

Outpost Natural Foods Cooperative

PUB-RR-825

March, 2009

Outpost Natural Foods Cooperative

North 70th Street & State Street
Wauwatosa, WI
Milwaukee County

1.5 Acres

Location: A mixed residential and commercial area on Milwaukee's west side.

A Milwaukee-area food co-op keeps with its sustainable philosophy by turning a former brownfields into a popular market.

History

During the rise of Milwaukee-area manufacturing, a company called Northwestern Chemical set up shop in Wauwatosa. From the turn of the century through the 1950s, the business supplied customers far and wide with a variety of chemical compounds. Public records indicate Northwestern made products like oil vitriol, muriatic acid and aqua ammonia. When the company moved on, Hydro-Thermal Corporation took its place, manufacturing equipment for the pulp, paper and chemical industries.

Eventually, in 1990, Hydro-Thermal left the property as well. Following nearly 100 years of industrial use, the property was now clearly a brownfield.



Prior to redevelopment, commercial activity was very limited at the former Northwestern Chemical Company (photo courtesy Department of Commerce).

Eventually an antique store and tavern appeared on adjacent properties, but nothing happened at the site itself for more than ten years. Seeing the need for help, the Wauwatosa Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) included the property in their State Street Land Use & Redevelopment Plan. The plan included a focus on attracting a major retailer to that area. An interested owner was discovered in Outpost Natural Foods.

Investigation & Cleanup

Years of chemical storage and use left the property with soil contamination. Testing revealed unsafe levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Cleanup of the property was addressed by removing as much contaminated soil from the site as possible. In all, 900 tons were taken to a landfill.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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





Outpost Natural Foods Cooperative brings tax revenue and an environmentally-friendly grocery store to Wauwatosa (photo courtesy Outpost Natural Foods).

The building foundation and parking lot were then meant to serve as “caps” to prevent anyone from coming in contact with the residual contaminated soil.

Redevelopment

In the spirit of sustainability, it is fitting that Outpost Natural Foods would choose to expand on this former brownfield.

The Milwaukee-based cooperative’s research showed Wauwatosa was a perfect place to build their second store.

In March 2000, Outpost opened its newest location: a \$3.2 Million, 14-thousand square foot grocery store, specifically constructed with green design techniques. The result is a popular food market, which employs an estimated 135 people, and increased the property value by \$1.79 Million.

The success of the project was acknowledged with the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Wisconsin Green Building Alliance.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

Cleanup oversight was provided by the DNR’s Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program. A Blight Elimination & Brownfield Redevelopment Grant from the Department of Commerce covered \$300,000 in remediation costs for the site. A federal Community Development Block Grant contributed another \$200,000 in funds for the redevelopment.

The site also received a certificate of completion (COC) via the RR Program’s Voluntary Party Liability Exemption (VPLE) process, which provides property owners an opportunity to receive exemption from future liability on past spills, if the site is remediated to levels approved by the DNR.

Contacts

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Praise for the RR Program:

"While dealing with a brownfield project had its challenges, we were pleased to act as a good citizen of the community in resolving the contamination issues on that site.

The project would not have been possible without the help of the WEDC along with the many Outpost owners in the community who lent us their financial support."

*Pam Mehnert
General Manager
Outpost Natural Foods Coop.*

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