

State and Tribal Response Program Highlights

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

REGION 1

RHODE ISLAND—In the 1900s, Pawtucket was Rhode Island's beehive of industrial activity, and as a result, has some of the largest concentrations of highly polluted brownfield sites in the state. The Blackstone and Seekonk rivers, once known as some of the most impaired rivers nationwide, have made impressive recoveries over the past few decades, and the city has aggressively remediated and redeveloped its polluted landscape. According to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Pawtucket had 22 known brownfield sites along its riverfront. A total of \$1 million in EPA cleanup grants were split among nine brownfield sites along Branch Street. First developed as far back as the late 1800s, these old mill properties gradually became abandoned starting in the 1970s. The RI DEM used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct investigations that found arsenic, lead, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHS), and petroleum products in the soil and groundwater. Pawtucket Central Falls Development obtained five EPA cleanup grants in two years to prepare the parcels for construction. Today, these once blighted lots are home to 29 affordable housing units overlooking the Blackstone River.



Twenty-nine affordable housing units in Pawtucket.

REGION 2

NEW YORK—On March 8, 2022, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) received a report of a sheen in Oswego Harbor. That night, NYDEC and USCG provided initial containment with harbor booms and oil absorbent pads. NYDEC determined the following morning that oil from Oswego Harbor Power (OHP) had entered a storm line and was discharging to the lake. OHP immediately shut down the oil line and retained a diver to install an inflatable plug in the affected storm sewer to prevent further contamination. The release ceased on March 11 when the plug was successfully installed. During this time, boats were deployed in the harbor to skim and collect any visible oil and clean up along the shoreline of Breitbeck Park. The NYDEC used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to recover oil from affected areas. A total of 1,682 tons of soil were excavated and removed, approximately 1.5 million gallons of water were treated on site and discharged, and at least 44,500 gallons of oil were recovered. Cleanup and restoration were completed August 31, 2022, and monitoring is ongoing.

REGION 3

WEST VIRGINIA—In late 2021, the Beckley Common Council voted to allow the transfer of ownership of the former Beckley landfill, a 20-acre parcel, to the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA) in order to clean up the site to provide more accessibility to the historic Alfred Beckley Mill. The Beckley landfill originally opened in the 1930s and operated for forty years until the Raleigh County Landfill opened, making the former dumpsite obsolete. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct an assessment on the dormant landfill that revealed contaminants common to landfill properties, including heavy metals, pesticides, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). With existing access to utilities and infrastructure, the site's potential was obvious, and students from West Virginia University assisted with compiling possible future uses. Plans for the former landfill include encapsulation and redevelopment into a parking lot, pavilion, community park, and trailheads.

REGION 4

GEORGIA—A 3-acre property in the Murphy Triangle area of Atlanta’s Oakland City neighborhood is being redeveloped into the new headquarters building for Trees Atlanta. In the 1930s, the Golian Company, which manufactured structural and ornamental steel, operated on the property; in the early 1960s-1970s, Armour & Company operated a wholesale meat company; and Moms Bakery operated a commercial bakery from the 1990s to the 2010s. As part of the due diligence prior to purchasing the site, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) worked with Trees Atlanta to use Section 128(a) response Program funding to conduct environmental site assessments that included the collection and analysis of soil samples. This analysis identified lead contamination in the soils above Georgia EPD’s Risk Reduction standards. Trees Atlanta entered the property into the Georgia Brownfield Program and has an EPD approved Correction Action Plan (CAP) for the site. The site will be remediated by excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated soils. The site will eventually be home to Trees Atlanta’s new, state-of-the-art 20,000 square-foot headquarters with walking trails and outdoor learning and gathering spaces.



Atlanta Trees Headquarters Building.

REGION 5

INDIANA—Holtsclaw Standard was a family-owned gas station and convenience store that opened in 1938 and was known for the “coldest soft drinks in town.” The store was a one-stop-shop selling animal feed, fishing gear, snacks, and drinks and became a regular meeting place for locals. In 2016, the owners could no longer manage the store and after 78 years of business, they decided to close their doors and sell the property. A 2020 geophysical survey showed that no underground storage tanks (USTs) remained at the site; however, further investigation showed that soil was impacted with various contaminants at levels exceeding Indiana Department of Environmental

Management’s (IDEM) Remediation Closure Guide (RCG) screening levels. IDEM used Section 128(a) Response Program Funding to remove and dispose of approximately 1,840 tons of petroleum-impacted soil. After cleanup activities were completed, a brewing company redeveloped the property. The Feed Store Brewing Company had its grand opening on October 22, 2021. It permanently employs 6 individuals and created 12 temporary jobs through redevelopment. The brewery lifts up other local businesses by inviting a rotating selection of food vendors and food trucks to set up on its property.



