



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Coos Bay, OR

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Coos Bay for a Brownfields Pilot. Coos Bay (population 15,635) is the economic center for Coos County (population 61,400). The city is approximately 10 square miles, and is defined as a working-class community. The per capita income is \$11,200, with a median household income of \$21,600. Approximately 17 percent of citizens live below the poverty line and there is an unemployment rate of 10 percent. Traditionally, timber, fishing, and mining have been the main industries sustaining the economy and community. However, those industries have declined in recent years and the city's reliance on them has increased unemployment and created a population flight; Coos Bay is the only region in Oregon to have a population decrease for two straight years (1996-1997). Coos Bay has been designated an economically distressed community by the Oregon Economic Development Department.

The Pilot targets a 10-square-block waterfront area called Front Street. When the city was founded in 1853, this area was a main meeting place and thoroughfare. The Front Street area now contains more than 35 privately owned parcels and is considered the keystone to brownfields cleanup and

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Coos Bay, Oregon

Date of Announcement:
June 1999

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets 35 parcels between the Coos Bay Estuary and Front Street.

Contacts:

City of Coos Bay
Department of
Community Services
(541) 269-8918

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 10
(206) 553-6523

Visit the EPA Region 10 Brownfields web site at:
<http://epainotes1.rtpnc.epa.gov:7777/r10/cleanup.nsf/webpage/Brownfields>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

redevelopment in Coos Bay. Many of the properties between Front Street and the Coos Bay Estuary are underused, blighted, and vacant. Suspected contamination includes waste from heavy industrial uses such as machine shops, iron works, ship maintenance, and forest product industries. The city suspects that at least half of the sites in the project area are contaminated, but the unknown levels of contamination are preventing redevelopment.

OBJECTIVES

The city's objective is to diversify its reliance on the dwindling timber, fishing, and mining industries to sustain its economy. Coos Bay recognizes the need to diversify its economy, and the redevelopment of the Front Street area is a critical first step. A master plan for the Front Street area is currently in development with the local government and community. The city wants to shift the resource-dependent economy to a tourism-based one. Potential future uses for the waterfront site include a boardwalk along the estuary shore and a maritime museum celebrating the history of the area. The Pilot will assist the city's goals by assessing and characterizing the contamination of the 35 properties in the project area to resolve the uncertainty regarding liability and cleanup costs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Performing Phase I assessments at 35 properties in the project area;
- Identifying and performing Phase II assessments at six to eight properties in the project area; and
- Conducting a Brownfields Town Hall meeting and two follow-up forums with the community.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.