Case Study of Crab Orchard

Keys to Success

- Project Description
- Economic Value
- Challenges & Advice
- Benefits
- Stewardship Meaning

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Crab Orchard, a small city in Lincoln County, was once the site of the Lincoln Scrap Yard, which had been an automotive scrap yard for several years. The business closed, and the site became littered with trash and overgrown with weeds. By 2006, the dust and water from the abandoned, contaminated site were a threat to neighboring properties and citizens.

Then an environmental assessment was done to determine the status of the three-acre site. When the results came in, the city received the good news that the site could be closed with the contamination safely managed, and the area could be put to use again.

A cleanup plan was implemented by the city, its environmental consultant and the state, with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Program and a Kentucky Pride Community Enrichment Grant. In the process, a large amount of debris was removed, groundwater wells were placed on-site, extensive monitoring was performed, surface control measures were created and a site management plan was finalized.

By the time the cleanup was complete in 2012, a total of 3,048 tons of clay and 2,064 tons of top soil had been brought to the site. The end result was the creation of public green space that includes a regulation-size basketball court, playgrounds, an Amish trading market, picnic areas, paved walking trails and a venue for music festivals.

> **"Towns-people have said the site cleanup and transformation into a park is one of the greatest things for the community."**

Before the site's cleanup and transformation into a lush green space, it was unusable and of little value. Now the park is beautiful and the focal point of downtown. The land has become valuable to the city and its citizens, who use it on a daily basis. It is the only park in the entire county.

During the transformation, city officials had several issues to

arise. The historic brick building on-site could not be torn down until a determination was made as to whether it could be saved. Then groundwater wells had to be placed on-site. Dirt that did not contain high levels of arsenic was needed, so several sites had to be tested to find enough dirt to haul to the site.

"Maintain a good rapport with all parties involved and be patient," advises Baker. "The relationship you have with the engineering firm, EPA project manager, contractor, grant administrator and any other persons involved will highly impact the success of your project. Through collaborative work with all of these parties and the city, we were able to build a beautiful and useful park for our city."

Baker also suggests getting the community involved to see what the townspeople would like to see in a site. Make use of every cent and make it count. Try to get as many donations as possible and work with the local and county governments, business leaders and citizens as all these are great resources.

Before the clean up, the site was not usable and benefitted no one.

A Bluegrass GreenSource grant stipulated that all plants in the new park had to be native to Kentucky, so this was quite a challenge, and much researching was done to comply.

By making the decision to restore the site into a useful property, the city demolished an unsafe building, capped contaminated soil across the entire site and turned a dangerous property into a scenic park to be enjoyed regularly by the community. There is a walking track, which is in constant use. Since the playground is for smaller children, a local elementary school sometimes brings classes to the park to play. The basketball court is the scene of a heated ballgame among the boys nearly every afternoon after school. Memory benches donated by local citizens in honor of loved ones are very special and located throughout the park.

The park's playground is a popular place for elementary children to visit.

The city of Crab Orchard cleaned a contaminated site that was an eyesore and transformed it into a beautiful area that serves as the county's only park.

"This has been a positive experience for our town and a beautiful one for the people," says Baker. "Townspeople have said the site cleanup and transformation into a park is one of the greatest things that has been accomplished for the community."

Helpful Hint: **Cleaning and redeveloping brownfield properties adds economic value to a community and can enhance the citizens' quality of life.**