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## Federal Resources

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) offers an annual grant competition cycle for municipalities and non-profit organizations to fund local brownfield efforts. Grant funds can be used to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct cleanup at petroleum brownfields, as well as complete redevelopment planning and community involvement activities related to brownfield sites. For more information on USEPA's programs, visit: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)



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# An Introduction to Petroleum Brownfields



**Niagara County**  
Center for Economic Development

*Samuel M. Ferraro, Commissioner*

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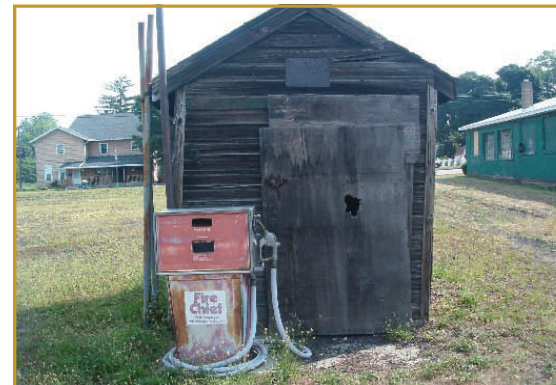
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## Niagara County Petroleum Brownfields Assessment

Recently, the Niagara County Department of Economic Development received a \$200,000 grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency to inventory and assess petroleum-contaminated brownfield sites throughout Niagara County.

The goal of Niagara County's petroleum brownfield program is to have complete comprehensive countywide inventory of petroleum contaminated sites. Using money from the grant, an inventory of sites was compiled and all sites were mapped. A Working Group was created, and all municipalities have been invited to actively participate in the Working Group. Utilizing grant funds, it is anticipated that several Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments will be completed within the next three years throughout the County.



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## What is a brownfield?

The United States Environmental Protection Agency defines a brownfield site as **“...any real property, the expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”** Sites such as abandoned gas stations and auto repair facilities are considered petroleum brownfields since the contamination at these types of sites is likely all petroleum based.



The presence of brownfields and other vacant sites has been a challenge for many communities. Cleaning up and reusing these sites offers economic development opportunities; improves quality of life; and protects the environment.

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## Dangers Posed by Petroleum Contamination

Mismanagement of petroleum products and accidental spills can pose environmental and occupational hazards, present a fire or explosion risk, or result in a release of odors or fumes with serious public health and environmental consequences.

A chemical release into the environment may impact soil and water resources. If left unaddressed, surface waters and drinking water wells may become contaminated, and soil vapors may migrate into homes, all of which could result in negative health effects.



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## Remediation Strategies

There are several methods available to address petroleum contamination. Cleanup methods are designed to eliminate exposure routes of harmful contaminants to humans and the environment. Soil, surface water, and groundwater can be remediated by removing contamination to an off site location, treating contaminants on site, or by encapsulating the contamination on site. The appropriate remediation technique is dependent upon the extent of contamination and intended reuse of the site.



Before beginning remediation, it is important to consult an environmental professional to ensure that the most appropriate remediation method is selected.

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## Sustainable Redevelopment Options

Petroleum brownfields can be reused for many uses including parks and recreation, residential, commercial, or even as a new gas station. Site reuse depends on several factors including location, the level of cleanup required, and the community's goals and vision for the site.



BEFORE



AFTER

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## New York State Resources

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) offers several programs to address petroleum contamination.

### Spill Response Program:

NYSDEC investigates spills reported through the State's spill hotline and takes action based on the type of material spilled, potential environmental damage, and safety risks to the public. To report a spill, call the NYS Spill Hotline at 1-800-457-7362.

### Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP):

This program offers tax credits and liability releases to encourage private sector cleanup of hazardous waste and/or petroleum contaminated brownfield sites.

### Environmental Restoration Program:

This program offers matching grants to municipalities for the assessment and remediation of municipally owned brownfield sites.

For more information on NYSDEC programs, visit: [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

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