

# State and Tribal Response Program Highlights

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

## REGION 1

**MAINE** – The Town of Hiram has historically been a center of farming and timber harvesting, while the nearby Saco River provided hydropower for mills. The Hiram Elementary School building was originally constructed in 1979, but in 2008, schools were consolidated in the southern Maine area and the building was abandoned. The former school building drew interest from GrandyOats, an organic granola and food producer local to Maine, because it offered more than 10,000 square feet of single-story space and 8.2 acres of land. In 2017, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide oversight of the assessment and cleanup of asbestos-containing building materials and underground fuel tanks. After cleanup was completed, GrandyOats redeveloped the property into their new facility in 2018. With support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development program, GrandyOats was able to outfit their new facility with a warehouse for storing raw and organic materials and install 288 solar panels on the school’s old sports field. GrandyOats is now the largest employer in Hiram with about 30 staff.



Aerial view of GrandyOats property and solar panels. Credit: GrandyOats

## REGION 2

**NEW JERSEY** – The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is using Section 128(a) Response Program funding to promote community engagement across the state. NJDEP has realized that long-term effective community engagement is a necessary but underappreciated component of successful brownfield redevelopment and the revitalization of distressed neighborhoods. Through an area-wide brownfield

planning approach that emphasized community engagement, the NJDEP, in partnership with EPA Region 2, began working with the Cramer Hill stakeholders of Camden in 2003 to tackle the largest contaminated property in the city, the 85-acre Harrison Avenue Landfill. Through continuous, transparent and iterative community engagement, Cramer Hill stakeholders started with an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant that evolved into a 24-acre parcel of the landfill becoming the 120,000-square foot Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center; and the current remediation of other landfill areas for a 62-acre waterfront park that will open in April 2021. Brownfield and landfill reclamation projects of this magnitude are only possible with true and continuous community engagement, and with dedicated support from state and federal agencies who generously provided technical support and resources to make this challenging site a nationally-recognized success in an environmental justice area.



Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center.

## REGION 3

**VIRGINIA** – The Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEQ) is using Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide cleanup oversight in rural Virginia. The Town of Bedford is conducting remediation work at the Old Yellow Building at the former Bedford Middle School. Cleanup at the property included the removal of asbestos and lead paint, as well as an underground storage tank. The three-story Old Yellow Building is one of four buildings on the former Bedford Middle School property, which also includes a two-story main building built in the 1930s, a one-story cafeteria built in 1964, and a two-story gymnasium built in 1999. Redevelopment of the Old Yellow building will consist of a 30-room boutique hotel, the old middle

school building into apartments, and the 8,000-square-foot cafeteria subleased for office space. In Amherst County, the town is cleaning up and redeveloping the old Phelps Road School into 40 market-rate apartments. Cleanup activities consisted of the removal of lead and asbestos in the school building. Construction on the approximately \$7 million project is expected to begin in 2020. The site recently was named a state historic landmark and is awaiting federal approval to become a national landmark, a process that secures tax credits.

## REGION 4

**FLORIDA** – In response to stakeholder input and an attempt for both the EPA and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to better understand the impacts of federal funding provided to eligible communities, FDEP began a collaborative project with the University of South Florida (USF) in Spring 2018. This project was titled “Social and Economic Impacts of Federal Grant-supported Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Activities Conducted at Brownfield Sites in Florida”, and used Florida Section 128(a) Response Program funding. The first phase of the project evaluated and recommended options for determining socio-economic impacts associated with redeveloped brownfield sites. The phase resulted in the creation of the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Atlas, an interactive GIS-based tool available to the public as an online platform. The tool allows users to select specific brownfield sites and compare historical and contemporary data (before and after redevelopment), noting increases or decreases in each factor over a set period. Phase II of the project evaluated the efficacy of the tool through site assessment at 18 brownfield redevelopment sites throughout Florida in 2019, along with data collection and continued tool development and refinement. Phase III is set to begin on February 1, 2020 and will include continued tool updates and expansion. This tool is the first of its kind for the State of Florida and provides valuable information for the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Program—enhancing the Program’s ability to track metrics of success of site rehabilitation and redevelopment and the impacts of federal funding for brownfield sites. The tool is available at the following address: <https://usfaist.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=60b46851ca3d46fb96b2c0ac2fa2d2f2>

## REGION 5

**WISCONSIN** – In 2018, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to create an interactive brownfield success stories map that allows users to see at a glance the locations of many successful brownfield redevelopments across the state. Communities across Wisconsin have successfully investigated, cleaned up, and redeveloped many of their contaminated properties. This map

highlights some, but certainly not all, of the thousands of projects that resulted from our partnerships with local governments and private parties. It showcases the transformations of Wisconsin’s brownfields and serves as a best practices and lessons learned on how to successfully redevelop them. The map can be viewed at: <https://wi-dnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=90c3eae097074f9391314b0bf555a3d9>.

