



Groundwork USA Initiative

Reusing Brownfields for Community Benefit

National Park Service
Rivers & Trails Program
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Program Update

March , 2009

The Groundwork USA network helps communities reuse brownfields for community benefit. Work includes assessment, remediation, community involvement, education, technical assistance, planning, site construction, and monitoring. Here is the status of the projects in 2008:

COMPLETED Projects in 2008

Elizabeth, NJ: Apple Tree Park (1st year of GW involvement: 2004)

History: (.04 acre) Originally an apple orchard, the site was an auto repair yard. Contamination included lead, petroleum and petroleum by products.

Reuse: Neighborhood pocket park

Role of GW Elizabeth: Assessments, site clean up, fundraising, community outreach, planning, design, engineering, bid documents, construction, legal requirements, site lessee, maintenance

Partners: City of Elizabeth, Elizabeth Development Company, Neighborhood Empowerment Council of Elizabethport

Funding: New Jersey DEP, Green Acres and Department of Community Affairs, City of Elizabeth CDBG, Elizabeth Development Company, neighborhood residents and businesses



Elizabeth, NJ: Washington Park (1st year of GW involvement: 2004)

History: (.05 acre) The site was a former gas station in a residential neighborhood. Contamination was primarily petroleum and petroleum by products.

Reuse: Neighborhood pocket park

Role of GW Elizabeth: Project coordination, site clean-up with city, community involvement and outreach, planning, park design

Partners: City of Elizabeth, City Councilors office, neighborhood residents

Funding: Community Development Block Grant



Gary , IN: Community Gardens Program (1st year of GW involvement: 2007)

Program empowers residents to create green space and gardens on brownfields and abandoned city lots to beautify, reduce dumping and criminal activity and increase access to fresh food. Young people learn about environmental issues in their community, help build the gardens and learn about green collar jobs in the environmental sciences.

History: (.06 acres average) Multiple vacant lots are being evaluated for community gardens across the City. Some were former gas stations or housing. 2 lots were transformed in 2008

Reuse: Community Gardens and green space

Role of GW Gary: Technical Asst/ Resources, site clean up, predevelopment work including brownfield issues, remediation planning, site design, construction, technical services, assist with site preparation and planting and maintenance

Partners: City of Gary, GPCDC, IUN, Ivy Tech, Gary Fire Department, YLIA, Sigma Gamma Rho, MCC, MGC

Funding: Miller Community Foundation, EPA Illegal Dumping funds, GW Gary





COMPLETED Projects in 2008

Milwaukee, WI: Kinnickinnic River Sediment Removal (1st year of GW involvement: 2006)

History: Sediment contaminated with PCBs and PAHs has accumulated in the KK River basin reducing the historic depth from 40 feet to less than 10 feet, impacting area marinas. A demonstration project to remove and remediate contaminated sediment was completed using phytoremediation. PCB levels were reduced from 35 mg/kg to below hazardous levels. Soil and plant material were disposed of in accordance with environmental regulations.

Reuse: The river harbor will be used for a marina and the sediment will be disposed of. Trees will be tested and disposed of accordingly.

Role of GW Milwaukee: Project advocacy, fundraising, demonstration site management, sediment testing, HAZ MAT job training

Partners: EPA Great Lakes Program Office, City of Milwaukee, Pier Milwaukee, Kinnickinnic River BID, State of Wisconsin, Harbor Commission

Funding: Tax Incremental Financing, Great Lakes Legacy, Pier Milwaukee



Minneapolis, MN: Groundwork Minneapolis Assessment Program (GAP)

GAP assists nonprofit organizations with the assessment and cleanup of brownfield sites in partnership with Hennepin County Environmental Services:

Shasta Neighborhood Open Space Site (1st year of GW involvement: 2007)

History: Site adjacent to rail corridor. Possible arsenic and lead contamination.

