

 **Brownfields to Playfields Work Group** 

Final Report

December 15, 2021

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

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Department Mission Statements

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)



Protect Pennsylvania's air, land and water from pollution and to provide for the health and safety of its citizens through a cleaner environment.



Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)



Encourage the shared prosperity of all Pennsylvanians by supporting good stewardship and sustainable development initiatives across our commonwealth.



Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCNR)



Conserve and sustain Pennsylvania's natural resources for present and future generations' use and enjoyment.



WORKGROUP PURPOSE

The Brownfields to Playfields Work Group was formed to Implement one of the Recommendations & Action Steps in the 2014-2019 PA Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Resource Management and Stewardship Action Step 1b.

Restore and repurpose brownfields, abandoned mine lands and other damaged lands for recreation and conservation purposes through at least 5 pilot projects.

EPA DEFINITION

A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

Examples: Closed commercial/industrial operations including

Dry Cleaners

Gas Stations

Automotive Salvage Yards

Recycling Facilities

Manufacturing Facilities

METHODOLOGY

Determine pilot project criteria

Identify potential pilot projects throughout the Commonwealth

Consider various types of projects located throughout Pennsylvania

Select final list based on:

Contributions of local partners

Projects in various states of readiness to proceed

Potential to show measurable progress within 4 years

Potential to implement multiple SCORP Priority Areas

Focus on smaller and disadvantaged communities

Include higher capacity community projects to use as examples

Planned Workgroup contributions to Pilot Projects:

Coordination of existing funding sources between departments

- A separate funding program was not available for the workgroup

Determine what funding sources are eligible as a match for other sources

Coordinate timing of projects to maximize efficiency and funding matches

Provide direction when other funding and/or regulatory agencies needed to be involved or could assist with project

Pilot Projects Announcement

On March 20, 2017, DEP Acting Secretary Patrick McDonnell, DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn and DCED Secretary Dennis Davin released a joint statement that the following projects were selected as “Brownfields to Playfields Pilot Projects:”

Ira Reynolds Riverfront Park

Susquehanna Depot Borough, Susquehanna County

Historical Use – Erie Railroad Railyard

Proposed Recreational use – Community Park

Kaier’s Playground

Mahanoy City Borough, Schuylkill County

Historical Use – Kaier’s Brewery complex

Proposed Recreational use – Community Park

Fairground Avenue Linear Park

Carlisle Borough, Cumberland County

Historical Use – Industrial manufacturing facility

Proposed Recreational use – Linear Park

Susquehanna River Walk Extension

Williamsport City, Lycoming County

Historical Uses – landfill site and past multiple brownfield sites

Proposed Recreational use – Multi-use Trail

Lower Broadway Recreation Complex

Nanticoke City, Luzerne County

Historical Use – dump and junkyard (adjacent to a former manufactured gas plant)

Proposed Recreational use – Athletic Field Complex

Elrama Neighborhood Park

Union Township, Washington County

Historical Use – chrome shop

Proposed Recreational use – community park

Magic City Riverfront Park

Charleroi Borough, Washington County

Historical Use – Glass factory and sports stadium

Proposed Recreational use – Community Park with boat launch and Marina

Pilot Project Status Reports

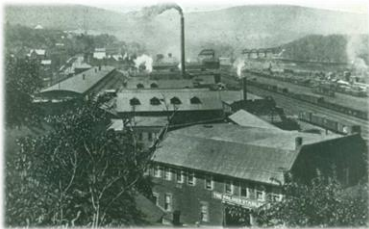
Ira Reynolds Riverfront Park

Susquehanna Depot Borough, Susquehanna County

BACKGROUND

This project is located along the Susquehanna River on a portion of the former Erie Rail Yard site that ceased operations in the mid-1970's after more than a century. A manufactured gas plant, an auto salvage operation, and an auto repair shop also operated in the area.

Initial environmental investigations found wide-spread heavy metals contamination including lead and arsenic related to historic activities.



Historical Use C 1900



Historical Use C 1970



Pre-construction 2017

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

PA DEP began implementing an interim clean-up response in coordination with the Borough of Susquehanna Depot in 2017. The response included excavation of contaminated soils, re-grading land, site demolition and soil capsulation over approximately 14 acres of contaminated land. This work was funded through the PA Hazardous Sites Cleanup Program.

