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On July 19, 2019, a transformer exploded, causing a fire at a local power company substation in Madison, WI. Read more about the incident and the involvement of Wisconsin DNR’s Remediation and Redevelopment Program on page 6. (Photo credit: DNR)
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INTRODUCTION

This final report summarizes the use of CERCLA Sec. 128(a) grant funds by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program, for its state response efforts and public records management system, for the period of September 1, 2018, to August 31, 2019. Activities listed in this report are the equivalent to those identified in “Attachment 1 to Cooperative Agreement No. RP-96520013-0 titled DNR’s 2018–19 Work Plan and Time Frames for Accomplishments (Commitments).”

DNR uses the CERCLA Sec. 128(a) grant to support state programs, and designated federal programs, under the jurisdiction of DNR’s Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program, including:

- High-priority leaking underground storage tanks (LUST);
- RCRA hazardous waste closures and corrective actions;
- State-required cleanups; and
- Voluntary party remediation actions.

Brownfields tools developed and administered through 128(a) grant funding are packaged with assessment contractor services and cleanup funding for greatest leverage.

CERCLA Sec. 128(a) grant funds further support outreach, site discovery and redevelopment tools, such as:

- Hands-on assistance which empowers local governments;
- Voluntary Party Liability Exemption;
- General liability assistance;
- Conferences and training;
- Policy development to address emerging issues;
- Institutional control audits;
- Online site information — public database and interactive maps;
- Public/private partnerships for continuous program improvement; and
- Green Team Meetings — where tools are packaged and strategies are formed.

FINANCIAL STATUS

On August 8, 2018, the EPA awarded the Wisconsin DNR $929,806 in CERCLA Sec. 128(a) grant funding for the September 1, 2018, to August 31, 2019, grant period. In accordance with available grant accounting information, the Wisconsin DNR fully expended all grant funding by the end of the grant period. There are no slippages, work plan problems, cost overruns or adverse conditions to report, per 40 CFR Part 31.40.

REPORTING PERIOD HIGHLIGHTS

Wisconsin DNR effectively puts CERCLA Sec. 128(a) grant funds to work to, among other things:

- Maintain high-quality, online information and resource tools for customers— such as our contaminated property database, GIS map, webpages, publications and more;
- Deliver resources and assistance on contamination, assessment and cleanup to empower Wisconsin communities; and
- Offer grant and loan programs that provide valuable resources.

The Wisconsin DNR’s RR Program continues to deliver quality services that address the environmental and economic challenges of contaminated sites to improve Wisconsin communities by returning properties to productive use.

FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYM GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>BRRTS on the Web</td>
<td>Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System</td>
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<td>BOTW</td>
<td>BrRTS on the Web</td>
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<td>Certificate of Completion</td>
<td>COC</td>
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<td>Local Governmental Unit</td>
<td>LGU</td>
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<td>Project Manager</td>
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<td>Remediation and Redevelopment Program</td>
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<td>Waste and Materials Management</td>
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<td>Enhance Site Discovery Through Local Government Education</td>
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<td><strong>Task 2</strong></td>
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<td>Wis. Plant Recovery Initiative Letters Sent</td>
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<td>Bankruptcy Filings Reviewed / Proofs of Claim Filed</td>
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<td>Redevelopment Assistance Actions &amp; Tools</td>
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<td>News Releases, Media Events, Articles, Social Media</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop and implement soil management tracking system</td>
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<td>Audit Continuing Obligations at Closed Sites</td>
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<td><strong>Task 6</strong></td>
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<td>Hire, Supervise and Manage RR Program Staff to Meet Program Goals</td>
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<td>Ensure Cooperative Agreements are Developed and Implemented in Accordance with State and Federal US EPA policies</td>
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<td>Implement Wisconsin Assessment Monies (WAM) Program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Implement Ready for Reuse RLF Program</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
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* Details are available upon request, including event and announcement dates and publication and web page titles.
DNR Outreach Efforts Address Emerging Contamination Concerns

Nearly 300 people turned out at the Community REC Center in Marinette, Wis. on a warm July evening to get an update from Wisconsin DNR about the ongoing investigation and cleanup of per- and polyfluororoalkyl substances (PFAS) water contamination in the local area. The two-hour public meeting consisted of formal presentations and “open house” topic tables attended to by DNR staff and others.

Brownfields, Outreach and Policy (BOP) staff put in considerable effort to organize the event, helping to ensure a good outcome. Advance work included:
- Creating and placing advertisements in the local newspaper
- Creating and sending a media advisory to area press
- Establishing a toll-free hotline and an email account for community members to raise concerns or ask questions
- Offering and maintaining a community-specific email message service (GovDelivery) to periodically inform subscribers of relevant events

A series of six, monthly listening sessions has also been scheduled. BOP staff are involved in those efforts, too.

The emerging contaminant family of compounds known as PFAS is a group of substances that can be found in common household products such as stain- and water-repellent fabrics, nonstick products, polishes, waxes, paints, cleaning products and firefighting foams, but can have detrimental health affects for those who consume it.

PFAS in the Marinette area originates from Tyco, through chemical testing and production of fire-fighting foam. The chemicals used have seeped into the groundwater and have been flushed through the city’s wastewater systems.

DNR RR Staff Respond to Downtown Transformer Explosion & Cleanup

On July 19, a transformer fire at a local power company substation in Madison, WI, knocked out electricity to some 13,000 customers in the central part of the city during one of the hottest days of the summer. The fire resulted in a spill of 18,000 gallons of mineral oil. The local fire department also used approximately 50 gallons of fire-fighting foam containing PFAS compounds to battle the blaze. DNR spill coordinators helped oversee the cleanup efforts after the fire was extinguished.

The mineral oil and PFAS-contaminated wastewater largely collected in nearby storm sewers—and was removed on site—as high lake levels kept the contaminated water from washing away. DNR staff from several programs, including Remediation and Redevelopment, fielded calls from state and local media for days following the event.