## REGION 6

**NEW MEXICO** – A hospital in the Town of Silver City, located in southwest New Mexico nestled against the 3.3 million-acre Gila National Forest, has remained vacant for many years. The hospital was originally constructed in the 1930s using Works Progress Administration Funds on donated land. A remodel was completed in 1961, adding 39 rooms; the hospital eventually closed in the early 1980s and fell into disrepair. In 2006, the New Mexico Department for the Environment used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct an environmental assessment that identified asbestos, lead, incinerator ash, and rodent/bird feces at the property. In 2007, the New Mexico Brownfields Program Revolving Loan Fund provided a zero-interest loan to the Town of Silver City to fund environmental remediation. Cleanup was completed and the loan was repaid in 2011. Opened in late 2019, the 69-unit facility now provides one and two-bedroom independent living apartments for tenants age 55+ and accepts HUD Section 8 qualified applicants. This development fills a significant community need for senior housing and features a community room, beauty salon, exercise room, library, and computer room.

## REGION 7

**NEBRASKA** – A plot of land in the City of Kimball had an impressive industrial past leading back to the turn of the 20th century, when local innovator Pat Maginnis used his blacksmith shop to manufacture his own patented irrigation flumes. Designed to carry water across ravines, these specialized flumes were shipped across the U.S. The site’s building was also home to the Maginnis hardware store and the Maginnis hotel/café. Though more recently used by a modern restaurant chain, the building has been vacant since 2012 and fell into disrepair. Reluctant to demolish the structure due to its historical significance, the city reached out to Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) for help. In 2019, NDEE used Section 128(a) funding to complete a Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), a mold and asbestos-containing materials survey, and to abate asbestos removal and disposal costs. Following cleanup, the property was purchased by a local business owner seeking to help rejuvenate Kimball’s downtown. Approximately \$500,000 in public and private funding, including a façade grant from the city, is being used to renovate the original building. Scheduled to



open in summer 2020, a new fitness center on the site will include locker rooms, showers, tanning beds, and a massage therapist. Kimball residents are glad to see this historical icon preserved and the site returned to productive use.

## REGION 8

**COLORADO** – The Dairy Block in downtown Denver was once home to Windsor Dairy. The Dairy Block site was cemented as a state-of-the-art home for Windsor Dairy in a landmark real estate deal inked in 1920 and thrived as a dairy until the early 1960s. The property later became a condominium complex until the early 2000s. The Denver Dairy Block laid vacant for years after a failed redevelopment deal centered around then anchor tenant Planet Hollywood. In 2018, the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide oversight of the assessment and cleanup of the property. Limited cleanup was required and today's redevelopment centers around Denver's first "activated alley"—developing and making an alley an attractive part of the city—and carries the central theme of the former Windsor Dairy in numerous sculptural, lighting, and artistic details.



*Dairy Block in Downtown Denver.*

## REGION 9

**TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION** – The Tohono O'odham Nation has used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to partner with the Tribe's Mineral Resources Program to clean up and protect its mineral resources. Since first contact with European cultures, O'odham people were exposed to mining. Over the years, a legacy of abandoned copper and silver mines have impacted the land. The Tohono O'odham Response Program is helping

to inventory and prioritize mine-scarred lands. Activities include conducting outreach to the community, developing an inventory of mining sites, locating and pulling information from historic files, mapping the land, conducting site visits, recording community members' input and concerns, developing potential site reuse plans, and exploring funding options for reclamation.

## REGION 10

**IDAHO** – Two adjacent sites on West Fairview Avenue—2403 and 2419—had seen a wide spectrum of uses since the 1940s. 2403 West Fairview had been used as bulk storage for petroleum products, as a service station, and as a heavy machinery storage and maintenance site. From the 1980s to early 1990s it was used as an equipment yard for a construction company, and more recently for boat sales and maintenance. 2419 West Fairview had seen use as an auto sales and repair shop, a veterinarian hospital, and a storage yard for the Idaho Power Company. In 2014, hoping to sell or lease the properties for redevelopment, the City of Boise sought assistance from the Idaho DEQ's Brownfields program. In response, the DEQ used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct Phase I and II environmental assessments on both sites. The 2403 West Fairview property had been targeted for assessment and monitoring since the early to mid-1990s, when leaking fuel storage tanks were discovered. At that time, seven underground tanks and contaminated soils were removed, and ground water monitoring wells were installed. The 2014-2016 DEQ Brownfields program assessments gave the 2419 property a clean bill of health but revealed residual contamination at 2403. The DEQ placed usage restrictions on affected portions of the site to allow safe reuse of remaining areas. Today, following a \$28 million redevelopment effort supported by Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, the properties on West Fairview are home to a 134-unit affordable apartment complex.



*West Fairview affordable housing complex.*