



Planning for Assessments

General Questions

John B. Carnahan

Brownfield Coordinator

DEC Division of Spill Prevention and Response

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DEC's Reuse & Redevelopment Program

Overview

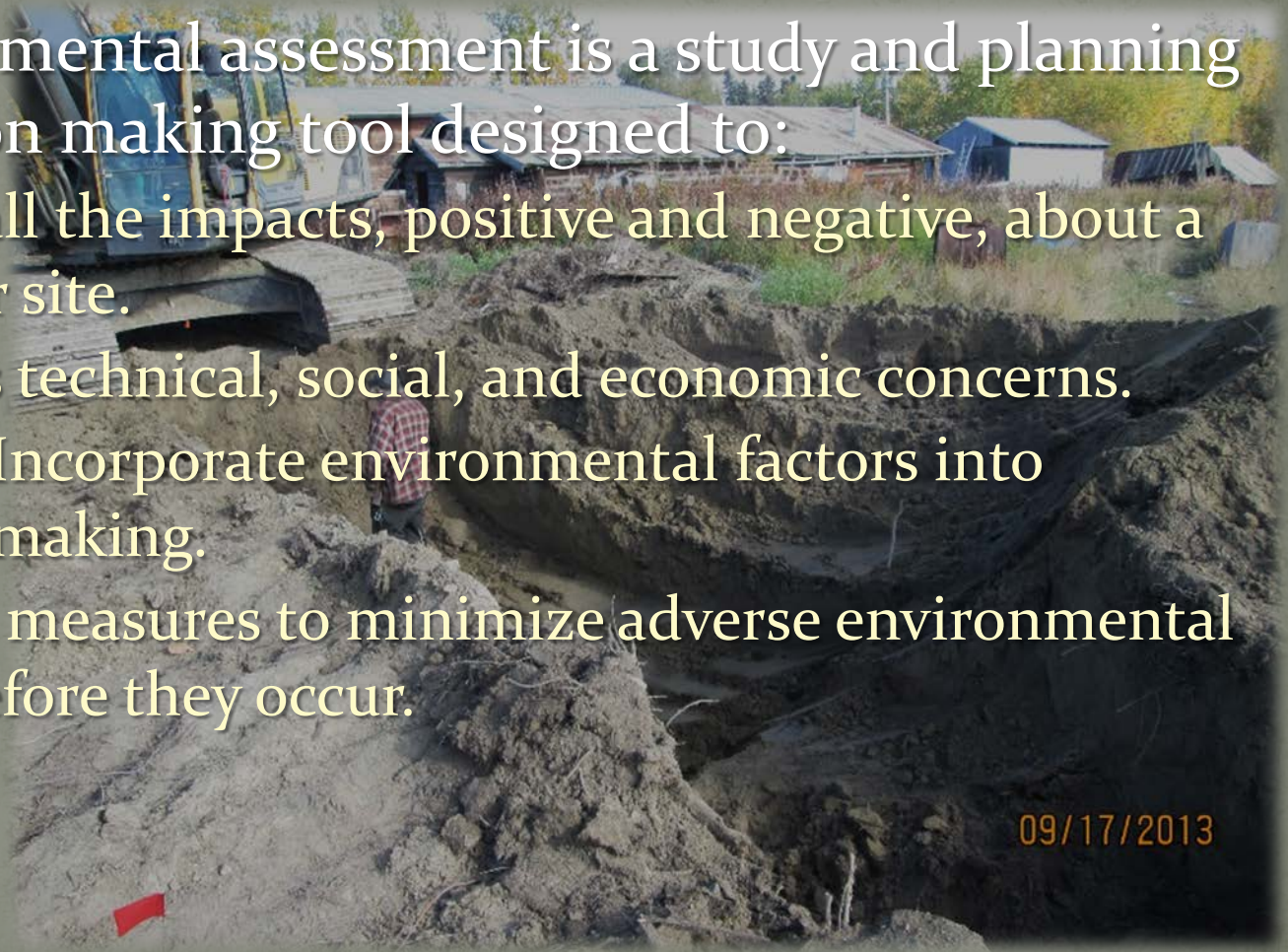
- What is an assessment?
- Why do we need an assessment?
- When do you need an assessment?
- What type of assessments are there?
- How do you select sites for an assessment?
- How should I select a consultant?
- When should you coordinate with the state?
- Where can I get assessment assistance?
- What should I expect from my assessment?

