# The Bureau of Environmental Services works with Portland residents and businesses to protect water quality, public health, and the environment through wastewater collection and treatment, sewer construction and maintenance, stormwater management, and stream and watershed restoration.

# Portland Brownfield Program Annual Report

JULY 2012- JUNE 2013







At the former Killingsworth Fast Disposal landfill on NE 72nd Avenue and Killingsworth, brownfield grants supported community participation in environmental site assessment that cleared the way for a new community garden. Community members took samples for soil testing (left), prepared the land for the garden (top) and planted (bottom).

Since 1998 the **Portland Brownfield Program (PBP)** has provided financial and technical assistance to clean up neighborhood land. PBP brings federal dollars to Portland to facilitate brownfield redevelopment as a tool for human and environmental health, environmental justice, water quality, smart growth, neighborhood revitalization, and economic development.

PBP works on contaminated property throughout the city, with target areas of north, northeast and east Portland. The sites we work on face many obstacles to redevelopment: small footprints, low land value relative to other areas of the city, ownership by residents and organizations with limited resources, and environmental and financial unknowns associated with potential contamination. Because of these obstacles, neighborhood brownfields often remain vacant for years – even decades – while contaminants migrate to ground and surface water and adjacent sites. Hundreds of brownfields in Portland's neighborhoods are not identified in any existing database. Assessment and cleanup of small brownfields is critical to improving watershed and community health.



Nick Fish, Commissioner <u>Dean</u> Marriott, Director

## **Portland Brownfield Program—Annual Report**

### **Program Services: Technical Assistance, Assessment, and Cleanup**

Each year the Portland Brownfield Program provides direct technical assistance to dozens of property owners and prospective purchasers trying to move forward with brownfield redevelopment, and provides guidance to community members and organizations with concerns about contamination in their neighborhoods.



The future Dharma Rain Zen Center will be on a former gravel quarry.

Some typical services we provided in 2012-13:

- collaborating with the Portland Development
   Commission Long-Time Property Owner Development
   Assistance Program to provide environmental
   site assessments to long-time residents of rapidly
   changing neighborhoods
- educating attorneys and real estate agents who work on local brownfields about available funding and services for their clients
- providing "brownfield tours" to students at Portland State University, University of Portland, the Groundwork Green Team, and pre-apprenticeship programs Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc and Constructing Hope to discuss environmental contamination and green job opportunities on brownfields

To date, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants have allowed us to offer low- or no-cost environmental site assessments to 67 projects in the City of Portland with environmental and community benefit. Projects that received assessment funding in the past year include:

 SCHOOL GARDENS AT OLIVER ELEMENTARY AND CENTENNIAL LEARNING CENTER in east Portland's Centennial neighborhood. Environmental site assessment at these two new gardens, including historical review and soil testing, determined that both sites were clean and safe for growing.

- SOIL TESTING TO SUPPORT DECOMMISSIONING
   of an underground storage tank at the Urban
   League office, a building owned by Portland
   Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc (PCRI).
   PCRI is a local nonprofit that helps low-income
   Portlanders achieve stability by preserving and
   managing affordable housing.
- THE FUTURE DHARMA RAIN ZEN CENTER (left) on a former gravel quarry and landfill in East Portland's Roseway and Madison South neighborhoods. Environmental site assessment was necessary to plan appropriate mitigation and to ensure safety for those who will be using and living on the site. PBP also provided financial assistance for a Prospective Purchaser Agreement with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

In addition to technical assistance and environmental site assessments, PBP manages and funds cleanup activities with site-specific EPA brownfield cleanup grants, the \$500,000 Brownfield Investment Fund from City Council, and a \$1 million Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) established in October 2011 through an EPA grant. The first RLF loan was made in the 2012-2013 fiscal year to 3300 N Williams Ave LLC for cleanup of a long-vacant, highly contaminated former dry cleaner in the Eliot neighborhood.



The first loan from EPA's \$1 million Portland Revolving Loan Fund was issued to 3300 N Williams Ave LLC for redevelopment of a long-vacant former dry cleaner site with significant contamination surrounded by active homes and businesses.