(Photo credit: DNR)
Evolving Voluntary Cleanup Program Continues to Facilitate Brownfields Reuse

Wisconsin’s Voluntary Party Liability Exemption (VPLE) program allows a person or entity to clean up a contaminated property, obtain case closure and receive an exemption from regulatory liability. The exemption applies even if environmental standards change or if the contamination is more extensive than initially identified. Once a VPLE Certificate of Completion (COC) is issued under Wis. Stat. § 292.15(2), current and future property owners obtain continuing environmental cleanup liability protections. Traditionally the exemption also would cover any subsequently discovered historic contamination—even if it was not tested for in the site investigation.

A VPLE COC transfers to state taxpayers an expectation that Wisconsin DNR may remediate serious health and safety threats that were not previously identified and subsequently come to light. DNR has issued 186 COCs under this liability exemption framework since 1995, when state law first authorized the VPLE program.

In the past few years, heightened health and safety concerns have been identified for several contaminant classes that have not been part of standard site investigations and remediation projects. This has prompted DNR to reevaluate the potential for historical discharges of contaminants of emerging concern at properties currently enrolled in the VPLE program. At present, 74 voluntary parties are cleaning up contaminated sites and pursuing VPLE COCs.

The state of understanding about contaminants of emerging concern is still evolving. Environmental professionals are learning about how substances were used, the fate and transport of chemicals in the environment and how to remediate them once they are identified. To protect state taxpayers from this possibly large financial liability, in late 2018, DNR issued an interim decision to begin offering current and future voluntary parties COCs, and the associated liability protections, for just the individual hazardous substances that were investigated at a property. DNR will no longer issue COCs that provide liability protection for historical hazardous substances that were not investigated prior to obtaining the COC. Wis. Stat. § 292.15(2)(am) authorizes this new approach.

Before and after this decision was made, DNR staff met individually with people working on cleanup sites in the VPLE program to explain the agency’s concerns. Options for obtaining a COC under the new framework were outlined and discussed. DNR also shared information about its interim decision on substance-specific COCs through letters to VPLE program participants, articles in the RR Report newsletter interviews with news reporters and at meetings with external stakeholders.

DNR is responsible for protecting public health, safety and the environment. It is also expected to be a good steward of state taxpayer dollars. Issuing new COCs that cover contamination that was not sampled or analyzed during the site investigation and prior to case closure, at a time when so much uncertainty exists, is not prudent and a breach of Wisconsin DNR’s fiduciary duty.

Since December 2018, following VPLE program changes related to contaminants of emerging concern, DNR has issued 5 VPLE COCs for brownfield properties. These COCs provide liability protection for the hazardous substances that were investigated. Four are already redeveloped, and one is seeking a developer. Following is summary information about the four redeveloped properties.

1. River House Apartments (former Gallun Tannery property), Milwaukee

   Tannery operations at this 5.5-acre property on the Milwaukee River started in the late 1800s and ended in 1993. The land and facilities were not reused and steadily declined and deteriorated after the closing. Vandalism, including graffiti and more, was widespread. A large wall of the main building collapsed during a storm in 2011.

   In addition to demolishing structures, the company conducted extensive environmental investigation and remediation work. Remedial actions included targeted excavations and the capping of residual contamination with buildings, pavement and construction of a new dock wall. The VPLE COC was issued in December 2018 and helped make possible a property development phase that included two new buildings with 243 residential units and a riverwalk. Phase two construction is underway.
2. Lullabye Furniture, Stevens Point

The Lulabye Furniture company began manufacturing at this downtown property in the 1890s. They made various types of furniture and specialized in baby cradles. It was a long-running successful business, with even Lucille Ball promoting their wares in the 1950s.

The plant closed in the 1990s and remained idle and vacant for many years. The city of Stevens Point acquired the property in 2008, making use of multiple DNR Green Team meetings and liability clarification letters to inform their plans and decisions.

Following property acquisition, obtaining Wisconsin’s local government environmental liability exemption, and acquiring a $200,000 Ready for Reuse grant from DNR, the city assertively took charge of the situation and led the way on site investigation and cleanup. The city received its VPLE COC in February 2019 and has an agreement with a developer who has begun a $25 million mixed-use development as part of a larger effort to transform the northern side of the city’s downtown.

3. North End Development—Site F and Sites D & E of the former U.S. Leather Tannery, Milwaukee

Two VPLE COCs were issued in February 2019 for final-phase work at a 19-year-long revitalization effort in downtown Milwaukee’s North End neighborhood. Work began in 2000, when United States Leather Inc. closed its Milwaukee operations, including the Pfister & Vogel tannery. “The tannery had 29 separate buildings quilted together. Load-bearing walls had been removed so U.S. Leather could sell some of its equipment. And fumes from industrial chemicals left visitors coughing,” according to an April 13, 2018, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel story.

“The property was in shambles, the combined effect of their abrupt shutdown and damage caused during the equipment auction process,” said Robert Monnat, Mandel Group chief operating officer. The Mandel Group is the lead project developer.

The North End is now redeveloped into a commercial and residential complex on the Milwaukee River. This LEED Neighborhood development includes more than 600 residential units, a grocery store and additional retail space.

The city contributed $8.4 million to help pay for building demolition, environmental cleanup work, new streets, a riverwalk and other public improvements. The new development will have an assessed value of around $95 million, and the city expects to recoup its investment by 2022. “A visitor to North Water Street now would find it hard to believe the transformation over the past decade,” said Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett in the Journal Sentinel story.

4. State Street Parking Lot, Oshkosh

This irregular-sized parcel was part of a surface city parking lot in downtown Oshkosh. This parcel was used for various purposes since the late 1800s including a paint company, a bicycle shop and an automobile service shop. By 1971, all buildings had been raised at the property and it was used as a parking lot since.

Historical records indicate that a gasoline underground storage tank was used on the property. The City of Oshkosh took the lead on the cleanup effort, which included an engineering control over residual soil contamination. The city received a COC in May of 2019. The property was used to build parking garages to accommodate the residents who now live in the newly renovated Washington Place Historical Flats building adjacent to this property. Washington Place Historical Flats is located in the newly designated Washington Avenue Neoclassical Historic District.
RR Program Seeks Input Early in Rulemaking Process

In January 2019, following approval from the Wisconsin Natural Resource Board, the Remediation and Redevelopment program began drafting revisions to Wisconsin Administrative Code, chapters NR 700–799, which set forth the process for conducting investigation and remediation of contaminated sites in Wisconsin. Shortly thereafter, the RR program launched a series of monthly, town hall-style Rule Development Meetings to provide an opportunity for public input early in the rulemaking process.