09/23/2013



What is an assessment?

- An environmental assessment is a study and planning and decision making tool designed to:
 - Identify all the impacts, positive and negative, about a project or site.
 - Evaluates technical, social, and economic concerns.
 - Helps to Incorporate environmental factors into decision making.
 - Proposes measures to minimize adverse environmental effects before they occur.



09/17/2013



Why do an assessment?

- Answer questions that you or others may have about a site.
- Provide answers, good and bad, about a property.
- Protection from future liability.
- Ensure workers, public, community members are safe.
- Regulations may require it.



When should you do an assessment?

- If there is a real or perceived environmental concern:
 - Historic uses of a site may have left contamination.
 - Construction materials may be unhealthy.
 - History of spills or chemical mismanagement.
 - Concerned about liability as part of a purchase.
 - Concern over the threat to workers at a site.
- Funding may require it.
- At the soonest opportunity in the planning stages of a project:
 - Helps ensure safety.
 - Help identify and predict problems.
 - Plan and manage unforeseen costs early.
- Check with Regulatory Agency to determine if an assessment is required.



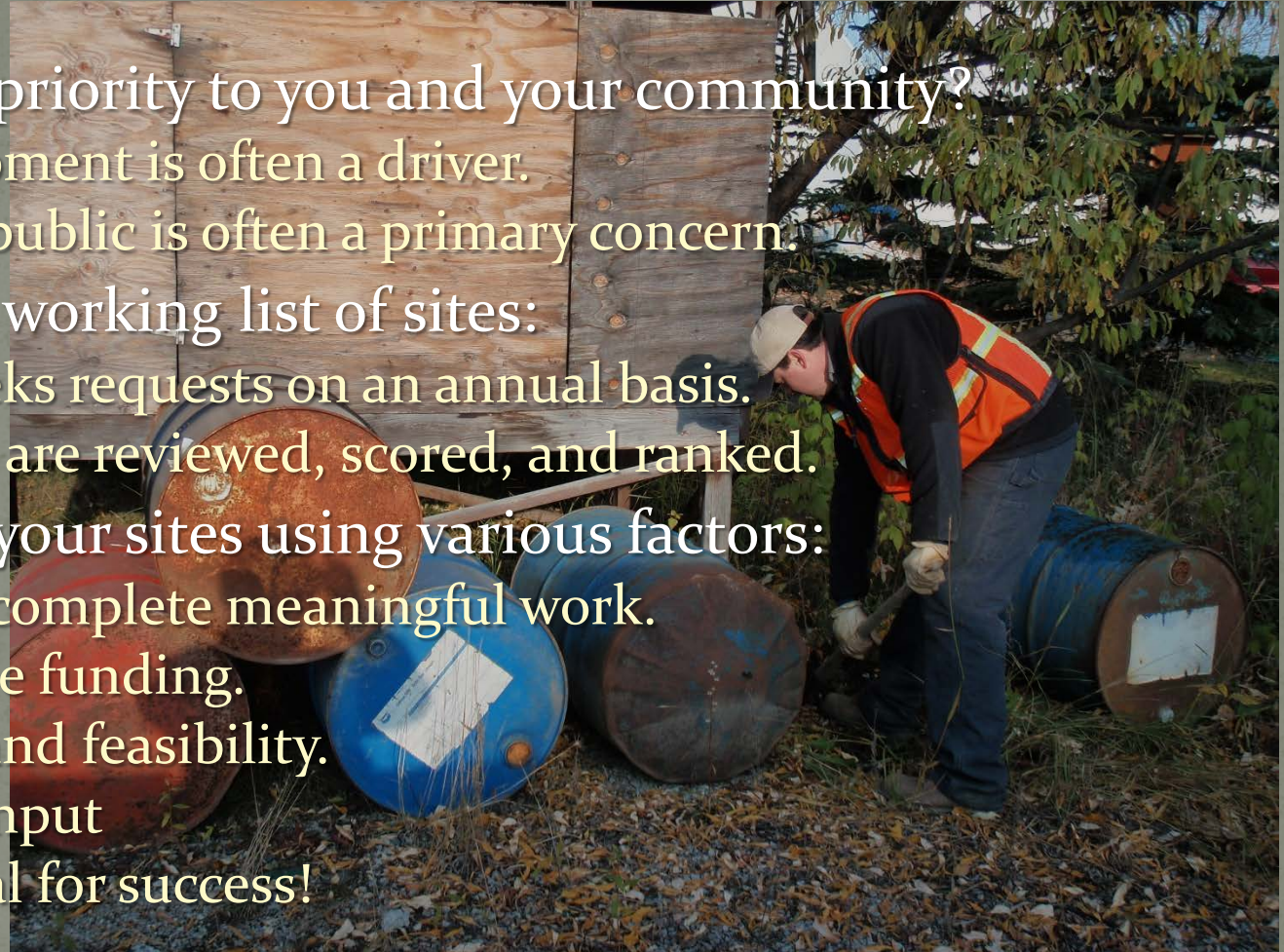
What type of assessments are there?

