



Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

Reuse & Redevelopment Initiative

Brownfield Bulletin

Revitalizing Communities through the Recycling of Contaminated Properties

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2007

Welcome

John B. Carnahan
Brownfield Coordinator

Welcome to the Summer edition of the DEC Brownfield Bulletin. We appreciate your taking the time to read about [DEC's Reuse and Redevelopment Initiative](#), which focuses on revitalizing brownfields across Alaska. It has been a busy field season this summer with the completion of ten projects in June, and the beginning of another twelve this month.

Sonja L. Benson
Brownfield Program
Specialist

Brownfield reuse and redevelopment does not have to mean big construction projects. Local priorities as well as traditional values may be more compatible with restoration of wildlife habitat, greenspace preservation, areas for subsistence harvesting of wild foods, or establishment of clean parklands and playgrounds.

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Please call us with your questions, concerns, ideas, and brownfield sites when you come across them. We are here to work with you.

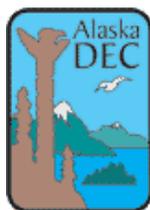
"You don't have to build a shopping mall in Noorvik [to get brownfield assistance]."--Joy Shockley at the Alaska Forum on the Environment in Anchorage, February 14, 2007.

[DEC Brownfield
Webpage](#)
[Contaminated Sites
Webpage](#)

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Other sites of Interest



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Let Your Cultural Values Guide Your Brownfield Reuse Goals

Historically, brownfields programs have focused on contaminated, idle, industrial properties; this focus, over time, has shaped a widespread perception that brownfields only exist in heavily populated, industrialized cities. Add to that the fact that many high-profile brownfield successes have spotlighted reuses involving large construction projects, such as new housing complexes, retail shopping centers, and big box stores, and it may seem that the concept of brownfields just doesn't "fit" in rural Alaska. However, brownfields do exist in rural areas and the reuses of brownfield sites can take many other forms.



In Alaska, Tribes maintain lifestyles and cultural values that closely connect them to the land and resources. For this reason, open spaces for subsistence and recreational uses take on an elevated importance that can easily compete with other land uses such as mining, timber harvesting, or tourism. A brownfield site in rural Alaska can pose health and safety hazards as well as occupy valuable space that otherwise could be used for wildlife habitat, berry picking, subsistence hunting, fish and game processing, playgrounds, parks, or community gardens.

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[version of our newsletter in PDF \(234 K\) format click here.](#)

Previous Issues of DEC's Brownfield Bulletin

- [Winter 2007](#)
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When you think about the possibilities for reusing a brownfield site in your community, let your cultural values guide your reuse goals. There is no limit to the types of projects that can be realized through a cooperative community effort, creativity, and brownfield assistance.

[Sonja Benson](#)
Brownfield Program Specialist

[Charlene Stern](#), Brownfield Program Manager
Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council

Delta Junction Seeks to Place "End of the Highway Arch" on Brownfield

For many years, the City of Delta Junction has sought to increase its tourism base by marketing its unique location at the end of the Alaska Highway. Many of us who have traveled the Alaska Highway are familiar with the beginning of the road in Dawson Creek, British Columbia, and have stopped there to take pictures of our family and friends. But it really isn't anything to just start the journey – finishing it is the real chore!

In Delta Junction, one piece of property, known to locals as the "triangle," is the perfect site to greet those making it to the end of the road. Residing at what would be the final mile marker of this 1,422-mile trip, this is the ideal spot to receive incoming tourists and residents alike. Unfortunately, Delta Junction has not had full use of this site, which is owned by the State of Alaska, because of pre-existing contamination that prevents the State from transferring it to the City. Thus, the triangle became Delta Junction's most important and long-standing brownfield site.

The triangle site was formerly an army fuel storage and dispensing depot known as the Fort Greely North Tank Farm, which operated between 1954 and 1987. In 1999, at the request of the State, the U.S. Army initiated a cleanup project that included the excavation and removal of more than 5,000 cubic yards of contaminated material. Unfortunately, budget constraints and competing financial priorities forced the military to cease its cleanup operations, leaving a few lingering problems that precluded the State's conveying ownership to the City of Delta Junction. With most of the contaminated material removed, the risk to human health was reduced to the point that obtaining more cleanup funding was difficult. The languishing triangle site became a brownfield because the remaining contamination prevented the community from developing the site to its full economic potential.