This park is named for Ira J. Reynolds a local resident who worked for the Erie Railroad. Mr. Reynolds joined the Boy Scouts of America 4 years after their founding. Upon his passing on November 13, 2010, he had served the BSA for over 90 years and was considered 'America's Oldest Boy Scout.'

CURRENT STATUS

- Park development began in 2019 with lamp posts installation along the river side of the park, as well as the foundation laid for a pavilion and an electrical building.
- In Spring of 2020, over a mile of trail and fencing along the park near a riverbank concrete highwall and a volleyball court were installed.
- The local Lions Club secured the materials and installed a pavilion on the concrete foundation as a community service project in 2021.
- Phase one of the project is complete



Ira J. Reynolds



Park Dedication September 2021



Boy Scout
Tribute



Completed Phase 1 September 2021

WORKGROUP INVOLVEMENT

Central Office personnel and Regional Advisors from PA DEP and PA DCNR attended numerous meetings before and during construction of Ira Reynolds Riverfront Park to provide guidance so that all activities conformed to both departmental requirements.

This involved recommendations on coordinating construction work and documentation by the remediation character in a manner that would facilitate the value of specific remediation activities being eligible as matching funds for park construction under the DCNR Keystone Grant requirements.

Additional coordination occurred with the park architect regarding bidding, coordination of construction activities to maximize the use of grant funding.

DEP, DCNR and DCED advised borough officials on other sources of funding for future park expansion, redevelopment of surrounding properties and economic development opportunities.

MILESTONE DATES

Groundbreaking Event – July 13, 2017

DCNR Final Inspection – October 24, 2019

Park Dedicated – September 21, 2021

FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Borough officials are negotiating with the Central New York Railroad Corporation to provide a more convenient private vehicular and pedestrian crossing to enter the park
- Installation of an electrical building
- Additional paved parking areas.
- Purchase of adjacent properties to facilitate overnight camping
- Boat launch into the Susquehanna River
 - Borough was awarded a DCNR Rivers Planning grant in 2019 to study the feasibility of removing the partially breached Oakland dam in the Susquehanna River
 - Borough has applied for a DCNR grant to remove the Oakland Dam. If awarded, this grant will begin on January 1, 2022.

Ira Reynolds Riverfront Park Project Funding Table		
Funding Source	Funding Amount	Uses of Funding
2016 DCNR Keystone Grant	\$250,000.00	Develop Community park
2017 DEP HSCA Budget	\$1,900,000.00	Tree clearing, environmental remediation, installation of soil cap, site stabilization
2020 DCNR Keystone Grant	\$20,000.00	Dam removal feasibility study
2022 DCNR Keystone Grant (application)	\$153,000.00	Dam Removal

Kaier's Playground

Mahanoy City Borough, Schuylkill County

BACKGROUND

This project is located on a 0.3-acre portion of the site of the former Kaier's Brewery complex. The brewery and distillery operations were founded by Charles D. Kaier in 1880. In its heyday, it was a successful commercial production and one of the largest breweries in Pennsylvania. After closing in 1968, the structures fell into disrepair, posing health and safety hazards to the neighborhood residents. In 2017, the crumbling 5 story main brewery building was razed to make way for a community park.



Property Conditions November 2016

REDEVELOPMENT

Phase 1 development included a picnic pavilion, picnic tables, park benches, ADA accessible pathways, and play structures for 5-12 year old's.

Site amenities include a project sign, new fencing, and several trees.

Phase 2 development included installation of adult fitness stations adjacent to the pavilion.

Bricks and historical architectural ornamentation salvaged from the building demolition were used in the construction of entrance pillars and as accent items within the park.

CURRENT STATUS

- Phases one and two are complete
- DCNR Keystone grant application submitted for phase three improvements



August 2018 Groundbreaking



Phase 1 Substantial Completion October 2019



WORKGROUP INVOLVEMENT

Central Office personnel and Regional Advisors from participating departments attended numerous meetings before and during construction of Kaier's Playground to provide guidance so that all activities conformed to departmental requirements.

Workgroup members worked closely with the project engineer and grantee to make sure that contracts and construction work documentation were prepared in a manner to ensure that the all costs incurred were eligible and conformed to the requirements of the respective grant requirements.

