



Frequently Asked Questions

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Spill Prevention and Response
Contaminated Sites Program

What is a Brownfield?

Brownfields are abandoned, unused, or underused properties that are hindered from desired reuse or redevelopment by real or perceived environmental contamination. A brownfield can be anything from a 200-acre industrial property, to an old lumber mill, or a small abandoned corner gas station.

How can the Cleanup and Reuse of Brownfields Benefit My Community?

Communities can realize many environmental, social, and economic benefits through brownfield reuse and redevelopment, including:

- preserving open space that would otherwise be developed;
- reusing valuable, existing infrastructure;
- reducing vehicular miles traveled and associated air emissions;
- revitalizing stressed and depressed neighborhoods;
- increasing economic growth, employment opportunities, property values, and tax revenue; and
- improving local safety and public health.

It is important to remember that brownfields are not only an urban problem, and reuse doesn't have to mean new construction projects. Brownfields exist in rural Alaska as well, and often take up valuable space within a community and are harmful to subsistence resources and other traditional pursuits. Thus, recycling brownfields may have benefits to a community that are unique to it and important to its identity, but not easily quantifiable.

What Brownfield Concerns are Unique to Alaska?

Alaska's urban areas have many of the same brownfield concerns as large urban centers in the rest of the country, such as, former industrial sites, petroleum and chemical storage areas, abandoned commercial businesses, old gas stations, railroad yards, and many others. However, Alaskan rural communities have brownfields that are unique to their remote locations. Very often, these brownfields may directly affect a subsistence resource or recreational area. Some of these sites include:

- old canneries and fish processing facilities;
- old fuel-storage tank farms;
- abandoned, inactive dump sites;



Delta Junction Trespass Shooting Range (2009)



Design for Delta Junction Riverwalk Park

The City of Delta Junction, in partnership with the Delta Junction Trails Association, requested DEC conduct a cleanup of metals-contaminated soil from a former unauthorized shooting range. DEC excavated the contaminated soil, treated on-site, and arranged for its off-site disposal. In addition, the property was previously characterized under an EPA targeted brownfields assessment (TBA). The site is now available for reuse as a trail system on the site and neighboring parcels recreational trail system to be used for walking and cross-country skiing.

- logging camps;
- old shooting ranges; and
- former municipal and commercial buildings.

How can the DEC Brownfields Program Help get Sites Cleaned Up and Reused?

The DEC Brownfields Program strongly supports and promotes the assessment, cleanup, and reuse of brownfields, working with local governments, tribes, and community stakeholders by providing information, funding, technical assistance, and other resources to facilitate brownfield redevelopment. In particular, DEC:

- provides technical assistance and services through DEC Brownfields Assessment and Cleanups (DBAC) Program;
- provides regulatory guidance;
- provides assistance in applying and implementing for additional grants;
- provides community outreach and training; and
- manages state database of contaminated sites.

What Types of Brownfields Funding or Services are Available to Alaskans?

Any Alaskan can contact the DEC Brownfields Program to learn more about the program and what resources may be available to help assess whether contamination is present at the site and, if so, how to address the contamination so the property can be safely and productively reused.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Program can provide direct funding or services for brownfields assessment, cleanup, revolving loans, environmental job training, technical assistance, training, and research. EPA's Brownfields Program provides support through competitive grants for assessments and cleanup, as well as through non-competitive means through its Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) Program, as well as its team of Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) providers.

Through DEC Brownfields and Assessment and Cleanup (DBAC) services, the DEC Brownfields Program can help reduce the environmental uncertainties or conditions that hinder the reuse and/or redevelopment of an eligible property. DBAC services can include providing soil and groundwater assessments, hazardous building materials (HBM) surveys, asbestos abatement and disposal, cleanup services, among others. Generally, the application period for [DBAC services](#) runs from November through February.

In addition to providing DBAC services, the DEC Brownfields Program will also provide direct, informal technical assistance to anyone, such as providing community outreach and training, researching site history and cleanup status, and facilitating collaboration with other state and federal agencies in an effort to leverage other additional resources.

Who can I contact for more information?

We invite you to contact us with any questions or concerns about brownfields. [Lisa Griswold](#) (907-269-2021) and [Marc Thomas](#) (907-465-5206) are available to help answer your questions about contaminated sites and potential brownfields, workshops and training, and funding opportunities. Please consider us your first stop for information.