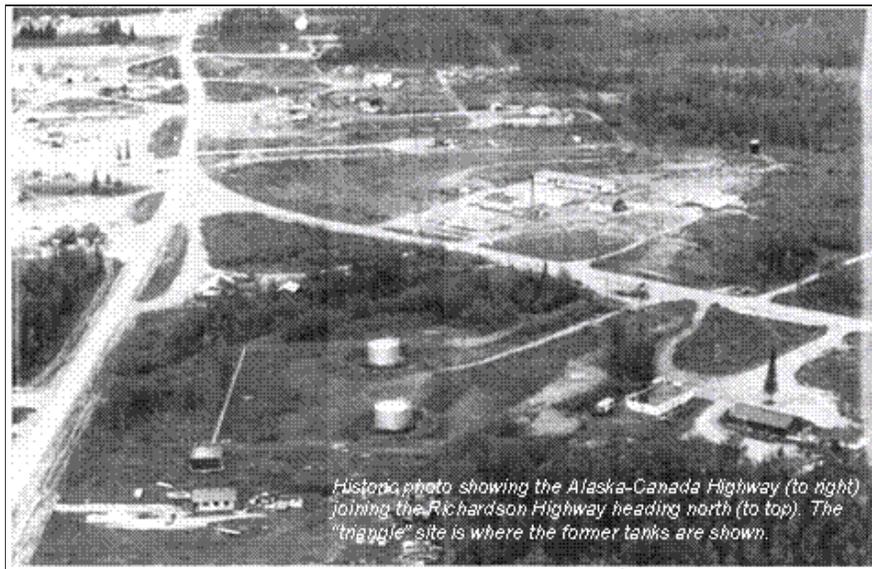


The City of Delta Junction has strived to increase tourism where the Alaska-Canada Highway (or ALCAN) ends at its juncture with the Richardson Highway. Over the years the City has built the Delta Junction Visitor Center just to the west of the triangle, and later relocated the Sullivan Roadhouse and converted it to a museum, to the south. Part of the triangle is the home of the Delta Farmer's Market during the summer, but it remains largely unused. For most tourists, the triangle goes unnoticed as traffic merges onto the Richardson, heading either north or south.

But Delta Junction has a vision. Today, the City has fully engineered plans for the construction of the "End of the Alaska Highway Arch," which is designed to extend over the Alaska Highway with one leg on the triangle and the other across the road. Community leaders believe the triangle is a significant historic site and potentially a major tourist attraction. Plans for future tourism facilities and operations are pending transfer of the land.

Upon receiving a request from the City of Delta Junction for a DEC Brownfield Assessment (DBA), DEC selected the project for a DBA, in which our efforts were focused on delineating the remaining contamination and determining whether it poses a significant threat to future development. The intent was to guide the State in making a reasoned and informed decision as to whether the site could be

safely developed by the City—it was not intended to fully remediate the site because that would be too costly. The first phase of the DBA targeted known problems, with the collection of samples from areas where little information existed. The investigation confirmed residual contamination that would likely impede future property use and normal construction activities. A new proposal was developed, and through close coordination with the military, contaminated material was removed for treatment at Fort Greely.



Although the final assessment is not yet completed and the data from confirmation samples are not all in, we expect that the results of this brownfield project will significantly move the property transfer forward, ultimately allowing the End of the Alaska Highway

Arch to become a reality. We hope that our next story on this site describes the first passing of visitors beneath the arch that will mark the end of a highway that is a world-famous engineering marvel.

[John Carnahan](#)
DEC Brownfield Coordinator

DEC Receives Eighteen Brownfield Assessment Requests in 2007

The DEC Brownfield Assessment (DBA) program has continued to increase in size and scope and receives more requests for assessment services with each passing year. 2007 marks the third season that DEC has been able to offer the DBA program to communities across the state. This service is provided through the Contaminated Sites Program's Reuse and Redevelopment Initiative, and the intent of DBAs is to help reduce the environmental uncertainties at brownfield sites so that they can more easily be put back into productive use. All work is done by DEC and its contractors. The objectives of a DBA are to help sort out the real problems from the perceived problems, determine the extent of a problem, and identify cleanup options if required.

This year DEC received eighteen DBA requests, and we are hoping to provide some level of assessment at more than half of these. Assessment services vary from audits and management plans, to Phase I environmental site assessments, to in-depth site characterizations. The types of projects include:

- Canneries – DEC plans to continue site characterization efforts at one cannery site for which the community has restoration and community-revitalization plans. Two abandoned cannery properties were investigated under last year's grant.
- Abandoned and eroding dumpsites – DEC received four requests to assess dumpsites. Two abandoned, eroding dumps are currently under evaluation for a DBA audit or assessment.
- Abandoned rural school sites – three requests to assess former school sites for which the community has reuse interests were received. It was important for the applicants to present a vision as to how they intend to revitalize those sites. DEC investigated one former school site under last year's program; this project will continue this year.
- Former aboveground fuel-storage tank farms – these sites continue to top the list of brownfield sites in rural communities. As more rural tank farms are consolidated, many more abandoned tank farm properties become available. Identifying a reuse scenario for the tank farm in question is an important element of a successful DBA request.



Eroding dump at Alakanuk, on the south bank of the Yukon River. Photo courtesy Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council.

DEC also received a request for assistance at an historic village site that was abandoned after a devastating flood. Other DBA requests involved an old village store, a vehicle maintenance shop, a dry cleaning operation, a composting facility, and an abandoned apartment complex.