- Audits or desk top reviews
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA)
- Property Assessment & Cleanup Plan (PACP)
 - R&R-designed assessment to meet brownfield needs
- Phase II ESA
 - ASTM defined Phase II
 - A release investigation or site characterization
- Interim or clarifying assessment
- Triad Assessment
- Phase III or Cleanup



How do I select a site?

- What is a priority to you and your community?
 - Development is often a driver.
 - Risk to public is often a primary concern.
- Develop a working list of sites:
 - R&R seeks requests on an annual basis.
 - All sites are reviewed, scored, and ranked.
- Prioritize your sites using various factors:
 - Cost to complete meaningful work.
 - Available funding.
 - Access and feasibility.
 - Public input
 - Potential for success!



How do I select a consultant?

- First, put together a summary of what you know about your problem.
- Summarize a list of prospective consultants and talk to them.
- Inquire as to how much time they believe will be required.
- Review other work that they have completed
 - Any work submitted to DEC is available to public.



Questions to ask consultants:

- What projects have they managed similar to yours?
- Are they qualified to do the full scope of work, or do they need to team?
- What subcontractors will they use for each phase of work (i.e., excavation, monitoring, laboratory, etc.)
- Who will manage the work and communicate with me?
- What is their experience working with DEC or other regulating agencies?
- How will your work impact neighbors, customers, or traffic?

Check References!



Consultants should:

- Provide strong references:
 - Reputation may be a good measure of their capacity.
 - Strong qualifications are a must – there may be regulatory requirements.
 - Ensure that they are *insured!*
- Provide clear and understandable cost estimate.
 - Costs may be detailed or lump sum for small jobs.
 - Always get more than one estimate.
 - Be certain it is clear what will be provided as a product.
 - Costs may vary by more than 100%!

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When should you coordinate with DEC?

- At the planning stage
 - If the site is already a known contaminated site.
 - Anytime you want an unbiased perspective.
 - When you are concerned that the project may develop into further assessment or cleanup.
 - When the information you are producing may be needed for regulatory decisions.
 - If there is potential that you may seek agreement with the findings from DEC.
- Upon completion:
 - If you find new contamination at a site.
 - If you would like a regulatory perspective on your findings.



Where can I get assessment assistance?

- DEC

- R&R provides assistance to all TRPs upon request.
 - DBACs are our primary means.
 - Project Managers provide assistance on their projects.

- EPA

- Project Officers are available to discuss project concerns.
- Targeted Brownfield Assessments (TBA).
- Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB).
 - Organizations that provide technical assistance to communities and stakeholders.
 - Center for Creative Land Recycling.

Online resources...



