

CADLEROCK PROPERTIES



DECD Brownfield Assessment Grant Environmental Investigations Ashford/Willington, Connecticut

OVERVIEW

In 2018, the towns of Ashford and Willington received a \$200,000 assessment grant from the Remedial Action and Redevelopment Municipal Grant Program administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to study a 350-acre area referred to as the “Cadlerock Property”. The site is located between 392 and 460 Squaw Hollow Road (Route 44) and straddles the Willington-Ashford line, with nearly 300 acres in Ashford. The properties are privately owned by one of two entities that have been the subject of numerous legal battles and environmental pollution penalties. With nearly \$900,000 in back taxes owed in Ashford alone and a US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) lien attached to the properties, both towns are eager to definitely determine a course of action that will ultimately put the properties back into productive use. The towns used a competitive bidding process to select BL Companies of Meriden, Connecticut along with Good Earth Advisors to carry out a series of tasks to help guide decision-making.

All twelve of the parcels comprising the Cadlerock property were first used for agricultural purposes, but since the mid-20th century other uses resulted in releases of regulated compounds to the ground. Lot 11 in Willington appears to have been subjected to the greatest impacts from past activities. It is believed that between 1969 and 1972, insulated wire was burned in order to reclaim valuable copper for resale. Demolition debris from buildings destroyed by a 1980 fire was also left on site along with motor vehicle parts and appliances. There are concerns that other portions of the property have been used for burial of waste of unknown type and origin.

In 1991, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) initiated what became a 15-year effort by state and federal agencies to identify and remove impacted soil and solid waste that could threaten public health. Several waste disposal areas were identified and large quantities of contaminated waste and soil were removed. Potential ground water impacts also were identified but fortunately private residential wells were found not to be affected.

A PUBLIC CHALLENGE

The current owners are responsible for investigation and clean-up and this responsibility has been confirmed through court proceedings and regulatory actions. The owners have failed to complete these obligations and have not paid taxes for several years.



The properties fit perfectly within the definition of a brownfield: *A property where future use is complicated by real or perceived contamination.*

The challenge for both towns has been the potential unknowns:

Does contamination still exist? How much would it cost to clean-up the properties? How do we pay for clean-up? Should we take title to all of the properties, and if we do, how do we avoid liability? What could the property be used for? Are developers interested in property of this size and in this location?

Liability is of prime concern but fortunately by working with DEEP and USEPA, there are now mechanisms and regulations in place for the municipalities to investigate and even take ownership of the properties without taking on the liability.

BROWNFIELD:

A property where future use is complicated by real or perceived contamination.

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TASKS COMPLETED

In order to address these questions, a series of tasks were completed using the DECD grant:

- Reviewed over 20 years of historical environmental documents, including USEPA clean-up actions and subsequent investigations.
- Completed a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of all 12 properties to determine if the probability of encountering contamination remains.
- Identified potential areas requiring additional testing and carried out Phase II Site Investigation to evaluate the presence and extent of suspected contaminants in the soil, ground water, sediment, and surface water.
- Identified risks, if any, to human health and the environment.
- Recommended options for remediation and estimate probable costs for clean-up.
- Provided recommendations for next steps.

FINDINGS

- Previous removal actions conducted by the USEPA removed most of the contaminated soil and solid waste.
- No evidence of ground water contamination was found.
- A small area of soil containing elevated concentrations of copper and antimony was detected at the northern edge of the Northwest Disposal Area.

FINDINGS (continued)

- A small area of sediment containing slightly elevated lead was detected adjacent to the northern edge of the Northwest Disposal Area.
- A small area of soil containing an elevated concentration of lead was detected below an observed crushed steel drum located in the northern portion of the Central Disposal Area.
- A small area of soil containing slightly elevated concentrations of tetrachloroethylene (PCE) was detected in the South-Central Disposal Area.
- The estimated cost to remove the impacted soils and visible solid waste/debris is \$125,000 to \$175,000.

NEXT STEPS

- Both towns will review the findings and begin discussions of acquisition options.
- A Remedial Action Plan will need to be prepared prior to carrying out clean-up activities.
- Track future availability of DECD and USEPA grants for remediation and develop a competitive grant application.
- If funds are available, select a contractor to complete the recommended remedial actions.
- Removal of the liens and closure of the orders must be negotiated with DEEP and USEPA.



LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

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