As of August 2019, the program had hosted seven of the eleven scheduled monthly Rule Development Meetings. Attorneys, environmental consultants, state and local agency staff, industry representatives, and community stakeholders are actively contributing input to help ensure that staff has sufficient input and information to develop policies and procedures that work well for the full spectrum of affected parties.

At the Rule Development Meetings, staff provide an overview of rules being developed in various subject areas. The program provides meeting documents and updates through a dedicated website: https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/RuleChanges.html. To encourage broad participation, RR Program is announcing Rule Development Meetings via RR Report, which reaches an estimated 4,000 persons, and via email to various external advisory groups, and is also maintaining a listserv for any additional interested persons.

The Wisconsin administrative rulemaking process provides approximately 12 months for rule drafting before staff must move into the next phase of the rulemaking process. Following these external Rule Development Meetings, the program will continue seeking public input as part of the rulemaking process, including comments on the economic impacts of the proposed rules as well as public hearings on the content of the proposed rules; and will also seek the review and approval by the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, the state legislature, and the governor.

Rule Change Process & Timeline

| Winter 2018/2019 |
| Statement of Scope approved by DNR secretary; governor; NRB |
| Winter 2019 - Spring 2020 |
| Rule development meetings open to public; preparation of proposed rule; solicitation of information for economic impact analysis |
| Summer 2020 |
| Rule development meetings complete; NRB notification (hearing authorization already approved) |
| Summer 2020 - Fall 2020 |
| Economic impact analysis public comment period |
| Fall 2020 |
| Public hearings on proposed rule; public comment period |
| Winter 2020/2021 |
| NRB meeting for adoption; rule approved by governor |
| Spring 2021 |
| Legislative review/hearings |
| Summer 2021 |
| Rule signed by DNR secretary; rule published |

Timeline and details available online on the NR 700–754 Rule Changes web page.

Strauss Brands Brings 250 Jobs to the Century City Business Park

The City of Milwaukee has secured a deal with a large area business that will bring 250 jobs to the former Tower Automotive plant property, now known as the Century City Business Park. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel recently reported that Strauss Brands, a meat processing company, will develop a 170,000 square-foot production facility on this former 86-acre brownfield site.

The City has worked on this property for more than 10 years. Massive demolition, environmental remediation, stormwater management, and many other actions were needed to prepare this large property in Milwaukee’s 30th Street Industrial Corridor for redevelopment as a modern industrial park.

In addition to tax incremental financing, the city and the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (RACM) employed several financial programs including EPA brownfields funds and funding from DNR’s Wisconsin Assessment Monies (WAM) program. DNR project manager Margaret Brunette, a long-time member of the agency’s Land Recycling Team, worked closely with RACM and their consultants for many years. Brunette oversaw and monitored all site investigation and remedial actions. Strauss Brands will join Good City Brewing, Talgo and other occupants of the new business park.
**Enhance Site Discovery through Inter-Bureau Coordination**

Workplan output: Regular meetings with Waste Management and other Bureaus to identify sites that may need immediate action or investigation

**Waste and Materials Management and Remediation and Redevelopment Integrated Team**

The RR Program continued its collaborative efforts with the Waste and Materials Management (WA) Program to increase site discovery and inter-program coordination. The Integration Team works to ensure consistent, cross-program understanding of issues and implementation of practices that are routinely regulated by staff working with waste and materials management, and remediation and redevelopment administrative codes. Although the team has not had formal meetings this reporting period, small groups have continued to make progress on finding resolution on outstanding issues. Team members provided support to Wisconsin DNR staff, consultants and responsible parties related to a new soil management guidance document and the contaminated soil tracking process.

The ongoing work on Wis. Admin. Code chs. NR 700 rule-making/updating processes, plus emerging contaminant concerns, and the retirements and reassignments of several key staff challenged this inter-program team’s efforts to slow down somewhat. During this reporting period, the team continued working to better coordinate landfill regulatory responsibilities between the programs including addressing methane issues, and update guidance for transferring landfills between programs.

The group is also developing a public info sheet, with a “frequently asked questions” section, regarding environmental regulatory liabilities for owners (and prospective purchasers) of properties containing closed landfills and unlicensed waste disposal areas.

**Integrated Sediments Team**

During this reporting period, DNR’s RR Program, WA Program, Watershed Management Program, and the Office of Great Waters continued efforts to create a unified approach to address regulatory issues associated with the investigation, remediation and management of contaminated sediments. These efforts are coordinated through Wisconsin DNR’s internal cross-program Integrated Sediments Team. The Integrated Sediments Team works to identify policy issues, and develop administrative rules, manual codes, guidance documents, and fact sheets to improve processes associated with the investigation, remediation and management of contaminated sediments from dredging projects, environmental cleanups, redevelopment and other construction projects.

**Contaminants of Emerging Concern**

Wisconsin DNR recently launched an agency-wide effort to research, investigate, and address contaminants of emerging concern. Multiple DNR programs, including the RR Program, are involved in this new and evolving effort. Agency goals include information gathering, policy development, and the creation of coordinated and effective response procedures.

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**Paper products manufacturer Flambeau River Papers in Park Falls, WI, went through receivership in the summer of 2019. Multiple DNR programs, including Air, RR, and WA, assisted Wisconsin Department of Justice in identifying potential environmental issues at the property. In addition to public health and environmental protection, the goal is to prevent creation of a new brownfield.**
Interaction with Local Governments Promotes Site Discovery

*Workplan output: Creation & implementation of outreach efforts to LGUs to aid in discovery of potential sites*

RR Program employees, both brownfields staff and site project managers, have daily interactions with local government staff, officials and contractors. Some of these contacts are primarily technical in nature, but most are multifaceted discussions about site-specific options plus liability exemptions, financial assistance opportunities, redevelopment planning, etc. Further, in most cases, these interactions explicitly or implicitly involve discussions about new site discovery, assessment, investigation, cleanup, and reuse.