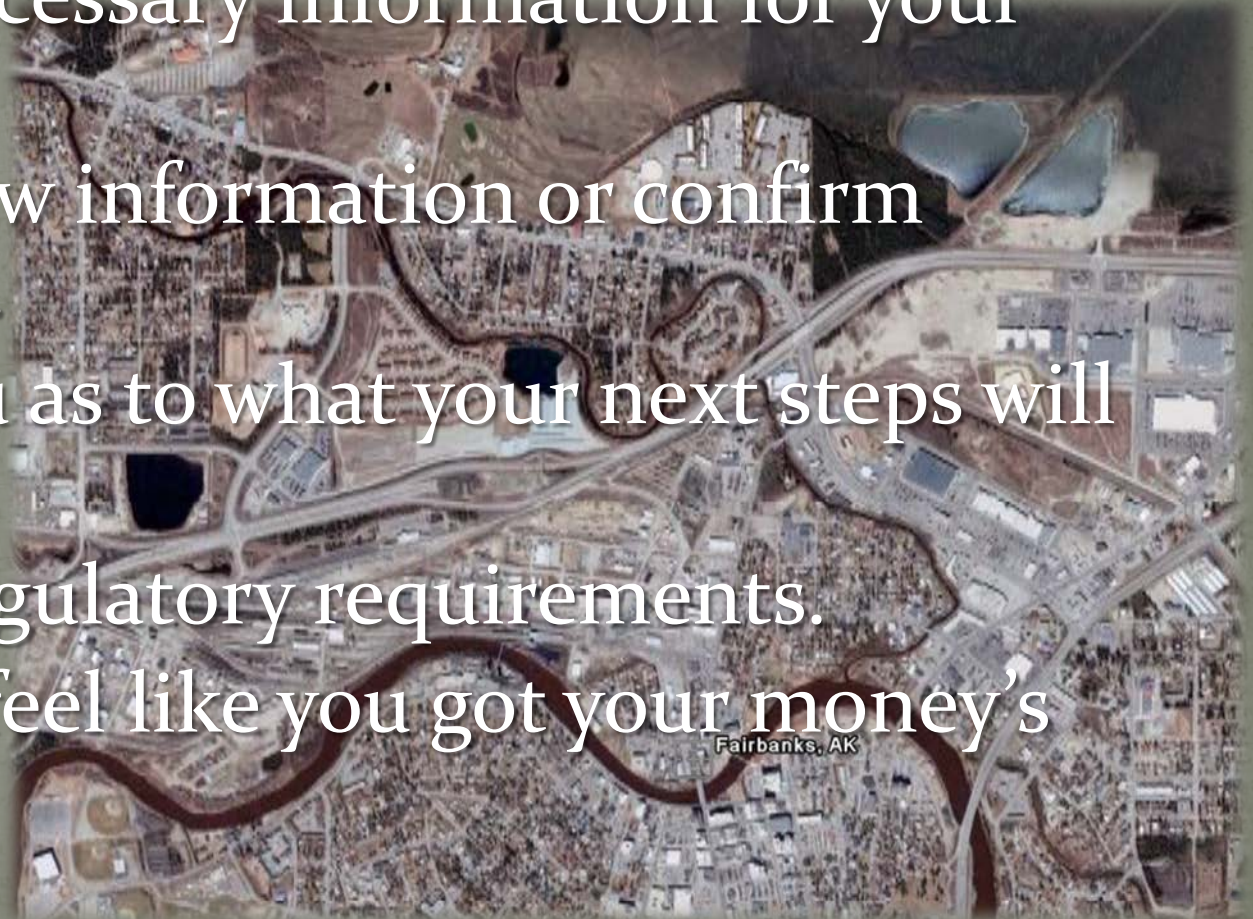
What should I expect from an assessment?

- Executive summary up front.
- A description of all the work completed and notes.
- Clear description of any deviations.
- Laboratory data quality that is useable.
 - DEC has laboratory data checklists that must be completed.
- Pictures to document the work.
- Ensure all deliverables are received.
- Ensure all questions are answered.
- Conclusions and recommendations (when desired).



