

# State and Tribal Response Program Highlights

EPA Funding Provided to States and Tribes to Address Contaminated Land in their Communities

## REGION 1

VERMONT – In 2019, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC) received a \$20,000 Small Technical Assistance Grant from EPA for planning work which focused on a municipal-owned former Armory building in the Town of St. Johnsbury. The armory is a 16,700 sq ft three-story masonry structure located on a 0.44-acre parcel on Main Street. The Armory was built in 1913 and has been vacant since 2010. In 2018, the VTDEC used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to provide oversight of assessment activities that revealed the building's contamination with PCBs, lead-based paint, and asbestos. Cleanup costs were estimated at around \$1 million and presented a significant barrier to redevelopment. Between March and October 2020, the town worked with VTDEC and EPA to evaluate various redevelopment scenarios. With the costs and vision for redevelopment more clearly defined, the town applied for \$500,000 in EPA Brownfields cleanup funding as well as a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant. The town plans to reuse the Armory as a new public safety building. The redevelopment will be a catalyst for future brownfields revitalization along the Main Street corridor.



Armory Building prior to redevelopment.

## REGION 2

NEW YORK – As a result of its historical industrial operations, the former Cerro property in Nassau County was included on the New York State Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Sites (Registry) in 1983. It was removed from the Registry in 1994 following decommissioning, multiple investigations, multiple soil removal/remediation activities, and completion of a risk assessment—all of which were completed under New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) oversight. In 2017, NYSDEC used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to review and approve a remedial investigation plan to evaluate the property's soil vapor levels. Following the evaluation, the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) gave the go-ahead for Amazon.com Services LLC (Amazon) to invest nearly \$72 million to construct a more than 204,000 square-foot warehouse and distribution facility. As part of this investment, Amazon will construct a cap on the property before a state-of-the-art center is constructed to meet the growing demand from its Nassau County customers. The project will generate more than 200 full-time employment opportunities and 125 construction-phase jobs. The project is expected to be completed in 2022.

## REGION 3

DELAWARE – A property along Philadelphia Pike outside of Wilmington was developed as a gasoline service station in the early 1920s and served that role until the early 2000s, after which it sat idle for many years. In 2019, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct an assessment on the property. DNREC then used Section 128(a) funding to oversee the removal of several underground storage tanks. The property is now being used as a garden and greenhouse center called Always the Garden.

## REGION 4

**FLORIDA** – In August 2019, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) received a \$20,000 Small Technical Assistance Grant as a part of DEP’s Section 128(a) funding. DEP utilized the funding to assist the small, disadvantaged community of Esto with consulting services to address the numerous brownfields within the Esto town limits, including developing an inventory of Esto’s brownfields. After the inventory was completed, the town initially focused on two properties—the Former Lambs Recycling Facility and an abandoned gas station. In 2020, the DEP used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct assessment activities on the Lambs Recycling Facility and the former gas station. The assessment revealed limited contamination and the town is now working to clean up both properties. The town is also conducting public outreach and working with its newly established Brownfields Advisory Board to conduct visioning, land use, and other concept options for a fresh grocery store and gathering space for a local produce farmer’s market on these two sites.

## REGION 5

**MICHIGAN** – A former car dealership operated in the Town of Manistique for nearly 100 years, after which it became vacant and idle. In 2019, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct assessment activities at the property. The assessment revealed no contamination, and that the property was ready for reuse—clearing the way for redevelopment into the Schoolcraft County Lake Effect Community Arts Center. The Center features an array of artwork and fine crafts by local and regional artists from Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.



*Schoolcraft County Lake Effect Community Arts Center.*

## REGION 6

**ARKANSAS** – The former Conway Scrap Metal Yard began operation in 1917, but eventually became vacant and sat idle for many years. The City of Conway acquired the property in 2014 and worked with the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to address the brownfield. In 2018, the Arkansas DEQ used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct cleanup activities including removal of concrete slabs, excavation and disposal of contaminated soil, installation of stormwater control, backfill of excavation areas, and seeding and mulching of the area. The property is strategically located between the Hendrix College campus and the rapidly developing Downtown Conway area. The City of Conway is finalizing plans to transform the property into a public green space, park area, and outdoor amphitheater. The redevelopment is planned for 2021.