### **Putting Federal Dollars to Work in Portland**

Since its inception in 1998 as one of the first EPA Brownfield Showcase Communities, the Portland Brownfield Program has been highly successful at leveraging federal grant dollars for assessment and cleanup in Portland. Most recently the Portland Brownfield Program received two EPA grants in June 2011: \$400,000 for communitywide brownfield assessment, and \$1 million to establish a Revolving Loan Fund for site cleanup. The Revolving Loan Fund allows us to establish a long-term resource of flexible loans and subgrants to clean up contamination on privately owned properties.

### **A National Model**

The Portland Brownfield Program's focus on providing resources for neighborhood brownfields on commercial corridors is driven by the goals of environmental justice and sustainable development. It is an approach for which Portland continues to be recognized as a national leader, and PBP is regularly invited to share our work at regional and national conferences. In the past several years program staff members have presented at multiple state and national forums on the topics of urban agriculture, redevelopment strategies for small brownfields, community involvement on contaminated sites, and sustainable redevelopment. In 2012 program coordinator Jenn Bildersee presented at the Portland Earth Care Summit, the National Association of Environmental Professionals Conference, and the Oregon Brownfields Conference.

Two PBP-supported projects were selected to receive the 2012 Oregon Brownfield Award: the June Key Delta Community Center, and Tabor Commons. Both projects

are former gas stations transformed by community organizations into unique neighborhood amenities. The June Key Delta Community Center also received the Region 10 Phoenix Award at the 2013 National Brownfields Conference.



Café au Play at Tabor Commons received the 2012 Oregon Brownfield Award.

# Federal Funds Leveraged by the Portland Brownfield Program

Total federal funds brought to Portland for PBP Projects	\$4,580,000	
National Park Service Grant for Groundwork Portland	\$	85,000
EPA Sustainability, Job Training, and Brownfield Assessment and Cleanup Funds to our partners for projects PBP was directly involved in	\$	825,000
EPA Revolving Loan Fund	\$ <sup>^</sup>	1,000,000
EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grants to PBP	\$	380,000
EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants to PBP	\$ 2	2,375,000



The June Key Delta Community Center, a former gas station, received both the Region 10 Phoenix Award at the 2013 National Brownfields Conference and the 2012 Oregon Brownfield Award.



### **Partnerships**

The Portland Brownfield Program works closely with a wide variety of partners: public, private, nonprofit, business, and community. A list of the entities we have worked with on projects in the past two years includes:

**US EPA** 

**Oregon DEQ** 

**Business Oregon** 

Metro

**Groundwork Portland** 

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.

Verde

**Hacienda CDC** 

**Mercy Corps** 

**Northwest Environmental Business Council** 

**Constructing Hope** 

**Pre-Apprenticeship Program** 1,000 Gardens Initiative **Oregon Health Authority** Let Us Build Cully Park! **Portland Development** Commission

According to the 2008 report Environmental and **Economic Impacts of Brownfields Redevelopment** published by the Northeast Midwest Institute, public investment in the assessment, cleanup, and preparation of brownfield sites leverages total investment at a ratio of 1 to 20. Further, the report states that "the majority (perhaps as much as 80 percent) of brownfield sites require a public subsidy in order to stimulate private investment." The Portland Brownfield Program capitalizes on this opportunity, assisting citizens in their own neighborhoods and directing resources to dispersed sites that collectively improve watershed, community, and economic health throughout Portland.

### By the Numbers

as of July 1, 2013

- Nonprofits serving Portland 18 communities aided by PBP grant funding to address contamination on their sites
- New parks, public spaces, school and community gardens planted or planned on former brownfields with financial assistance from PBP grants
- Small business owners provided 21 with PBP assessment grants for necessary environmental work on their properties
- Units of housing on former 180 brownfields assessed by PBP, including affordable housing, senior housing, housing for families in crisis, and transitoriented development
- Acres of potentially 74 contaminated land provided with environmental assessment and/or cleanup by PBP

Public investment in the assessment, cleanup, and preparation of brownfield sites leverages total investment at a ratio of 1 to 20.

> **Environmental and Economic Impacts** of Brownfields Redevelopment, Northeast Midwest Institute



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/brownfields

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