Kettle Lakes Cooperative/Feed Mill

219 Appleton Street
Plymouth, WI 53703
Sheboygan County

1 Acre

Location: A mostly-residential neighborhood in downtown Plymouth

Plymouth-area farmers had been coming to this local feed mill for decades, but as times changed, DNR assistance helped the city give this polluted downtown property a clean new beginning.

History
Since 1914, generations of farmers had geared-up and gassed-up at the downtown Plymouth feed mill. The agricultural cooperative sold most everything a farmer needed -- feed, grains, supplies, diesel and gas, as well as fertilizers and pesticides.

However, the chemicals that made Sheboygan County farms grow and prosper posed risks to the land on which they were being stored. Four underground and five above-ground petroleum storage tanks were housed on the property by the time leaks were discovered in 1991.

Kettle Lakes Cooperative operated the feed mill until it closed. Over time, it became a neighborhood blight. Lack of security meant trespassers could be exposed to safety and health hazards at the property. In addition, soil contamination was so high it impacted area groundwater above state standards, adding another health and environmental threat to the community.

Plymouth officials took ownership of the property in 2005 with an eye for including it in the city's downtown revitalization project, with help from the DNR’s Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program and the Department of Commerce.
Investigation and Cleanup
Contamination at the feed mill was first discovered and reported to the DNR in 1991. Petroleum products leaked from storage tanks and spills occurred during the loading and unloading of fuel. In some spots, the spilled material was still present in the soil.

A "Green Team" consisting of DNR and Commerce staff met with city officials, consultants, private developers and the property owner to discuss the problems and decide on the best ways to revitalize the site.

All above- and underground storage tanks were removed from the property. Two major excavations then removed much of the site's contaminated soil.

Redevelopment
Once the property was cleared for new development, the city rezoned the land for residential use and sold it to a private developer.

Today, the former feed mill site is a place several families call home. Several multi-family housing units have been constructed to provide affordable downtown housing and increased tax revenue. Asphalt driveways and parking lots act as barriers to protect against exposure to any residually contaminated soil.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance
In addition to RR Program staff serving as project managers for the property, cleanup of the former Kettle Lakes Cooperative Feed Mill came at a cost of nearly $850,000. Of that money, $748,000 was provided by Commerce via a Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Fund Award (PECFA), and $100,000 stemmed from a Commerce brownfields grant.

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The former Kettle Lakes brownfield (DNR photo).
The new multi-family housing units now provide affordable downtown housing to Plymouth residents and help increase the local tax base.