Wisconsin DNR appreciates the important role that local government staff and officials play in brownfield redevelopment efforts, and RR Program staff take every opportunity to answer questions, provide assistance and go the extra mile to help local governments succeed. RR Program staff are trained and equipped to help local governments understand brownfield revitalization responsibilities and benefits. Staff in the RR Program’s BOP section are available and seek to help local governments identify, address and reuse brownfield properties year-round.

During this reporting period, DNR staff held numerous Green Team meetings, and other similar discussions, with local government officials around the state to assist them with brownfields remediation and redevelopment projects.

For example, RR staff met with the City of Kenosha and responsible parties to discuss a planned entertainment district that will involve redevelopment of multiple blocks of brownfields in the city’s downtown area. RR Program staff also had several meetings with the City of Janesville, a developer, and potential end user that would anchor a large riverfront redevelopment project and transform several historic brownfields into productive properties. In addition, the City of Watertown and RR staff have had multiple interactions recently about three different brownfield properties in the city’s downtown area.

**Task 2 | Oversight & Enforcement**

**Responding to Bankruptcies**

*Workplan output: Appropriate and timely response to bankruptcies*

Wisconsin DNR receives notice of pending bankruptcy filings from the state Department of Justice. Program staff compare filing information to the online BRRTS database to see if contamination issues exist at open remediation projects or at closed sites with continuing obligations.

When additional case investigation needs arise, the RR Program bankruptcy coordinator solicits input from regional RR staff through a project manager (PM) worksheet. The PM worksheet identifies current and past uses of the listed properties in the bankruptcy filing, contamination concerns (e.g., spills, ongoing cleanups, etc.), whether cleanup work is needed, any DNR money spent at the site(s), and future action recommendations.

Based on the PM information, a bankruptcy team comprised of RR Program staff and legal staff decide what, if any, actions to take in response to the bankruptcy filing. Possible actions include filing a proof of claim to request a share of the assets for cleanup work or monitoring reorganization plans.

The RR Program staff continues to review bankruptcy filings. There were 80 bankruptcy filings reviewed, with four of those filings elevating to additional review and correspondence with the state Department of Justice and/or EPA.

**Responsibility Through Due Diligence and RP Letters**

*Workplan output: Timely issuance of RP letters*

Wisconsin DNR uses CERCLA Sec. 128a grant funding to support efforts to identify and track brownfield sites by issuing letters to the parties responsible (RP letters) under Wisconsin law for the investigation and cleanup of environmental contamination. This includes the causer of the contamination and any current possessor or controller of the property.

Wisconsin law requires that hazardous substance discharges be immediately reported to DNR. Often, when due diligence efforts include Phase I and/or Phase II assessment work, parties learn that hazardous substances were discharged on the property in the past—and those discharges must be reported. After receiving a notice of a hazardous substance discharge to the environment, the RR Program sends the causer or possessor an RP letter to start the process of investigating the contamination and determining the best way for the site to be remediated. Wisconsin DNR undertakes continuous outreach efforts to remind lenders, local officials, businesses, consultants and others about the notification requirements. During this grant period, Wisconsin DNR sent out a total of 241 RP letters.
PECFA Stalled Sites Initiative Amps Up as End of Funding Nears

Workplan output: Strategies to work with RPs to resume response actions at stalled sites

The RR Program has been working to ensure all eligible PECFA sites take advantage of available funding before the program sunsets on June 30, 2020, and has undertaken several outreach efforts to reach active and stalled sites alike.

General outreach efforts include:

- Letters have been sent every six months to all eligible PECFA sites reminding the property owner that they are eligible for funding, how much funding they have, and that the deadline to access the funding is quickly approaching. Additional information on how to access the funding and how to hire a PECFA-registered consultant is included in the letter.
- A report on the status of the fund, how many claims were paid and the amount of claims paid is posted in the RR Report each month.
- Quarterly PECFA Stakeholder meetings are held to update PECFA-registered agents on the status of the fund, number of sites remaining, and what the RR program is doing to engage stalled sites, as well as gather feedback from the regulated community.

Stalled sites initiatives include:

- Identifying sites that have completed all investigation and cleanup work but have not been closed because of the inability of the property owner to pay closure fees. In August 2018, the RR Program developed a process authorized by Wis. Stat. § 292.81 whereby property owners can voluntary sign up to have a lien placed on their property for the amount of the closure fee (and any applicable database fees). This allows the property owner to get their site to closure and the RR Program to officially take the site “off the books.” The RR Program has closed 16 sites using this process.
- Identifying sites that have taken no action in several years and have not responded to multiple “push actions.” The RR Program has also worked to identify those sites in PECFA where the property owner has not responded to any request by Wisconsin DNR. These are often “lower risk” sites that do not warrant enforcement action. The program identified 24 of these sites to begin the process of placing Wis. Admin. Code § NR 728.11 deed affidavit on the properties. Deed affidavits give notice to the public and any potential future property owners that contamination exists at the site and that work still needs to be completed.
- Finally, at the end of this grant period, the RR Program began the process of identifying stalled PECFA sites that have monitoring wells that may serve as pathways of contamination if left unattended. This project will look at asking the property owners, who do not intend to finish their investigations or cleanups, to properly abandon their monitoring wells while PECFA funding is still available so as not to further spread contamination.

The RR Program will continue all of these efforts into the next grant period, and will continue to develop additional outreach and stalled sites initiatives as PECFA draws to a close.

Wisconsin Plant Recovery Initiative Update

Workplan output: The cleanup and revitalization of industrial and commercial facilities that have recently closed

The Wisconsin Plant Recovery Initiative (WPRI) is a DNR effort to help communities expedite the cleanup and revitalization of industrial and commercial facilities that have recently shut their doors.

Each time a company announces a plant closing, Wisconsin DNR offers to work with company officials and the community affected by the closing, to outline the company’s responsibilities to safeguard public health and the environment, and discuss the brownfield resources available to both parties to help assess, clean up and redevelop the property. Wisconsin DNR’s goal is to organize a Green Team meeting with the company and comprehensively discuss any obligations associated with air, waste, water and land issues.

During this reporting period, Wisconsin DNR identified 23 plant closings for contact and consultation. There were 15 letters sent to closing businesses and communities identifying environmental issues associated with the closings. The letters also outlined assistance options and opportunities for repurposing or redeveloping these shuttered sites.