DEP, DCNR and DCED advised borough officials on other sources of funding for future community park development/rehabilitation, redevelopment of surrounding properties and economic development opportunities.

MILESTONE DATES

Groundbreaking Event – August 15, 2018

Phase 1 DCNR Final Inspection – October 24, 2019

Phase 2 DCNR Final Inspection – August 31, 2020

Park Dedication - To be Determined



Flagpole base using salvaged bricks and building ornamentation

FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Installation of playground equipment for 2-5 year old's

Kaier's Playground Project Funding Table		
Funding Source	Funding Amount	Uses of funding
2014 & 2015 DCED Keystone Communities Grants	\$270,000.00	Building demolition, site preparation
DCED Community Dev Block Grant (Federal HUD funds)	\$22,000.000	Sidewalks and pathways
2015 DCED Commonwealth Finance Authority Grant	\$120,000.00	Building demolition, site preparation, streetscaping
2015 DCNR Keystone Grant	\$150,000.00	Installation of playground equipment for 5-12 year old's, pavilion, site furnishings
2018 DCNR Keystone Grant	\$50,000.00	Installation of outdoor fitness stations
2022 DCNR C2P2 (application)	\$70,000.00	Installation of playground equipment for 2-5 year old's

Susquehanna River Walk Extension

Williamsport City, Lycoming County

BACKGROUND

The 2014-2019 PA Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan identified an approximately 3-mile-long area between the existing Susquehanna River Walk at Maynard Street and the existing 20-acre riverfront Susquehanna State Park as one of Pennsylvania's top 10 trail gaps.

The trail connection would follow an existing railroad corridor near and through numerous brownfield sites. The connection will require crossing Interstate Highway 180, US Route 15 and Lycoming Creek.

Completion of this section of trail would provide the following key connections:

- 20-acre riverfront Susquehanna State Park and Hiawatha Riverboat
- Williamsport City's Newberry and West End neighborhoods
- Penn College of Technology
- Lycoming Creek Bike Trail
- Memorial Park and original Little League Field
- Downtown Williamsport River Walk and Timber Trail
- Loyalsock Bikeway via downtown River Walk
- Part of the 400-mile Genesee-Susquehanna Greenway corridor (Lake Ontario, NY to Chesapeake Bay, MD)

Lycoming County is spearheading this project and partnering with the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority, PennDOT, DCNR Bureau of State Parks, Penn College of Technology, Williamsport Municipal Water Authority, the City of Williamsport, the Commonwealth of PA, private landowners, and other local stakeholders to complete this project.

CURRENT STATUS

- PennDOT assisted Lycoming County in drafting the final RFP, since they plan to seek Penn DOT funds for construction and will be revising site plans and project elements along the way
- DCNR approved a scope of work amendment to include the Newberry connector section of the trail which was initially planned to be a later project phase
- Grantee has worked through numerous property ownership questions that arose during the early project investigation
- Project design and engineering is well underway and expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

WORKGROUP INVOLVEMENT

PA DEP provided guidance on required environmental assessment and remediation work.

Workgroup toured site with Lycoming County Community Development Lead Planner and County Transportation Planner and discussed suggested possible trail alignment along the Susquehanna River and Lycoming Creek.

Lycoming County staff have a high level of capacity to manage this project, therefore, the workgroup used this project as an example to provide guidance to communities with limited capacity.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Secure funding for trail construction
- Apply for all necessary permits
- Advertise for construction bids

MILESTONE DATES

DCNR approval of Request for Proposals from design consultants – April 17, 2019

ATC Group/ BCM Engineers selected as project consultant - July 2019

Initial Draft anticipated Spring - 2022

Final draft anticipated - Fall 2022

Susquehanna Riverwalk Extension Project Funding Table		
Funding Source	Funding Amount	Uses of Funding
2007 & 2012 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants	\$400,000.00	Inventory and Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments
PA Act 13 of 2012 County Impact Fee	\$75,000.00	Engineering design and specifications
2017 DCNR Keystone Grant	\$75,000.00	Engineering design and specifications
2019 DCNR Keystone Grant Amendment	\$11,145.00	Engineering design, specifications, permitting

Elrama Central Park

Union Township, Washington County

BACKGROUND

This project site is an approximately 2-acre property in the Elrama neighborhood of Union Township. The property formerly housed a chrome shop that ceased operations and was removed. However, this industrial use resulted in contamination of the property. PA DEP undertook a hazardous site (HSCA) cleanup a few years ago to address immediate environmental concerns. A deed restriction preventing development was placed on the property at that time.

