

# **Brownfields Supplemental Assistance**

## *Milwaukee, WI*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

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 awarded the City of Milwaukee supplemental assistance for its Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot. Milwaukee (population 628,000) will continue to focus its brownfields efforts on the Menomonee River Valley (population approximately 68,000). This 1,500-acre industrial area lies in the heart of the city and includes 300 to 400 acres of abandoned or underused properties. For years the area was home to many industrial facilities, including foundries, power plants, coke and coal gasification plants, tanneries, cement plants, and chemical companies. Today, about 7,000 people work in the valley, from a high in the 1930s of more than 50,000 workers. The residents surrounding the valley are 48 percent minority and suffer from a 13 percent unemployment rate, a 39 percent poverty rate, and a median household income that is half the state average.

The key to cleanup and redevelopment of Menomonee Valley is establishing innovative methods of dealing with groundwater contamination. Extensive marshes used to occupy the valley, and steep bluffs, some 40 feet higher than the modern land surface, bordered the marshes. From 1835 to 1890, the bluffs were cut and graded, and the material from the bluffs, along

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

**Date of Announcement:**  
March 2000

**Amount:** \$150,000

**Profile:** The Pilot targets the Menomonee River Valley, a 1,500-acre industrial area in the heart of Milwaukee.

#### Contacts:

City of Milwaukee  
Department of City  
Development  
(414) 286-5851

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 5  
(312) 886-1960

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields Web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

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/>

with household and industrial wastes, were used to fill in the marshy areas. Prospective investors, lenders, and developers are wary of the valley's soil and groundwater quality due to the area's land use history and the unknown quality of fill used to reclaim it from a marsh. Through the initial Pilot progress has been made to determine the nature and extent of groundwater contamination; however, some work remains to be done.

## **OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

The objectives of Milwaukee's brownfields redevelopment program are to remove environmental barriers related to the wetland nature of Menomonee Valley and redevelop one to two properties as test cases, while creating jobs for nearby residents. The city hopes its area-wide approach to groundwater investigation and cleanup will encourage the redevelopment of valley brownfields. The supplemental assistance will be used to complete the area-wide groundwater assessment and characterization, to help develop area-wide negotiated agreements with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and to facilitate cleanup and redevelopment in the valley.

To accomplish these objectives, the Pilot plans to:

- Conduct additional groundwater flow monitoring to better determine the potential flow of contaminants and receptors for potential exposure;
- Continue working with Wisconsin DNR to develop or adapt tools that address the area-wide groundwater challenges; and
- Develop a chemical sampling plan, obtain permission from property owners for testing, and conduct chemical sampling.

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