(See next page for list and map of statewide plant recovery locations.)
Updates to Redevelopment Assistance Tools

Workplan output: Ensure template documents are up to date and reflect current processes and law

Over the grant period, the Wisconsin DNR provided written redevelopment assistance 155 times. The template documents for the tools listed below are developed, maintained and updated with CERCLA Sec. 128(a) grant funding:

1. General liability clarification letters;
2. Liability clarification letters for lessees;
3. Liability exemption letters for contamination originated on another property;
4. Lender liability exemption letters;
5. Approval letters to build on abandoned landfills;
6. Cleanup agreements to allow cancellation of delinquent property taxes;
7. Cleanup agreements to allow direct assignment of title to third parties during tax foreclosure proceedings;
8. Negotiated cleanup agreements with local governments; and
9. Liability clarification letters for local governments.

Plant closings included:

1. Bimbo Bakeries (Madison, WI)
2. Beechworth Windows (Ladysmith, WI)
3. Prinsco, Inc. (Appleton, WI)
4. Figi’s Companies (Marshfield, WI)
5. Figi’s Companies (Marshfield, WI)
6. Figi’s Companies (Marshfield, WI)
7. Figi’s Companies (Marshfield, WI)
8. Figi’s Companies (Neilsville, WI)
9. Figi’s Companies (Stevens Point, WI)
10. Becton, Dickinson and Company (Franklin, WI)
11. Compass Minerals America, Inc. (Kenosha, WI)
12. Lacrosse Hardwood Flooring (Westby, WI)
13. ABQC Corporation (Milwaukee, WI)
14. Motor Castings Company (Milwaukee, WI)
15. CasTech, Inc. (Milwaukee, WI)
16. Radial (Eau Claire, WI)
17. Inmar (Milwaukee, WI)
18. Merit Gear, LLC (Antigo, WI)
19. Silgan Containers (Waupun, WI)
20. Beauty Systems Group (Marinette, WI)
21. Alliance Industries (Marinette, WI)
22. Tramontina USA (Manitowoc, WI)
23. C&D Technologies (Milwaukee, WI)
Outreach Efforts Increase: Webinar Offered, Newsfeed Subscriptions Grow

Wisconsin DNR’s RR Program uses 128(a) funds to help develop outreach materials, maintain comprehensive web pages, coordinate Green Team meetings with interested communities, give presentations and trainings, market state and federal brownfield grants and loans, and coordinate the work of the Wisconsin Brownfields Study Group. The Wisconsin DNR’s public participation activities fall into two primary areas: public outreach activities and financial assistance to communities.

During this reporting period, RR Program staff participated in 34 Green Team Meetings across the state, gave 6 presentations to varied audiences of stakeholders, had 265 incidents of DNR RR web page updates, participated in 2 social media outreach efforts, and hosted 1 public listening session. Thirty-two new publications were created, including two Spanish translations, and 91 publications were updated.

Subscriptions to The RR Report newsfeed increased to 4,109 readers and 97 articles were posted. The RR Program also sends subscribers an email with a summary and link to new newsfeed posts; 26 email bulletins were sent over the course of the grant period.

On July 24, 2019, RR Program staff presented a webinar on Wisconsin’s Continuing Obligation Process at the request of U.S. EPA Region 5. The webinar was part of the RCRA Expert Brownbag Series and supported the series’ new focus on long term stewardship efforts and institutional controls. The webinar was broadcast to a national audience including EPA representatives from headquarters and all regions as well as state regulator representatives from across the country. Over 130 web connections were live for the presentation. The presentation is available on EPA’s Clu-In website.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Summary of Public Participation Activities*</th>
<th>Mid-Year Numbers</th>
<th>End-of-Year Totals</th>
<th>Annual Target</th>
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<td>News Releases, Media Events, Articles, Social Media</td>
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<td>New and Updated RR Publications</td>
<td>70*</td>
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<td>New and Updated RR Webpages</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops, Trainings and Meetings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Details are available upon request, including event and announcement dates and publication and web page titles.

RR Program Participates in Department’s New Social Media Interaction with Stakeholders

The RR Program’s Brownfields, Outreach and Policy Section amped up its social media efforts by engaging in an Instagram story developed as an awareness campaign for World Environment Day, June 5, 2019. The Instagram platform provided an opportunity to interact with the public by posting quiz questions relating to DNR’s environmental management division.

Opening with a simple “Happy World Environment Day” message and closing with a call to action to learn more about the state’s environmental management division, the campaign included four quiz questions, each relating to specific programs: Remediation and Redevelopment, Air, Recycling and E-cycling.

Analytics demonstrate that RR’s post had 2,580 impressions, the second highest of all six posts in the campaign. Of those impressions, 489 viewers clicked to answer the question. Overall, the campaign was considered successful by the division communications office, and RR expects to engage in future social media campaigns.
Spanish Translations of Vapor Intrusion Video & Fact Sheets Produced

Recognizing the need to make accurate information available to all audiences, the RR Program has made some recent headway in translating into Spanish a number of VI materials.

Program staff have translated two of the program’s VI fact sheets, *Mitigation: Protection from Vapor Intrusion and Why Test for Vapor Intrusion?*, as part of outreach efforts to a Spanish-speaking population in the Milwaukee area. In the coming months, the remaining five fact sheets of the VI publication library will be translated and posted on the Program’s VI web page.

Program staff also produced a translated version of the animated VI video, *Vapor Intrusion 101*. The video, also available on the web page, uses a hand-drawn animation technique to introduce the basic concept of vapor intrusion to people who may be unfamiliar with the topic. The animation explains the root cause of vapor intrusion, how it spreads underground, and what property owners can do about it.

Click the separate images to the right to view the materials.

