building contains Brewski’s Pub & Grub sports bar and restaurant.



Mulberry Flats and Brewski’s Pub.

REGION 7

MISSOURI – Built in 2004, the old Woody’s Grocery Store in the City of Agency featured a convenience store and a canopy with fueling pumps and a concrete pad. In 2011, the convenience store burned down and the property remained vacant for many years. In 2017, the city obtained a sub-grant from the Missouri-Kansas (Mo-Kan) Regional Council to remove two 8,000 gallon and one 6,000 gallon underground storage tanks. The tanks were excavated and disposed of properly. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide oversight of cleanup activities. The property was then backfilled with clean soil and prepared for redevelopment. The city is using the property to expand the city park with a basketball court and a horseshoe pit. The project is anticipated to be completed in 2019.

REGION 8

NORTH DAKOTA – The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) continues to use its Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct cleanups, resulting in significant improvements for rural towns across the state. In 2018, the North Dakota DEQ conducted asbestos removal at the Lidgerwood Civic Center and the Rugby City Armory. The Lidgerwood Civic Center had multiple prior uses including a train depot and a senior citizens’ center, but its building had significantly deteriorated. With asbestos removed, the building can now be safely demolished, and the property will be reused by the local Fire Protection District. The North Dakota DEQ also used Section 128(a) funding to remove asbestos-containing materials at the Rugby City Armory, which will be renovated to provide improved space for school sporting events, community meetings, and other public and private events. In 2019, the North Dakota DEQ completed cleanup at the former Nygaard Oil Station in Noonan. Since the state first began its program more than 15 years ago, the average cleanup cost has been about \$16,000, which can be difficult for rural towns with limited tax bases to fund. As word has spread about the availability of cleanup funding, demand has grown and there is now a wait list for projects.

REGION 9

ARIZONA – Over the years, a former abandoned residential and commercial property in South Phoenix became an illegal dumping area. The property was purchased by the city and with help from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality’s Section 128(a) Response Program funding, an assessment was conducted. The results identified lead and arsenic soil contamination. The city removed the contaminated soil and redeveloped the property in partnership with Green on Purpose, an organization focused on creating local food hubs for communities. The property is now the Pueblo Viejo Fields Project, which includes a demonstration farm, farm stand, and agricultural training facility for veterans and developmentally disabled adults. The project provides locally grown and freshly harvested food to the south Phoenix community, a USDA-designated food desert.

REGION 10

NATIVE VILLAGE OF EKLUTNA (NVE) – Located 25 miles northeast of Anchorage, Alaska, the NVE has worked on revitalizing contaminated lands that impact their community for many years. NVE has led efforts to address key sites of concern, including the Old Matanuska Townsite. NVE has actively used its Section 128(a) Response Program funding and technical assistance to provide tribal oversight and coordinate public involvement by interfacing with a diverse group of stakeholders. High-priority sites often require government agencies, contractors, lawyers, insolvent parties, and others to be engaged. In 2018, NVE found that no records could be found regarding ownership of the rights-of-way near the Old Matanuska Townsite. Through agency coordination, ownership uncertainties were resolved legally by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. Illegal squatters near the property presented another challenge and several additional hurdles have delayed cleanup of the site, but the NVE has continued to shepherd forward progress. In 2019, NVE is coordinating ground water sampling at the site to determine if adjacent properties are contaminated.



Property near the Old Matanuska Townsite