

RECLAIMING CONTAMINATED LAND

Cooperation between EPA, local governments and real estate developers is revolutionizing the way that cities convert contaminated industrial areas to useful purposes. The case of Elitch Gardens in Denver, Colorado is an example of innovative public/private partnership, a concept that EPA is now promoting more formally under the Brownfields Initiative.

In 1992, the City of Denver and private developers approached EPA with a proposal to build an amusement park on land in Denver's Central Platte Valley. The land was contaminated from previous use as a gas plant and rail yard facility. EPA worked with the stakeholders involved in the project, and eventually the parties jointly developed an acceptable cleanup strategy. As a result, environmental cleanup and land use objectives were both achieved, as envisioned under the Brownfields Initiative. This simple but groundbreaking agreement removed a critical obstacle and allowed Denver to convert a blighted area into one that the public can enjoy safely.

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