Coordination by Brownfields Study Group to Effectuate Legislation

*Workplan output: Passage of new state brownfields legislation; Improvement of existing processes and programs; Development of new programs and resources; Development of emergency rules for Wisconsin Act 204 regarding use of VPLE at contaminated sediment sites*

DNR staff and members of the Brownfields Study Group met three times during the reporting period to discuss areas for improvement to the state’s brownfields laws, including the VPLE program. Study Group meetings were held in September 2018, and in January and May of 2019. A subgroup of members and guests reviewing the VPLE program also met at least three times during the reporting period. In addition, staff worked to implement past legislative revisions and administrative recommendations that originated with the Study Group including the rule making that addresses several issues, such as the new process to obtain VPLE for sediments and the Economic Development and Green Environment (EDGE) pilot program aimed at encouraging green industrial development on brownfield sites.
**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

**TASK 4 | MECHANISMS FOR APPROVAL OF CLEANUP PLANS, VERIFICATION & CERTIFICATION**

Wisconsin DNR approved case closure for 328 cleanup sites during this grant period. Case closure means DNR has reviewed all technical submittals related to the environmental investigation and contaminant remediation activities at a site and found them complete and in compliance with state laws and rules. Case closure requests are thoroughly reviewed by regional technical committees made up of experienced project managers, ensuring the closure request is thoroughly reviewed and monitoring decision consistency in the region and throughout the state. All site actions are documented in DNR’s publicly accessible database, BRRTS, and the associated RR Sites Map.

**RR Program Special Vapor Continuing Obligation Audit Study**

*Workplan outputs: Determine if sites closed out with continuing obligations have met and continue to meet those restrictions, and bring sites back into compliance, if necessary*

From September 2018 until April 2019, the Wisconsin DNR’s RR program continued to audit closed sites with continuing obligations either:

1) requiring operation and maintenance of a vapor mitigation system, or

2) requiring DNR notification prior to construction of a building on a property where there is a potential risk from vapor intrusion.

These are also referred to as “future risk” properties. This project started in fall 2017. During this period, staff conducted 24 field audits of properties with a vapor mitigation system, 15 field audits of future risk properties, and 76 desktop audits of future risk properties. The desktop audits consisted of comparing air photos of the property at closure with more recent air photos to assess whether new construction had occurred without DNR notification.

A total of 40 field audits of properties with a vapor mitigation system, 84 field audits and 76 desktop audits of future risk properties were completed. Results of individual audits and an overall assessment of compliance were documented. Eighteen of the 40 systems were found to be not working or there were concerns about the design or effectiveness of the system. Only 13 of 40 property owners were documenting inspections of the system as required. Twelve owners are required to submit annual reports as part of the continuing obligation but only six are doing so.

The results of the special vapor intrusion continuing obligation study are currently being evaluated. Recommendations to ensure compliance with the vapor intrusion continuing obligations will be developed as well as a re-evaluation of how these continuing obligations are being applied, especially where chlorinated contamination remains at the time of closure.

**Streamlined and Consistent Case Closure Process**

*Workplan outputs: Implementation of new closure form and process*

Over the reporting period, the RR Program has had several small group meetings to continue to update the closure form and associated closure template letters. Consistency and streamlining efforts include:

- Updates to the professional certification and signature page of the closure form.
- Updates for consistency to code language throughout closure letter templates.
- Development of an interactive closure committee review form to streamline tracking of closure decisions.
- Continued small group work on updates to the closure letter template, including preparations for inclusion of the template in the auto-letter generator.

**Voluntary Party Liability Exemptions**

*Workplan outputs: Continued implementation of VPLE process*

In this grant period, the Wisconsin DNR approved five new COCs for VPLEs. Seven new applications to VPLE were received.

A VPLE follows a thorough environmental investigation and cleanup at a contaminated property. This option is provided in state law and removes future liability for the specified response action. The COC can be passed along to future owners of the property. The certificate can help with real estate transactions where prospective purchasers have concerns about contamination, assuring them that the entire property has been cleaned up to the satisfaction of Wisconsin DNR.

During the grant period, Wisconsin DNR developed draft rules related to VPLE for sites that included contaminated sediment including new requirements for financial responsibility. The rules also include changes related to changes to property boundaries at VPLE sites.
Tracking Soil Management

Workplan output: Tracking system for on- and off-site soils to track movement of materials and identify final placement of materials

The RR Program made substantial progress during this past year developing and implementing a system to track management of contaminated soil and waste. As part of a multi-year effort, the RR program issued several new guidance documents in 2017 regarding the management of contaminated soil and other waste materials in locations other than a licensed landfill. The guidance was a culmination of years of discussion between the RR program and external stakeholders.

These guidance documents were aimed at clarifying the requirements and options to manage soil and other fill that is generated as part of a cleanup and redevelopment project. The purpose was also to prevent contaminated material from being disposed or used in areas where there could be a health or environmental threat while still providing reasonable, clear options for builders and consultants to follow.

While that guidance was issued in 2017, a critical part of this initiative is the tracking of decisions and documentation of where material is being disposed. The Wisconsin DNR is using its existing online BRRTS database system of remediation projects to track and document material management activities. Users will be able to determine if contaminated material was excavated from or brought onto a site they own, may potentially purchase, or are otherwise interested in.

The system identifies requirements the Wisconsin DNR placed on a property to limit disturbance and exposure to contaminated material. These additions to the tracking system are expected to prevent accidental exposure and mismanagement of contaminated material and will allow property owners to incorporate material management into their development plans early in the process. Finally, the system can be used by staff to determine how often, and where, these exemptions are requested.

Throughout this past year there were many internal meetings to determine appropriate modifications to BRRTS. Staff worked with the program’s computer programmer through several rounds of revisions to the system, and a subgroup worked with the GIS specialist to determine appropriate additions to RR Sites Map to track locations of soil and fill movement. Some notable actions include:

- In April 2019, a 28-page procedural document was finalized that describes how to track the management process in our database called the Tracking Materials Management Activities under Wis. Admin. Code ch. NR 718 – Job Aid.
- From September 2018 to February 2019, staff in all statewide regional offices received internal training.
- In April 2019, the initial process for tracking materials managed on a single brownfields property was streamlined.
- Meetings between Wisconsin DNR RR program and the Waste and Materials Management program were held between September 2018 to February 2019 to clarify which program would oversee which types of materials management situations since regulations overlapped in some areas.