Union Township and their environmental consultant worked with EPA and the Washington County Redevelopment Authority's Brownfields Program to facilitate additional environmental site assessments and remediation activities.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Union Township Board of Supervisors and the Parks and Recreation Planning Committee targeted the Elrama Central Park location as a valuable asset that would improve the quality of life in the neighborhood by providing a recreation area and much needed green space.

CURRENT STATUS

- Construction work began in November 2021

WORKGROUP INVOLVEMENT

Central Office personnel and Regional Advisors from participating departments visited the site and advised Union Township on coordination and timing of submitting grant applications.

MILESTONE DATES

DCNR Approval to Proceed with Construction – October 1, 2021

Contractor mobilization and start of construction – December 6, 2021

FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Installation of playground equipment and other amenities

Elrama Central Park Project Funding Table		
Funding Source	Funding Amount	Uses of Funding
EPA Hazardous and Petroleum Assessment Grants	\$400,000.00	Phase 1 and 2 Environmental Site Assessment
2016 DCED ISRP Assessment Grant	\$37,500.00	Site Assessment
2020 DCNR Keystone Grant	\$49,900.00	Construction of pavilion/comfort station, parking area and pedestrian walkway

Magic City Riverfront Park

Charleroi Borough, Washington County

BACKGROUND

The project site is located on a 5.5-acre parcel located along the Monongahela River. Previous uses included a glass factory and the Charleroi School District sports stadium. Ownership was transferred from the Charleroi School District to Mon Valley Alliance Foundation, Inc.

REDEVELOPMENT

Mon Valley Alliance Foundation, Inc. is spearheading development of this project. Existing structures, including the sports stadium, were demolished in 2019.

A Master Site Development Plan was prepared for the property.

Phase one of this project consists of widening an existing boat ramp and launch, construction of additional retaining walls for safety and ground stability, a sidewalk to the adjacent park and the construction of boat trailer parking.

CURRENT STATUS

- Phase one work is substantially complete
- DCNR Final Site Inspection was conducted on October 29, 2021
 - The inspection noted a few minor punch list items to close out the DCNR grant



WORKGROUP INVOLVEMENT

Central Office personnel and Regional Advisors from participating departments visited the site and advised project partners on coordination and timing of submitting grant applications.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Construction of a community building
- Restrooms/concession building
- Storage buildings
- Construction of ice hockey pad
- Floating dock and moorings
- Stage with sloped lawn seating
- Pop up spray pad
- Installation of recreation and play equipment
- Sand volleyball and basketball courts
- Additional parking
- Pedestrian walkways
- Offsite trail extension

MILESTONE DATES

DCNR Approval to Proceed with Bidding, Awarding and Contracting – March 15, 2021

DCNR Approval to proceed with Construction – May 28, 2021

DCNR Final Site Inspection – October 29, 2021

Magic City Riverfront Park Project Funding Table		
Funding Source	Funding Amount	Funding Use
2016 Washington County Local Share Account (Gaming)	\$252,000.00	Demo building & bleachers; site preparation; environmental assessment
2020 DCNR Keystone Grant	\$157,250.00	Rehabilitation of boat launch, marina, pedestrian walkways, parking area

Fairground Avenue Linear Park

Carlisle Borough, Cumberland County

BACKGROUND

The property is a 48-acre parcel consisting of 25 acres of former manufacturing facilities for International Automotive Components/Masland Carpets and 23 acres of unimproved land.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Redevelopment of the site is a top priority of the Borough of Carlisle's Urban Redevelopment Plan and EPA Areawide Brownfield Plan. The project will transform the site into a vibrant extension of downtown Carlisle by developing the site into a mixed-use development featuring retail, office, restaurant, hotel, condominiums, market-rate housing and a 3-acre linear park.

The property is being redeveloped by Carlisle Events.

Carlisle Events has transferred ownership of the linear park properties to Carlisle Borough.

CURRENT STATUS

- Roadway improvements, infrastructure and commercial development are progressing.
- The recreational component has been delayed numerous times due to budget constraints resulting in the need to redesign the linear park.
- Carlisle Borough requested public input on new park concept plans in September 2021
- DCNR grant agreement has been extended to December 31, 2022.