Reuse: Neighborhood greenspace

Role of GW Minneapolis: Review application and approve participation in GAP, manage Phase I and II site assessment, contract for technical services, assist with site preparation and planting

Status: Assessment finds site is clean of contaminants, Site planting completed



Archdale Apartments (1st year of GW involvement: 2007)

History: Renovation of existing youth housing facility uncovers previously unknown underground storage tank. Petroleum contamination of soil suspected.

Reuse: Nonprofit youth housing program facility

Role of GW Minneapolis: Review application and approve participation in GAP, manage Phase II site assessment and soil testing, contract for technical services, facilitate tank removal, tank closure reports, and site enrollment in Petrofund

Status: Assessment and clean up completed, renovation work continued



Somerville, MA: Junction Park (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (.05 acre) The site is at the junction of 2 rail lines and was the site of a former rail station. It has been vacant for many years. One rail line is now a bike path and the other will be the new corridor for the extension of the Green Line light rail through Somerville. Contamination was primarily petroleum and petroleum by products.

Reuse: Neighborhood park

Role of GW Somerville: Project advocacy, community involvement and outreach, fiscal sponsor, program planning and implementation at the new park

Partners: City of Somerville, EPA, MA Department of Environment and Conservation, Shape Up Somerville, Friends of Community Bike Path

Funding: EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant, MA Urban Self Help Grant, City of Somerville, Shape Up Somerville, Friends of Community Bike Path





CONTINUING Projects in 2008

Bridgeport, CT: Neighborhood Environmental Demonstration Site (1st year of GW involvement: 2006)

History: (.23 acres) Vacant lot, formerly a house, is located next to an elementary school. Petroleum and lead are the suspected contaminants. Site attracted dumping and illicit activities.

Reuse: Neighborhood pocket park and outdoor classroom for school focused on mitigating urban pollution issues and phytoremediation

Role of GW Bridgeport: site cleanup, community outreach, site design, interpretive research and signage, construction, project management

Funding: EPA Region 1, Community Development Block Grant, GW Bridgeport

Status: Site work is completed. Interpretive signage is being developed.



Elizabeth, NJ: Elizabeth River Trail (1st year of GW Involvement: 2004)

History: (1 mile corridor) Formerly a highly industrialized river. It flows past parks, brownfields, remaining industrial areas, business and residential districts, historic sites and public facilities.

Reuse: Linear park and bike/pedestrian path

Role of GW Elizabeth: Community outreach, project advocate, stakeholder coordination, fundraising, project management, design and planning, construction

Partners: City of Elizabeth, Union County, State of New Jersey, Federal Highway Administration, Port Authority of NY and NJ, local partners

Funding: Federal Highway funds, Recreational Trails Trust Fund, NJ Green Acres Fund, City of Elizabeth, Port Authority, Union County

Status: Significant funding secured. Engineering work underway.



Lawrence, MA: Manchester Street Park (1st year of GW involvement: 2005)

History: (5+ acres) The Covanta site was most recently a municipal incinerator, which has been demolished. It is located on the Spicket River at Stevens Pond.

Reuse: A signature park on the Spicket River Greenway.

Role of GW Lawrence: Project catalyst, advocate and manager, site ownership negotiation, community involvement and outreach, fundraising, pre development work including brownfield issues, remediation planning, site design, construction

Partners: Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services PARC Program, City of Lawrence, Covanta Energy, Arlington and Tower Hill Neighborhoods

Funding: MA Urban River Visions Grant, MA PARC Grant, City of Lawrence, EPA Brownfields Clean-up Grant

Status: Design and construction documents drafted. Construction planned for '09



Manchester Street Park
LAWRENCE, MA September 24, 2008
TRAC TEC

Milwaukee, WI: Appleton Avenue (1st year of GW involvement: 2006)

History: (.03 acres) Former gas station and shoe repair shop, abandoned and tax delinquent, contaminated with petroleum and petroleum by products

Reuse: Pocket park and neighborhood gateway

Role of GW Milwaukee: Managed phytoremediation feasibility study, site maintenance, community involvement and education

Partners: City of Milwaukee, Sigma Environmental Services, URS Corporation, Milwaukee Community Service Corps, Marek Landscaping

Funding: EPA, WI Department of Natural Resources

Status: Site assessment completed, remedial action plan developed, application made for implementation funding





CONTINUING Projects in 2008

Yonkers, NY: Sawmill River (1st year of GW Involvement: 2003)

History: (1 mile corridor) The Sawmill River in downtown has been covered over, culverted and forgotten. It is now a brownfield site.