Audit Continuing Obligations at Closed Sites

Workplan output: Determine if sites closed out with continuing obligations have met and continue to meet those restrictions, and bring sites back into compliance, if necessary

Wisconsin owners of real property with residual contamination are responsible for complying with continuing obligations imposed by Wisconsin DNR at the time of case closure to protect public health, safety and the environment. For example, if Wisconsin DNR approved a cleanup with residual contamination under a parking lot, the property owner is required to maintain the parking lot to specified standards.

Continuing obligations run with the land and apply, until removed by Wisconsin DNR, to present and future property owners. Public notice and detailed information about continuing obligations is available on Wisconsin DNR’s online database BRRTS on the Web, and the associated RR Sites Map. (More details about BRRTS and RR Sites Map can be found on page 17.)

Wisconsin DNR’s RR Program conducts periodic audits of properties with continuing obligations to evaluate compliance. Closed sites are the ones most often audited, although open sites that have completed a remedial action may also have continuing obligations that are audited.

Common continuing obligations audited by Wisconsin DNR include: caps/covers over residual contamination; structural impediments that restricted the original investigation and cleanup in some way; industrial land use restrictions, and; operation and maintenance of vapor mitigation systems.

For the reporting period of September 1, 2018, through August 31, 2019, 68 sites were audited to evaluate compliance with case closure conditions.
**TASK 5 | ESTABLISH & MAINTAIN THE PUBLIC RECORD**

**Maintain & Update RR Program Tracking, Mapping & Submittal Applications**

*Workplan output: Enhanced geo-location and mapping options*

During the past grant year the RR program completed several upgrades to its primary tracking application, BRRTS, BRRTS on the Web (BOTW), SERTS and RR Sites Map. This included launching a new, external-facing, document submittal portal and a related internal dashboard.

These new tools provide customers and staff with a streamlined, time-saving process. Reporting period highlights include:

- Added banners to BRRTS on the Web indicating activities with: impacts to another property or right-of-way, continuing obligations, lien or deed affidavit, material management actions and jurisdiction under DATCP to make it easier for customers to identify sites with these characteristics.
- Simplified materials management tracking and did all associated cleanup.
- Added four new letters to the auto-letter generator in the BRRTS application for staff to create letters more efficiently.
- Added several new layers to RR Sites Map including: hillshade, updated parcel layer, facility-wide site layer including several new layers to the Layer Catalog.
- Created new reports to more quickly verify information and maintain data quality.
- Updated and improved document-upload tools to improve efficiencies.
- Created a new facility-wide activity type for tracking information at large sites with a negotiated agreement in place.
- Added tools and logic to track Wis. Admin. Code ch. NR 712 consultant qualifications and certifications.
- Improved data entry windows and tools to make it easier for staff to enter, validate and clean up data.
- Improved the search functions and criteria so staff can pare search lists faster.
- Incorporated a new action code look-up tool for staff to speed up data input.
- Added a knowledg-transfer tool that exports a project-manager specific spreadsheet with project milestones to help new staff quickly understand site history and status.
- Created new document submittal portal for RPs and consultants to use to submit required documents.
- Created an internal dashboard for staff to efficiently verify which RPs and consultants are approved to submit documents via the Submittal Portal.
- Improved the Spills application to improve entry and reporting for staff.

The RR program's Automation Team continues evaluate, modify, and update features and functionalities of all applications.

**Digitization of Site Records in Public Database**

*Workplan output: Ongoing activities*

The RR Program continues its implementation of case file records digitization and other efforts to increase public access to data. Over this grant period, the Program Support and Automation teams have tackled more specialized processes, and have focused on improving usability, including the following:

- Refined and simplified tracking and display of case closure documentation.
- Refined tracking and automated acknowledgment of NR 712 document compliance.
- Developed protocols for tracking material management activities and documents.
- Launched the external document uploader tool and backend features.
- Completed several database cleanup projects.
- Cleaned up and displayed deed instrument documentation and data (e.g., liens, affidavits).
- Initiated upload and geolocation of backlog of continuing obligation packets.
- Developed protocols for upload and display of large files (greater than 250MB).
- Developed efficiencies in the process of retrieving paper files from the state records center for open records reviews and document digitization.
- Reviewed 500+ action codes for readability to the public and revised/eliminated as necessary.
- Uploaded 22,051 documents to BOTW, thereby improving the public’s access to site file data.
TASK 6 | ENHANCE THE RESPONSE PROGRAM CLEANUP CAPACITY

In this reporting period, the Wisconsin DNR provided financial assistance to communities and property owners through the Ready for Reuse and Wisconsin Assessment Monies (WAM) programs, which are funded through grants from EPA 104k funds. In addition, the RR program provided support to federal brownfields grant applications by providing letters of acknowledgement.

Implement Ready for Reuse (R4R) RLF Program

**Workplan output: All R4R activities not covered by the RLF CA with EPA, plus data input for ACRES**

Since 2004, the Wisconsin Brownfields Coalition, which includes the Wisconsin DNR and several regional planning commissions, has received $11.254 million in traditional EPA brownfields revolving loan funds.

The Wisconsin DNR’s RR Program administers the funds as the Ready for Reuse Program. The program offers loans and sub-grants to local governments, tribes and non-profits to help with environmental cleanup of hazardous substances or petroleum at brownfields throughout Wisconsin.

During this period the Ready for Reuse Program received $500,000 in hazardous substance funding through our open cooperative agreement (BF00E01344). Staff continued to work with existing award recipients to move their projects forward. Awards were made to the Village of West Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien (overview of plan below).

The Wisconsin DNR promotes the Ready for Reuse Program through its website, at Green Team meetings, in RR Report newsletters, and in various publications such as the Financial Resource Guide for Cleanup & Redevelopment. As a result, RR Program staff respond to numerous Ready for Reuse general inquiries which indicates high program awareness and a strong funding need.

Wisconsin Assessment Monies (WAM) Update

**Workplan output: All WAM activities not covered by the Assessment CA with EPA**

The WAM Program provides contractor services for environmental assessment at brownfields sites throughout Wisconsin where closed or closing industrial plants act as impediments to redevelopment. Since 2009, the EPA has awarded the Wisconsin Brownfields Coalition $3.3 million in Brownfield Assessment grants, which the Wisconsin DNR’s RR Program administers. Awarding contractor services rather than funding takes the administrative burden of managing a grant off the award recipient, empowering even micro communities to take charge of brownfields.