WORKGROUP INVOLVEMENT

Workgroup members as well as their Central Office and Regional advisors have had numerous meetings with borough and development officials and consultants.

MILESTONE DATES

Groundbreaking Ceremony – November 1, 2017

Roadway improvements, infrastructure and commercial development started – Spring 2018

Park properties transferred to Carlisle Borough – June 2021

FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Preparation of detailed designs and specifications after revised park concept plans are approved by borough.

Fairground Avenue Linear Park Project Funding Table		
Funding Source	Funding Amount	Funding Use
2013 US EPA Area-Wide Brownfield Planning Grant	\$200,000.00	Urban planning
2015 US EPA Assessment Grant	\$400,000.00	Engineering controls for green infrastructure (liner)
2016 US EPA Job Training Grant	\$200,000.00	Env. training for 60 students
2015 DEP Growing Greener 2 Grant	\$95,000.00	60% design for stormwater management & park
2016 DCNR Keystone Grant	\$150,000.00	Linear Park construction
2016 US TIGER Grant	\$5,000,000.00	Transportation Infrastructure
2016 PennDOT Multimodal Grants	\$2,000,000.00 \$1,500,000.00 \$380,000.00	Reconstruct N. Hanover St., Carlisle Springs Rd. intersection & Restore B St. from College Ave. to Carlisle Springs Rd.//Multi-use trail
DCED Community Dev Block Grant (CDBG)	\$80,000.00	Stormwater in Linear Park
2017 DCED Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program	\$244,375.00	Urban Stormwater Park – Hardscaping for linear pedestrian promenade linking park to adjacent mixed-use redevelopment
2017 DCED ISRP Assessment – Act 4	\$55,543.00	Phase II environmental assessment, soil and groundwater testing, etc.
Chesapeake Bay Trust	\$30,000.00	Stormwater park
Nat'l Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NiFWiF)	\$559,000.00	Stormwater park
Nat'l Endowment of the Arts	\$10,000.00	Stormwater park
2018 Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant	\$500,000.00	Complete on-site preparation work for redevelopment
2018 DCNR Keystone Grant	\$150,000.00	Linear Park construction

* Funds for the stormwater park were returned because this feature was not built

Lower Broadway Recreation Complex

Nanticoke City, Luzerne County

BACKGROUND

The project site is a 10.5-acre portion of a 20-acre property adjacent to Lower Broadway Street. It was previously used as a junkyard and is adjacent to a former manufactured gas plant.

Following the Agnes Flood of 1972, the City of Nanticoke acquired several properties which were subsequently used for storing municipal equipment, parking, and a youth soccer field. The Soccer fields were constructed in the 1990's and utilized through 2011. The City planned to redevelop the Site into a municipal park and hired a consultant to complete an environmental site assessment using funds from DCED's Industrial Sites Reuse Program in 2011. The site assessment found soil contamination by metals (arsenic, lead, chromium, selenium), Poly-Chlorinated Biphenyl compounds ("PCBs") and semi-volatile organic chemicals ("SVOCs") exceeding acceptable levels and the use of the soccer field was abandoned. On November 1, 2013, the City sent DEP an Act 2 Notice of Intent to Remediate that proposed removing PCB "hot spots" and capping the site. The City had limited resources and sought another grant to allow them to complete their remediation project. The project stalled until it was selected as a **"Brownfields to Playfields Pilot Project"** in 2017.

On February 10, 2021, DEP provided an update to all federal, state, and local partners involved in the project, including political representatives. On September 29, 2021, DEP visited the Site to check on the condition of drums containing Investigation Derived Waste that had been left on site after the previous sampling event, as well as overall Site conditions. These drums are expected to be removed before the end of 2021. A final version of the PSCR should be completed before the end of 2021, and DEP will meet with all partners to discuss the next steps moving forward. The meeting will also include a discussion of the funding source because the costs of the cleanup may exceed the limits of that funding source. The finalized PSCR will also be shared electronically with UGI for their review and DEP will work with them to discuss plans for moving the Lower Broadway Recreation Complex Site forward.