Reuse: Sections daylighted for a new linear park, trail, and economic development

Role of GW Yonkers: Project advocacy, community outreach, fundraising, conceptual planning, contamination assessment, water quality monitoring

Partners: City of Yonkers, Manhattan College, New York State DEC, EPA Office of Water, New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, Downtown Yonkers BID, Scenic Hudson, Struever-Fidelco-Capelli Developers

Funding: New York State, EPA, City of Yonkers, local developers

Status: Significant funding secured. Engineers hired to design daylight area. Work begun to open up river in 1/4 acre brownfield site prior to larger daylighting project.



NEW Projects in 2008

Denver, CO: Arkins Court (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (.5 acres) Formerly residential, the site is abandoned and in the middle of an old industrial areas with smoke stacks, train tracks and various industrial uses. Suspected contamination includes asbestos and lead.

Reuse: Pocket Park

Role of GW Denver: Through its EPA CARE grant, GWD helped partners access Targeted Brownfield Assessment Grants to assess site.

Partners: Trust for Public Land, EPA Region 8, City and County of Denver

Funding: EPA CARE grant; EPA Region 8 TBA grant

Status: TBA grant secured, EPA assigned contractor to complete Phase 1, work begun



Denver, CO: Oletski Valley (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (4.8 acres) The site is part of a larger Superfund site. Contamination included arsenic, lead and cadmium from the ASARCO smelting industry. Cleanup is 'complete' but residents question safety. Site now attracts dumping and illicit activities.

Reuse: Neighborhood envisions park, playground, nature area, farmers market and connection to larger trail system

Role of GW Denver: Community outreach and involvement, vision and conceptual planning, retesting soil to build trust with residents, site design, project coordination, fundraising and resource development

Partners: Public Service Company of Colorado, City of Denver, Denver Police, City Councilors office, Globeville Civic Association, local business, Laradon Hall School

Funding: City of Denver CDBG, GW Denver

Status: Neighborhood Vision completed, planning grant secured for site design



Denver, CO: Riverside Cemetary (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (77 acres) Site is historic cemetery falling into disrepair. It includes 13 acres of wetlands adjacent to South Platte River. Abutting impacts include a gas station, smokestacks, train tracks, various industrial uses and I-70. Property ownership is in transition and could be acquired for public use and to maintain historic cemetery.

Reuse: Historic cemetery with open space

Role of GW Denver: Through its CARE grant, GWD helped partners access Targeted Brownfield Assessment Grants to assess site for contamination from adjacent uses..

Partners: Trust for Public Land, EPA Region 8, City and County of Denver Brownfields Coordinator

Funding: EPA CARE grant; EPA Region 8 TBA grant

Status: TBA grant secured, EPA assigned contractor to complete Phase 1, work begun





NEW Projects in 2008

Lawrence, MA: Community Gardens (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (.12 acres average) Multiple vacant lots are being evaluated for community gardens across the City. Most had multi-family houses that either burned down or were demolished and debris was buried in the foundation. Potential contamination includes lead, petroleum, and if burned down, barium, cadmium and dioxin from vinyl siding.

Reuse: Community Gardens

Role of GW Lawrence: Project catalyst, public health advocate, site ownership negotiation, community involvement and outreach, fundraising, pre development work including brownfield issues, community site design, construction

Partners: City of Lawrence, other partners being engaged

Funding: GW Lawrence, other funding applied for



Milwaukee, WI: Lisbon Ave Memorial Walls (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (.15 acres) Former gas station, abandoned, now a vacant lot, contaminated with PAHs

Reuse: pocket park with memorial to victims of gun violence

Role of GW Milwaukee: Manage and install landscaping, volunteer involvement, manage service learning project for West Side Academy students