The Wisconsin DNR awards contractor services for Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, and limited site investigation work at selected sites. Sites in this program are generally less than 10 acres and have petroleum or hazardous substance contamination that can be assessed for less than $35,000. Approximately 64 percent of WAM awards have been made to communities with populations of less than 10,000 people.

Wisconsin DNR’s RR Program is currently administering two $600,000 federal site assessment grants from U.S. EPA. During this grant reporting period, the Wisconsin DNR awarded sixteen new Contractor Services requests and eight assessments were completed.

See Table 3 (next page) for a listing of site locations, facilities and awarded services.

RR Program Welcomes New Staff

**Workplan output: Hire, supervise and manage the RR program staff to meet program goals.**

Jodie Peotter, P.G., joined DNR’s RR Program as the new chief of the Brownfields, Outreach and Policy section on August 5, 2019. Peotter brings 20 years of private sector environmental consulting experience to the program, including work with the WAM program. Much of her career involved investigating sites for contamination and helping clients understand that the presence of contamination should not hinder redevelopment projects. Peotter also brings expertise in advising clients on construction design and methods to minimize adverse impacts to the environment and cultural resources under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Peggy Frain was hired April 28, 2019, as the program’s web and publications coordinator. Coming from the private sector with over 20 years of experience in marketing, communications and design, Frain is helping to develop a cohesive look to the program’s communications materials and expand outreach collateral while assisting with the department’s website maintenance and migration to a new content management system.
### Wisconsin Assessment Monies Awards - 104(k) Assessment Funds

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>FACILITY</th>
<th>AWARDED SERVICES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horicon, WI</td>
<td>Former Gardner Sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Bay, WI</td>
<td>Fabry Glove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edgerton, WI</td>
<td>Lawton Street Site</td>
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<td>Millfab Holley Moulding</td>
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<td>CMERT</td>
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<td>Nagel Lumber</td>
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<td>401 E. Greenfield Site</td>
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<td>PDK Properties</td>
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<td>Imperial Laundry Services</td>
<td>Phase II &amp; Limited Site Investigation</td>
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<td>Marinette, WI</td>
<td>Colonial Building Site</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin, WI</td>
<td>Safeguard</td>
<td>Limited Site Investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allouez, WI</td>
<td>1324 S. Webster Ave and 917-923 Derby Ln</td>
<td>Phase I and II</td>
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<td>Eleva, WI</td>
<td>Kitelinger Property</td>
<td>Phase I and II</td>
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<td>Janesville, WI</td>
<td>Reflections Plaza Areas A &amp; B</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
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<td>Reflections Plaza Areas C, D &amp; E</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
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<td>Reflections Plaza Areas G, H &amp; I</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
</tr>
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<td>Reflections Plaza Area F</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
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<td>Stoughton, WI</td>
<td>Public Works Garage</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
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<td>Appleton, WI</td>
<td>Autotrust</td>
<td>Limited SI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watertown, WI</td>
<td>905 E. Main Street</td>
<td>Phase I &amp; II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenosha, WI</td>
<td>Parcel A</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie du Chien, WI</td>
<td>Blackhawk Junction</td>
<td>Phase I &amp; II</td>
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Federal Acknowledgment Letters

The Wisconsin DNR provides letters of acknowledgment for non-tribal entities applying for EPA brownfields grants. Combined, Wisconsin communities and other development groups requested over $4 million in FY19 federal grant funds. Acknowledgment letters were provided to:

- City of Brillion ............................................................... Site-specific Brownfields Grant
- City of Oshkosh ............................................................ Community Wide Assessment Grant*
- City of Oshkosh ............................................................ Site-specific Brownfields Grant
- Forest County Potawatomi Community ................... Assessment Grant
- City of Cudahy ............................................................ Community-wide Assessment Grant
- City of Green Bay ........................................................ Assessment Grant*
- Green Bay RDA .............................................................. Site-specific Brownfields Grant*
- Sheboygan County ........................................................ Community Wide Assessment Grant*
- Kenosha County .......................................................... Community Wide Assessment Grant
- City of Milwaukee ....................................................... Site-specific Brownfields Grant*
- Racine RDA ................................................................. Site-specific Brownfields Grant*
- City of Fond du Lac ........................................................ Assessment Grant
- CDA of West Allis ........................................................ Community Wide Assessment Grant
- City of Madison ............................................................ Assessment Grant*
- Calumet County ............................................................ Community Wide Assessment Grant*
- Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (RACM) ........................................................ Multipurpose Grant*

*Denotes successful application

Petroleum Eligibility Letters

In this reporting period, September 1, 2018, to August 31, 2019, the Wisconsin DNR provided 26 eligibility determinations for petroleum assessment or cleanup using an EPA brownfields grant:

1. Horlick Haban Site North – 2200 Northwestern Ave., Racine
2. ROW adjacent to 3915 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee
3. Gehl Co. Property – Main Parcel, Water Street, West Bend
4. Blaine Property, 2010-12 Northwestern Ave, West Bend
5. 1500 Summit Ave., Racine
6. 1450 Summit Ave., Racine
7. 0 Second Street, Stevens Point
8. Jerry’s Service, 1105 Second St. and 0 Centerpoint Dr., Stevens Point
9. Portesi Foods, 916 Centerpoint Dr., Stevens Point
10. 0 Third Street, Stevens Point
11. 914 Portage Street & 1000 Third Street, Stevens Point
12. 531 South Broadway, Green Bay
13. 525 South Broadway, Green Bay
14. Area C, D, E, J and K Reflection Plaza, Janesville
15. Area F Reflection Plaza, Janesville
16. Brillion Iron Works, Brillion
17. 24, 28 and 32 S. Main Street, Hartford
18. 2100 Northwestern Ave, West Bend
19. 900 E. Locust Street, Milwaukee
20. Riverwalk West, West Bend
21. 801 South Broadway, Green Bay
22. 2401 S. 30th Street, Manitowoc
23. 6411 W. Burleigh, Milwaukee
24. 607 Main Street, Wausauke
25. 404 Broadway, Sheboygan Falls
26. 511, 517, 517R N. Commerce St, Sheboygan