EPA obtained an Environmental Photographic Interpretation Center ("EPIC") study in December 2020 to assist DEP in the site characterization. The EPIC report provided an in-depth historical evaluation involving the Site and surrounding area. This report was shared with DEP's contractor and incorporated into the Preliminary Site Characterization Report (PSCR) to assist in identifying potential sources of contamination as well as any areas potentially requiring further evaluation.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Initial master plans included construction of a sports field complex with parking, walking trails, playground, skateboard park, pavilion, restrooms, scenic overlook, renovation of an existing historic building as a visitor's center and other amenities.

The first phase would be construction of the sports fields with parking, walking trails and other amenities.

WORKGROUP INVOLVEMENT

Workgroup members and regional advisors from the respective departments coordinated numerous meetings with officials from Nanticoke City, their municipal engineer and PA State Senator Yudichak's office.

After discussing funding options and schedules, the City asked DEP's Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields Program ("ECB") to investigate the recreation complex Site.

Soil sampling was completed in August & September 2018. A total 650 samples were collected at depth from between 0-2 feet deep at 275 sampling locations on the Site and analyzed for metals, semi-volatiles and PCBs.

Due to the extent and levels of contaminants identified, DEP determined that additional characterization and evaluation is needed.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Plans for recreational development on this property are currently on hold due to the length of site analysis and unknown length of time to prepare and execute remediation plans
- DEP and EPA plan to continue to share findings to ensure that Site activities meet both Federal and State objectives
- DEP's contractor will perform additional on-site sampling to further characterize the contaminants of concern. This work is budgeted under GTAC contract funded by HSCA.
- A significant amount of additional funding is needed for Nanticoke City to realize their goals for the site.

Lower Broadway Recreation Complex Project Funding Table		
Funding Source	Funding Amount	Funding Use
2012 DCNR Keystone Grant*	60,400.00	Construction of pavilion, parking area, pedestrian walkway, observation area and site amenities
2016 DCNR Keystone Grant*	\$250,000.00	Construction of Sports Complex
2016 DCED PA First	\$1,000,000.00	Acquisition and demolition of blighted properties and engineering costs at Market and Main Street Corridor (Downtown)
July 2016 DCED Multimodal Transportation	\$673,000.00	Nanticoke Streetscape Project at North Walnut St and East Main Street (Downtown)
Dec. 2016 DCED Multimodal Transportation	\$1,400,000.00	Upgrade the intersection of Broadway Street and Main Street (Downtown)
2014 LSA Gaming	\$500,000.00	East Ridge streetscape improvements (Downtown)

* Funds returned because they could not be utilized before the expiration dates

Other Projects

Guidance was provided to the following projects:

- The workgroup reviewed DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) Final Pilot Project lists to see if we can offer any guidance to local officials that may be involved in the projects that had recreational components.
 - DCNR awarded a \$200,000.00 grant to Frailey Township for the construction of an access drive, parking area, observation area and approximately 1.3 miles of walking trails with environmental educational signage at Good Spring Park and Trail (in the Village of Donaldson).
 - The trail is part of an overall \$6 million project that will create a new floodplain by removing approximately 550,000 cubic yards of mine spoil upstream of nearby Donaldson, Tremont, and Pine Grove. These areas have experienced widespread flooding over the last 20 years causing substantial damage to personal property and businesses in downstream municipalities.
- Oakland Borough (Susquehanna County) – Existing Park & Playground Site
- Lackawanna County Parks – UGI ‘Boomerang’/‘Gaslight Park’ Site, Scranton City
- Pottstown Borough, (Montgomery County) – Pollock Park
- Kennett Square (Chester County) – 10 Acre Site
- City of Sharon – (Mercer County) Radkowski Gas Station
- Linesville Borough (Crawford County) – Henry’s Site 2
- Venango County – 2-acre former landfill along Allegheny River & Hoge Island - Near Franklin Borough

National Recognition

On August 8, 2017, The Environmental Council of States (ECOS) Executive Committee announced that the Pennsylvania Brownfields to Playfields Initiative was selected for the 2017 ECOS State Program Innovation Award Recognition in the Waste Innovations category.