Partners: Lisbon Avenue Neighborhood Development (land owner), West Side Academy, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, Next Door Foundation, Lied's

Funding: Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Wisconsin Arts Board, Milwaukee Arts Board, LISC, in kind services and materials from local business

Status: Assessment completed, remediation begun,



Minneapolis, MN: Groundwork Minneapolis Assessment Program (GAP)

GAP assists nonprofit organizations with the assessment and cleanup of brownfield sites in partnership with Hennepin County Environmental Services:

8th & Washburn Site (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (2.1 acres) Site adjacent to rail corridor is used as passive green space by community. It was used as a dump site for urban fill from construction of the Target Center stadium in downtown. Contamination is suspected, but unknown

Reuse: Community Garden and neighborhood green space

Role of GW Minneapolis: Applied for GAP funds, manage Phase I and II site assessment, contract for technical services

Partners: Hennepin County Rail Authority, Washburn Ave Garden Society, Hennepin County Environmental Services

Status: Field work completed, assessment underway



Highpoint Center (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (.45 acres) Commercial building. Contamination is vapor intrusion from VOCs (PCE and traces of others) in the soil and PCE and chloroform in groundwater

Reuse: Nonprofit arts organization

Role of GW Minneapolis: Preparation of response action plan (RAP), and remediation of the contamination by retrofitting the building

Partners: Highpoint Center for Printmaking, Hennepin County Environmental Services

Status: Assessment completed, RAP prepared, remediation begun





NEW Projects in 2008

Portland, OR: Emerson Street Garden (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (.07 acre) This abandoned house lot has been vacant since the 1950s. It may have been used to store and fix cars. Sampling revealed lead concentrations up to 32,400 PPM, arsenic up to 10.2 PPM and hydrocarbons up to 273 PPM.

Reuse: Community garden and neighborhood environmental education about lead contamination in the urban environment, remediation and safe gardening.

Role of GW Portland: Community outreach, fundraising, partnership development, working with the landowner on clean-up and reuse plan and educating the community about lead contamination and remediation

Partners: Oregon Sustainable Agricultural Land Trust, Multnomah County DIGS Program, City of Portland Brownfields Program, Oregon DEQ, Oregon Tradeswoman, GeoEngineers, TestAmerica and OPAL

Funding: Multnomah County, City of Portland, Oregon Tradeswomen, GeoEngineers, TestAmerica, OPAL and PARR Lumber



Yonkers, NY: Orchard Street Lot (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (.25 acres) Formerly an apartment building, the abandoned lot is part of a Hope VI project area. It is near a major industrial site, the Yonkers Carpet Mills. GW Hudson Valley assumed ownership from a synagogue. Contamination was suspected.

Reuse: Pocket Park

Role of GW Hudson Valley: Land-owner, Phase I Environmental Assessment, neighborhood outreach, conceptual planning, maintenance, programming, and stewardship

Partners: Scarsdale Temple, AKRF Environmental and Planning Consultants, Father Carroll Green Senior Housing, City of Yonkers.

Funding: City of Yonkers, AKRF (pro bono Phase I)

Status: Phase I assessment completed, site cleaned up, reuse plan underdevelopment with community



Yonkers, NY: Willow Street Lot (1st year of GW involvement: 2008)

History: (.3 acres) Site is a former corner gas station that had been demolished. Tanks remain in the ground. Contamination is petroleum.

Reuse: Community Gardens

Role of GW Hudson Valley: Project director, Phase I Environmental Assessment, neighborhood outreach, conceptual planning, maintenance, programming, and stewardship.

Partners: Greyston Community Garden Program, Center for Urban Rehabilitation and Empowerment, Cottage Gardens Public Housing Development, Hudson River Community Association, City of Yonkers.

Funding: City of Yonkers, Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation, Westchester County Youth Bureau

Status: Site assessed, cleared of weeds and debris and mulched to stabilize soil and separate from raised beds. Raised bed boxes have been built by local youth to allow for temporary use while funding and plans are being developed to remove tanks and fully remediate site.