Feed Store Brewery.

REGION 6

LOUISIANA—Established in 2009 by a group made up of mostly schoolteachers, musicians, and recent New Orleans transplants, the Krewe of Red Beans (KRB) developed several innovative initiatives to support the community. In September 2021, KRB acquired a 25,000 square-foot historic furniture manufacturing warehouse to redevelop as a multi-functional community center. Before acquiring the property, KRB partnered with the Regional Planning Commission’s (RPC’s) Brownfield Program to conduct a Phase I assessment that identified potential contamination from the site’s former uses. Following this initial assessment, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) used Section 128(a) Response Program to further assess the soil, groundwater, and building materials to determine if contamination was present at levels that would impact human health or the environment. These investigations revealed that contaminant levels did not pose a risk to human health or the environment. KRB’s renovation plans include the “Museum of Beans” to highlight New Orleans culture artists; space for the community and Krewe members to gather to make crafts, Mardi Gras floats and costumes; areas for cultural events and film screenings focused on New Orleans culture; performance space for local artists and kid-friendly events; and a restaurant and oyster bar. The \$3.5 million renovation cost is being crowdfunded by KRB, which will be re-invested back into the community by creating jobs and revenue to support New Orleanians.

REGION 7

NEBRASKA—Community Crops is a non-profit organization based in Lincoln that provides education and resources for people to grow their own food. Community Crops started with one garden in 2003 and has grown to 11 community garden sites, a training farm, a production greenhouse, a mobile farmers market, and garden and cooking education for all ages. In 2022, Community Crops set their sights on a new community garden site on vacant land adjacent to the Charles H. Gere Library in Lincoln. Community Crops sent the results of some preliminary soil testing to the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) for approval to start the garden; however, LLCHD requested additional assessment to ensure the soil was safe for gardening as well as information on any underground storage tanks or drains. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) Brownfields Program used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to complete a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and conduct soil sampling that met the standards of the LLCHD. NeighborWorks Lincoln funded installation of a well at the site that made the garden possible, and Lincoln Public Libraries has made the generous commitment of helping with site maintenance and costs of electricity. The Gere Library Garden had a wonderfully successful first season, serving 18 households (46 individuals), with 17% being immigrants or refugees and 56% being low-to-moderate income.

REGION 8

YANKTON SIOUX TRIBE—Over the last decade, asbestos-containing material (ACB) cleanup and removal has been a focus for the Yankton Sioux Tribe. In 2022, the tribe used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to develop general asbestos information, ways to prevent asbestos exposure, and handling and storage information on flyers and on its website. The information contains a brief history of ACB and a list of all types of household material that potentially contain it, including vinyl floor tiles and their glues, some types of linoleum, siding material, and plaster. It also provides guidance regarding asbestos exposure and ways it can occur. Finally, it offers insight on the handling of ACB and the materials containing it. The tribe reports that this guidance has helped to educate the public and is leading to the tribe addressing ACB across the reservation.

REGION 9

NEVADA—The Hawthorne Boys & Girls Club building was constructed in 1960 and is approximately 10,956 square feet. Additional uses included a community childcare facility, storage of county records, and the office of the Mineral County Emergency Management. In 2021, the Nevada Brownfields Program used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct an environmental assessment in preparation for the building's potential renovation. The assessment revealed damaged friable asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) and areas of lead-based paint (LBP), prompting closure of the building during the summer. All ACMs were abated through removal and/or repair, fabric coated pipe insulation was removed, and areas of LBP were addressed. As a result of these efforts, the building re-opened, and the Hawthorne Boys & Girls Club was able to resume operations in September 2022.



Hawthorne Boys and Girls Club.

REGION 10

KAWERAK—The community of Golovin sits on a small peninsula in Northwest Alaska between two large bodies of water. Approximately 240 people reside in Golovin currently, but 60 years ago, during the fish processing peak, the community was more than double in size. Over time, the Golovin Fish Plant building fell into disrepair and after many extreme weather events, started to fall into the ocean. In 2018, an EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) enabled sampling that confirmed lead-based paint, petroleum, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) ballasts, lead-acid batteries, fluorescent bulbs, and asbestos contamination; and over the next two years, the Kawerak Environmental Program used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to clean up the property. In early 2022, Kawerak was able to secure funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to demolish the former fish plant's structures. Kawerak Brownfields Program staff met with individuals from the Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields (KSU TAB) program and collaborated on a project with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Brownfield Program to determine best ways to reuse the site. By the end of June 2023, the fish plant had been safely demolished. Care was taken to preserve as much material as possible for reuse in other projects in Golovin. The City of Golovin will seek community input to inform future decisions on the site's reuse.