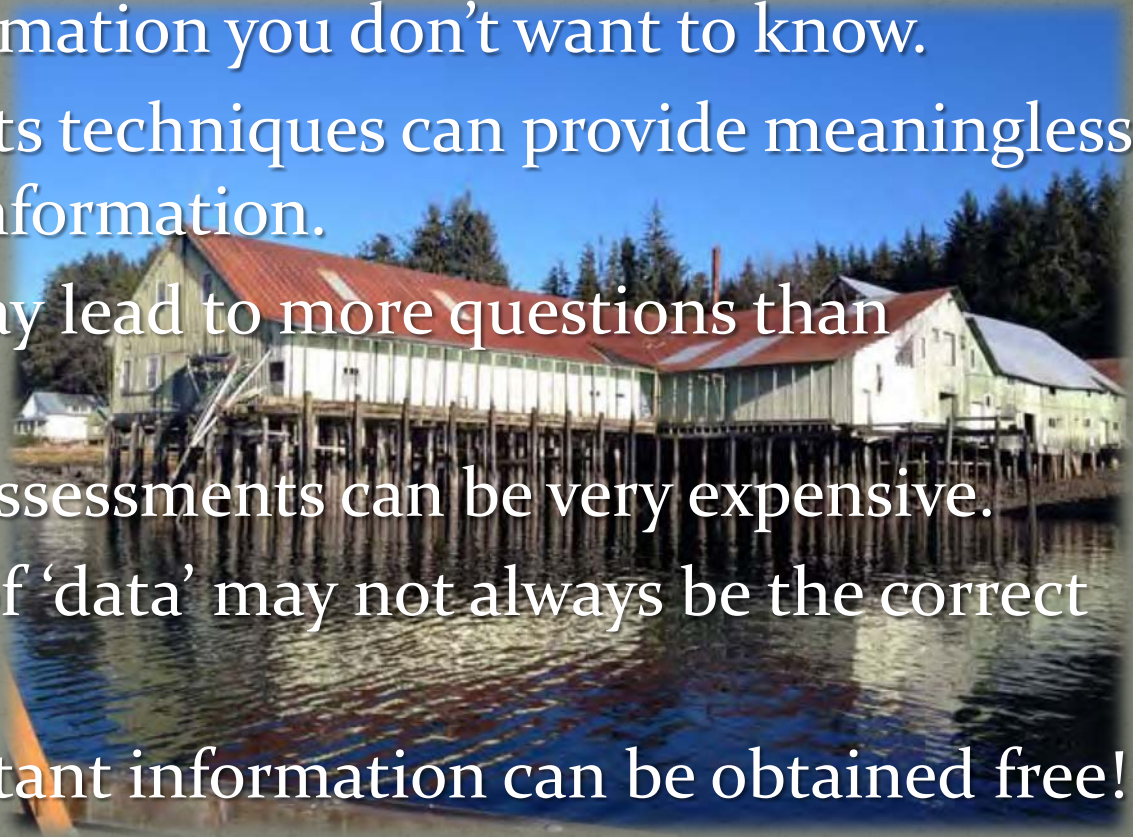
An assessment should:

- Provide necessary information for your project.
- Provide new information or confirm suspicions.
- Inform you as to what your next steps will be.
- Meet all regulatory requirements.
- Make you feel like you got your money's worth!



Comments about assessments:

- Not every site needs an assessment.
- Don't seek information you don't want to know.
- Poor assessments techniques can provide meaningless or misleading information.
- Assessments may lead to more questions than answers.
- Good and bad assessments can be very expensive.
- The collection of 'data' may not always be the correct focus.



Plenty of important information can be obtained free!





Other questions?

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Important things you can do

- Create a site file and put everything in it!
- Database inquiries
 - Collect DEC database information, if available.
- Interviews about the site
 - Nobody will be in a better position to do this
- The physical setting of a site
 - Include historical uses of the property and surrounding properties
- Photographs
 - Collect current, aerial, and historical photographs
- Any legal documentation
 - There may be some historical files associated with an old building, school or site in your community!



More important things you can document

- Address and land record information
 - Zoning? Land ownership issues? Can be complex...
- Environmental information
 - Potential issues that are suspect
 - Previous assessments – get copies of reports (talk to DEC)
 - Anything associated with the site history
- Develop a site inventory checklist
 - Some TRPs may have already developed one
- We can help with this!