DBAs may be requested by public, quasi-public, Tribal, and non-profit entities interested in reusing or redeveloping abandoned or underused properties. The applicant doesn't need to own the site but must be able to ensure access for DEC to conduct the work. Any brownfield site is eligible for a DBA, although DEC places a preference on property that is publicly owned and with community-supported reuse or redevelopment plans in place. State-owned brownfields are also eligible, and we have found communities can be strongly interested in reusing properties currently in state ownership. The environmental concerns often are what keep the property from changing ownership. We highly recommend that you bring these sites to our attention. Although the DBA request period has come and gone for this field season, it is never too soon to think about a potential brownfield project that could greatly benefit your community.

Although the next application period for the DBA program will be spring 2008, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has an open application process similar to DEC's DBA program, known as the "Targeted Brownfield Assessment" program. If you have ideas, let us know and we can help you put together a request to EPA now and to DEC next spring. Don't wait – the time to plan is now!

[John Carnahan](#)
DEC Brownfield Coordinator

[Sonja Benson](#)
Brownfield Program Specialist

The DEC Brownfield Assessment (DBA) program is an important component of the Contaminated Sites Program's Reuse and Redevelopment Initiative. The DBA program allows communities to request an environmental assessment when reuse of a property is hindered by potential or real contamination. The DBA is a free service offered to eligible applicants seeking this important information. The intent of a DBA is to help reduce environmental uncertainties associated with the reuse or redevelopment of brownfield properties. DEC seeks requests for this service annually, in the spring before the summer field season. The program is contingent on our annual funding awards. Look to this newsletter, our list-serve, or our website for more information as the next DBA request period approaches. Please call us if you have a particular site you'd like to discuss, and start planning your request now!

Sanduri "Brown to Green" Press Event

On July 11, 2007, DEC, EPA, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) held a "Brown to Green" mid-project celebration to mark the progress made by all three entities in working together to clean up and reclaim the site of a former recycling center. When finished, the site will become a viable light-industrial property that will create jobs and increase local tax revenue. Most importantly, it will also decrease the health risks associated with the existing contamination. Speakers at the event included FNSB Mayor Jim Whitaker, EPA-Alaska Director Marcia Combes, and DEC's Contaminated Sites Program Manager Steve Bainbridge. Attendees included representatives from the offices of Senator Ted Stevens, Senator Lisa Murkowski, Governor Sarah Palin, and North Pole Representative John Coghill, as well as the news media.

The work was initiated through a DEC Brownfield Assessment in 2004, which detailed information necessary for a competitive grant application to EPA for continuation funding of this costly brownfield project. Assessment and cleanup operations have been ongoing, but the large-scale removal of debris from the site is scheduled for fall 2007. The reclamation of the Sanduri site is a great example of different organizations working cooperatively to achieve a common goal. We look forward to an additional celebration when the project is complete!

For more information on the Sanduri cleanup project, see our [fact sheet here](#).

[John Carnahan](#)
DEC Brownfield Coordinator

Save the Date: Western Regional Brownfields Workshop, Portland in October

The next Western Brownfields Workshop will be held in Portland, Oregon, October 3–5, 2007. Now is the time to register and make your reservations for this event, which focuses on brownfield grant recipients from EPA Regions 8, 9, and 10. This is a great opportunity to network and learn how to get, manage, and report on your brownfield assessment, cleanup, or Tribal Response Program grant. The following links will take you to: [the event flyer](#), [registration form](#), [draft agenda](#), or the [case study application form](#).

****Calendar of Events—Important Dates****

- **Western Brownfields Workshop** in Portland, Oregon, is October 3–5, 2007 (see above).
- **EPA Conference Call Workshops** are designed to assist you with submitting your application for an EPA competitive grant: *Wednesday, September 5, 8:00 – 9:30 am* (ADT); *Tuesday Sept. 11, 1:00 – 2:30 pm* (ADT). Toll free call-in number is: (866) 299-3188 and conference code no. is 360-753-8185.
- **[The Brownfields 2008 National Conference](#)** will be held in Detroit, May 5–7, at the Cobo Convention Center.

****Important Brownfield News Flash****

- **[The 2008 EPA Competitive Grant Application](#) deadline is October 12, 2007**, for brownfield assessment, cleanup and revolving loan fund grants. The proposal guidelines are posted at: www.epa.gov/swerrims/docs/grants/epa-oswer-obcr-07-09.pdf.

Not on DEC's *Reuse and Redevelopment* electronic mailing list?

Please click [here](#) to sign up for our e-mailing list and ensure you get the latest information on DEC's Reuse and Redevelopment Initiative! Or visit our web page to sign up: www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/csp/brownfields.htm.

Enter your email address and check *immediate delivery* and submit. An email will be sent to your email address and you simply need to hit reply—that's it! Please forward any information you receive from our list-serve to anyone you think would be interested, and please send us any announcements that may be pertinent, and we will forward them to the brownfield community that has developed

across Alaska. Thanks!

[John Carnahan](#)
DEC Brownfield Coordinator

[Sonja Benson](#)
Brownfield Program Specialist

This *DEC Brownfield Bulletin* is meant as a simple means to disseminate news across the state to those interested in brownfield developments. Please feel free to forward this to anyone you believe would be interested. If you have issues or stories that you would like to submit, please send them to us and we will incorporate them on your behalf. If you would like to have your name removed from this distribution, simply email us and it will be done!