2017 Environmental Council of States State Program Innovation Award

Public Presentations

Committee members presented programs about the workgroup initiative at the following conferences:

2017 Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society Annual Conference, Hershey, PA

2018 Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society Annual Conference, Mt. Pocono, PA



2018 PA Brownfields Conference, Bethlehem, PA



2018 Central Appalachian Brownfields Innovation Network (CABIN) Summit, Pulaski, TN



2018 PA Municipal League Summit, Pittsburgh, PA



2018 Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors Annual Conference, Hershey, PA



2019 WVA Brownfields Conference, Morgantown, WV



2019 Joint CABIN/Tennessee Environmental Conference, Kingsport, TN



Workgroup members Kim Hoover and Rick Bogart served on the planning committee for the 2017 National Brownfields Conference held in Pittsburgh, PA



Lessons Learned

The ***“Brownfields to Playfields Work Group”*** was extremely effective in guiding smaller communities with limited resources including Susquehanna Depot and Mahanoy City Borough’s to manage and implement brownfield redevelopment projects.

These smaller communities typically have limited staffing levels and lack the in-house experience and expertise required to navigate the myriad of rules, regulations and policies of the numerous regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over brownfield sites. They generally do not have the resources required to hire professional consultants to advise them regarding site characterization and assessment, remediation planning and locating funding to implement the plans before, during and after project completion.

The workgroup communicated with Regional advisors from the appropriate departments to coordinate meetings and site visits with local and state officials to resolve issues as they occurred. This multi-agency communication helped projects to continue smoothly and prevented small issues from delaying project activities or jeopardizing eligibility for grant funding.

The workgroup assisted communities with the most practical timing of applying for funding to ensure that grant awards could be used within the designated agreement periods.

Officials from these communities were grateful to receive the assistance provided by the work group.

Redevelopment of brownfield properties routinely results in surprises when detailed environmental assessments are performed. This was the case with the Lower Broadway Recreation Complex in Nanticoke City. After several meetings with the city, the workgroup realized that additional investigations were required before final plans could be developed.

Classified as a “Financially Distressed Community” under PA Act 47, Nanticoke did not have the financial resources to perform additional testing at the levels required by PA DEP and US EPA. Therefore, the workgroup recommended the city to request DEP’s Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields Program (“ECB”) to perform further investigations. The ongoing investigation revealed the extent and levels of contamination were considerably higher than expected.

It will take several years to complete the assessment, develop a remediation plan and secure funding to clean up the site before it can be developed. As a result, Nanticoke would not be able to fulfill the DCNR Keystone Grant requirements within the agreement period and requested that they be terminated.

It was unfortunate that Nanticoke City was unable to utilize the grant awards from PA DCNR to realize their dreams of providing much needed field space for youth athletic events and leagues, active and passive recreational opportunities for the general public and environmental educational opportunities at this time.

Although it will take a long time before recreational facilities can be realized on this site, the work group considers our involvement to be a success. Because of the extensive coordination and collaboration between multiple departments, Nanticoke City will now have a clear understanding of what steps must be done and the funding required to move forward.

Lycoming County clearly exhibits a high capacity to manage a complex project such as the Susquehanna Riverwalk Extension. As a result, the workgroup used this project as a study to learn from and provide guidance to other communities.

Recreational projects that are dependent upon large scale economic development such as the Fairground Avenue Linear Park in Carlisle Borough can have many moving parts. Changing economics, market conditions, public opinion and redevelopment visions typically create the need for additional evaluation, refinement, design changes, etc. and can result in project delays.

Brownfields to Playfields Web Page

The ***“Brownfields to Playfields Work Group”*** created a web page with information on each of the pilot projects as well as sources of funding assistance, conferences & training events, related newsletters and links, etc. The web page is housed on the DEP website:

[Brownfields to Playfields \(pa.gov\)](https://brownfields.dep.state.pa.gov/)

Recommendations

The multi-departmental collaboration of this work group provided a level of service and guidance to communities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that could not be attainable by a single department working alone.

The cooperation of DEP, DCNR and DCED achieved our common goal to improve the quality of life for small communities in environmental justice areas. The communities often lacked capacity to navigate the many different sources of funding and environmental site assessments necessary to turn vacant brownfield properties into outdoor recreation assets, such as parks, playgrounds and trails.

The ***“Brownfields to Playfields Work Group”*** encourages the Executive Offices of the participating departments to consider forming a permanent multi-departmental work group/committee to build upon the foundation laid by this work group.



