

Ashland Central Railyard

PUB-RR-757

August, 2006

Ashland Central Railyard

400 Block of Ellis Avenue
Ashland, WI
Ashland County

18 Acres

Location: Downtown Ashland

For nearly 100 years, this brownfield was used by railroad companies hauling ore and other raw products to destinations around the Great Lakes.

History

The former Ashland Central Railyard housed several rail companies, including the Wisconsin Central Ltd. (WCL) and the Burlington Northern Railroad (BN).

From the 1870s to the 1980s, the site handled trains coming and going across the northern Great Lakes states.

Investigation and Cleanup

After the railyard was abandoned, investigations revealed soil and groundwater contamination, including diesel fuel, waste oil, lead contamination and other wastes.

Site investigation activities were completed in late 1995 and workers started cleaning up the contaminated soil in 1996. Staff from the DNR

approved the final cleanup and closure of the site in May, 1997.

In order to help recover some of the cleanup costs, the responsible parties -- Burlington Northern, Santa Fe Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway -- were referred to the Wisconsin Department of Justice for failure to investigate and clean up the site.



The Ashland Railyard site prior to cleanup. For more than 100 years, the property was used as a major railroad transportation facility (DNR photo).

Redevelopment

A developer purchased the property in 1997 and between 1998-2000 constructed a grocery store, medical clinic and office space on a portion of the property. The rest of the property was donated to the city of Ashland. Since 1999, the city has constructed Little League ball fields, tennis courts and a playground on the remainder of the property.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr>





The new neighborhood grocery store after cleanup was completed (DNR photo).

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

The DNR has provided technical assistance by reviewing the site investigation and remedial activities, and by clarifying liability to future owners.

Contacts

Chris Saari
Project Manager
WI DNR Remediation and Redevelopment Program
(715) 685-2920