## REGION 7

**SAC AND FOX NATIONS** – On July 8, 2020, 18 railcars derailed from the tracks in Reserve, Kansas. The Sac and Fox Nations Brownfields Section 128(a) Response Program coordinator arrived on the accident scene to assist with response efforts. The Tribal Response Program coordinator worked with the Brown County Kansas Emergency team and Tribal Police to determine the extent of the damage. From the assessment of the train car manifest and the wreckage, it was determined that less than 20 gallons of cottonseed oil was missing from the massive tank cars and that some diesel fuel and hydraulic fluid totaling less than 10 gallons had been spilled. Once the track was open and further potential releases neutralized, cleanup activities were conducted by the Tribe. There are still some scars on the land that mark the paths of loaders, tractors and cranes in the soybean field. However, the Brownfields Program at the Sac and Fox Nation was able to help ensure the health and safety of Tribal and community members and speed up the cleanup process while ensuring the needs of Tribe were being met.



*Railcars derailment moments after the incident.*

## REGION 8

**FORT PECK TRIBES** – The Fort Peck Tribes have been maintaining a productive Section 128(a) Response Program since the 2010s. In 2013, the Tribes' first large project utilized a Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) and an EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant to clean up and enable redevelopment of the former Poplar Airport into sustainable housing. Since then, additional competitive grants have allowed for a remediation of a large petroleum disposal site and the initiation of a reservation-wide methamphetamine assessment project. Using the skills learned from grant oversight and using assessment grants to create cleanup cost estimates, the Fort Peck Tribes are now engaging in more property cleanups directly funded through the Section 128(a) funding. This approach, where the Tribal coordinator writes analyses of brownfields cleanup alternatives (ABCAs), community relations plans, and directly contracts small cleanups, allows for maximum flexibility and expediency in cleaning up small properties and layering Section 128(a)-funded cleanup activities with competitive grant cleanups and removal actions to maximize their program's effectiveness.

## REGION 9

**NEVADA** – Originally built in the 1970s, the Bristlecone Apartment complex provided affordable housing for the citizens of Ely. After decades of use, the complex started to show significant signs of deterioration. Through multiple funding sources including private investments, and grants and loans from the Nevada Housing Division's HOME fund program, the Nevada Rural Housing Authority (NRHA) worked to update the property. In 2019, the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to assess and remove asbestos-containing vinyl sheet flooring and ceiling tiles in all the units. In 2020, after cleanup was completed, the Bristlecone Apartment complex was remodeled and opened for occupancy. The 68 affordable units are now fully occupied and help address NRHA's mission to provide housing opportunities for all rural eastern Nevadans.

## REGION 10

**MAKAH INDIAN TRIBE** – The Makah Indian Reservation is located on the northwest corner of Washington State in Neah Bay. Due to its location near the water, the reservation's Hake Plant property was prioritized for investigation. The site was originally a hake fish processing plant, and then served as an oil storage facility for ships until it was shut down in the 1980s. In 2007, the Tribe used Section 128(a) Response Program funding to conduct an environmental assessment as the first step in determining the site's environmental impacts. The results indicated that removal of three above-ground tanks and contaminated soil would be required to mitigate additional concerns. The Tribe was able to continue addressing the Hake Plant through funding from EPA's Puget Sound Geographic Program via a sub-award made by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. The tanks and residual oil were removed in 2016. In 2017, the Tribe used additional Section 128(a) Response Program funding to collect groundwater and soil samples that revealed only a small amount of contaminated soil remained around the supply pipe. In March 2019, the contaminated soil and pipe were removed to complete the site's cleanup.



*Soil and pipe removal at the Makah Hake Plant property.*