

WILLOW PARK

Oakland, CA
Revolving Loan Fund Grant

Oakland, California Turns a Run-Down, Contaminated Area into a Recreational Centerpiece

ADDRESS:	1368 Willow Street West Oakland, CA 94607
PROPERTY SIZE:	0.94 acres
FORMER USES:	Scrap yard, park
CURRENT USES:	Recreational Park
EPA GRANT RECIPIENT:	PROJECT PARTNERS:
The City of Oakland used its \$500,000 EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund awarded in 2000 to loan \$200,000 to the Oakland Redevelopment Agency.	California Department of Parks and Recreation, National Park Service, Oakland Redevelopment Agency



For additional data and geographic information for this and other Brownfields Grants, please visit EPA's:

Envirofacts - www.epa.gov/enviro/html/bms/bms_query.html

Enviromapper - www.epa.gov/enviro/bf

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The 0.94-acre parcel of idle, contaminated land targeted by this project was once part of a thriving commercial, industrial, and residential area in West Oakland, California. Bustling with port and railroad activity, this area flourished from the late 1800s through the Second World War, when shipbuilding was in high demand. However, West Oakland suffered disinvestment and decline through the 1950s and 60s. A parcel of land used briefly as a scrap yard was turned into "Willow Park," a recreational area for the area's mostly minority residents, but the park fell into disrepair and became unusable. The park was fenced off in 2002 after assessments conducted by the City of Oakland discovered high concentrations of lead in the soil. The city used \$200,000 of a \$500,000 EPA RLF grant to remove this contamination, and formed valuable federal and state partnerships that helped to fund the park's restoration.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control issued a No Further Action letter in June 2005 confirming that park soils are safe.
- The project leveraged more than \$1 million from state, federal, and local sources, including \$482,000 from the National Park Service under its Urban Parks and Recreation Program and \$568,000 from the California Department of Parks and Recreation for redevelopment and park improvements.



Sampling activities underway on a portion of the Willow Park Site.

OUTCOME:

The reopening celebration of Willow Park was held in March 2007, featuring a circus, face painting, basketball, and refreshments. The formerly idle, fenced-in area has been transformed into a park with game tables, a plaza for community gatherings and live performances, a basketball court, a picnic area with barbeque pits, open space, a children's play area, landscaping, a walking/jogging path, and remodeled restrooms. The park showcases a public art project at the seating area with tiles developed through the neighborhood children's participation.