

# WHAT IS A BROWNFIELD?

The Environmental Protection Agency defines a brownfield as:

“a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminate.”

The presence of a substance, pollutant, or contaminate must be determined by an environmental site assessment (ESA). Brownfields are sometimes abandoned, closed or under-used industrial or commercial facilities. The EPA estimates that there are more than 450,000 brownfields throughout the U.S



**Figure 1.**  
EPA Map brownfield sites nationwide. 2012  
<http://iowawatch.org/2012/09/16/iowa-cities-missing-opportunities-when-it-comes-to-cleaning-brownfield-areas/>

Brownfields are sometimes known as “superfund” sites, which usually entails an abandoned or uncontrolled site where the U.S. government is, or plans to be involved in cleanup processes. Some examples of contaminants/pollutants that create brownfields are petroleum, pesticides, fertilizers and heavy metals.

**Figure 2.**  
Example of a Brownfield before and after clean-up and development. Lawrence Massachusetts  
<http://neodfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ManchesterPark.jpg>



We have our own Brownfield success story in the Tribes Coos Head property. Since its acquisition in 2005, the Tribes, local stakeholders and state & federal agencies have worked to clean up the property and remove or mitigate all contaminants and environmental concerns. After 12 years of hard work, the Coos Head property has a clean bill of health and is no longer a brownfield. This gives the Tribes the opportunity to develop and utilize the land cultural activities, community events, and/or development.



**Figure 3.** (Left) the Coos Head site pre ownership of the Tribes or any clean-up work.

**Figure 4.** (Right) Clean-up work on the Coos Head Property after the Tribes acquired the property.

Our concern as a Tribal Government and community is to know when there is a potential brownfield on or adjacent to Tribal owned lands and/or within our ancestral territories. The more we know about potential brownfields in our area the more effort we can put towards protecting Tribal lands and resources. If you know of a Brownfield, superfund site or contaminated area, please fill out the Potential Brownfield Reporting Form and contact the CTCLUSI Natural Resources Department.

Here is a link to EPA site with more information about brownfields and contaminates.

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-tools>



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