Appendices

Appendix “A” – Pilot Project Locations



Appendix “B” - Fact Sheet distributed at September 21, 2021 Park Dedication

**pennsylvania**
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**pennsylvania**
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

**pennsylvania**
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Brownfields to Playfields Pilot Project

Ira Reynolds Riverfront Park

Susquehanna Depot Borough, Susquehanna County



This project is located along the Susquehanna River on a portion of the former Erie Rail Yard site that ceased operations in the mid-1970's after more than a century in Susquehanna Depot. A manufactured gas plant, an auto salvage operation, and an auto repair shop also operated in the area throughout the years. Initial investigations found widespread heavy metals contamination such as lead and arsenic related to historic activities.

Beginning in 2017, after coordination with the Borough of Susquehanna Depot, the DEP began implementing an interim clean-up response that included excavation of contaminated soils, re-grading land, site demolition and soil capsulation over approximately 14 acres of contaminated land with funding from the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund.

Park development began in 2019 with lamp posts installation along the river side of the park, as well as the foundation laid for a pavilion and an electrical building. In Spring of 2020, over a mile of trail and fencing along the park near a riverbank concrete highwall and a volleyball court were installed – all made possible by C2P2 grant funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Future plans include installation of a pavilion, an electrical building and eventually a paved parking area. An official dedication for the park is planned for 2021.

The Borough of Susquehanna Depot, with funding and technical assistance from DCNR, DCED, DEP and others has invested over \$2 million transforming this former brownfield site into a valuable community asset that will provide recreation and enjoyment to residents for years to come.

Sources of Funding

2016 DCNR C2P2 grant – \$250,000

2017-2020 DEP Hazardous Sites Cleanup budget (HSCA) – \$1.9 Million



Ira Reynolds



Kaier's Playground



Mahanoy City Borough
Schuylkill County

A Brownfields to Playfields Project

From Ruins to Recreation

Located at the site of the former Kaier's Brewery which operated from 1880 until 1968.

The property is being redeveloped into a community park with:

- Pavilion, Benches & Picnic Tables
- Playground Equipment
- Fitness Stations
- ADA Accessible Pathways
- Streetscape Improvements



Former Kaiser's Brewery - closed 1968



Building Demolished March 2017

Sources of Funding

2014 DCED Keystone Communities Grant - \$20k

2015 DCED Keystone Communities Grant - \$280k

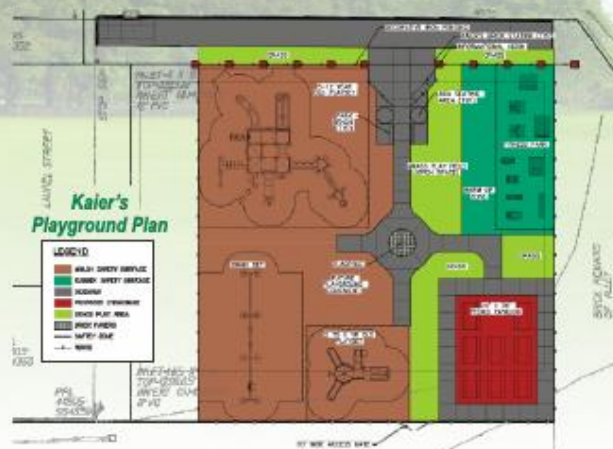
DCED Community Development Block Grant - \$22k

2015 CFA Greenways, Trails & Recreation - \$120k

2015 DCNR Keystone Grant - \$150k



**Pennsylvania's
Brownfields to Playfields
Initiative received the
2017 State Innovation
Award from the
Environmental Council
of States**





Brownfields to Playfields Pilot Project Mission:


- Enhance coordination between state agencies and communities
- Assess needs of each pilot and provide personalized assistance
- Deliver details on sources and leveraging of interagency funding and grant workshop opportunities




Appendix "D" - Poster displayed at November 1, 2017 Groundbreaking event


CARLISLE
PENNSYLVANIA


pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT


pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Fairground Avenue Linear Park *A Brownfields To Playfields Project*

Funding Partners

DCED Community Development Block Grant
DCED Industrial Sites Reuse Program
DEP Growing Greener 2
DCNR Community Partnership
PennDOT Multimodal
US Transportation TIGER Grant
US EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning
and Jobs Training Grants
Chesapeake Bay Trust
National Endowment of the Arts
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation



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