



# FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program



The former Ramage Paper/Deerfield Glassine Company – wood structure site in Monroe is now the Monroe Bridge Overlook park.

*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a “brownfield” as real property which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.*

## Overview

- Brownfields have the potential to negatively impact our region’s public health, natural resources, and economic opportunities.
- Since 2002, the FRCOG has received seven EPA environmental site assessment grants totaling \$1.5 million. The latest award of \$200,000 was received in 2019 and will fund assessment at sites potentially impacted by hazardous substances.
- Previously, FRCOG administered a Brownfields Clean-up Revolving Loan and Subgrant Fund through EPA awards of \$1 million in 1999 and \$500,000 in 2005. The Fund provided low interest loans to eligible public and private sector entities to clean-up brownfield sites. A portion of the Fund also provided subgrants to eligible towns. The Fund contributed to the successful clean-up of sites in Erving, Greenfield, Monroe, Montague and Orange. The Fund was closed out in 2016. FRCOG may reapply to the EPA in the future to reestablish the Fund.

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*Over 60 sites in 22 Franklin County towns have been assessed and/or cleaned up using EPA resources awarded to the FRCOG.*



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## Current EPA Award

- With the latest EPA award, the FRCOG has hired an environmental engineering contractor to complete assessments for properties requested by member municipalities and approved by the FRCOG Brownfields Steering Committee.
- Publicly or privately owned properties may be eligible for assessment under this program. FRCOG works with the EPA to determine site eligibility. No staff or contractor may go on a property without prior permission of the owner. Assessments are conducted at no cost to the property owner or the town.
- As part of this Program, FRCOG conducts the following tasks:
  - Inventory and mapping of identified Brownfield sites.
  - Using established criteria, the Steering Committee accepts sites into the Program and prioritizes them for assessment with the resources available.
  - Works with participating towns and property owners to understand the environmental assessment process and secure site access.
  - Completes site-specific environmental site assessments (ESA), according to established state and national standards.
- FRCOG member municipalities may request that a site be considered by submitting a letter or email that identifies the property and describes why the assessment is necessary. An assessor's card for the site should be included, along with an explanation of which Brownfield selection criteria relate to the proposed property.

## Brownfields Steering Committee

- The FRCOG established the FRCOG Brownfields Steering Committee to provide oversight of the program, and to approve and prioritize sites for assessment.
- The Steering Committee has established criteria to determine if a site should be accepted into the program and prioritized for assessment. Such criteria includes if successful assessment and clean-up activity would: address risk to public health, protect environmental resources, enhance the potential for site redevelopment for economic activity, and/or result in the removal blight. Also considered is if the site is located near disadvantaged populations.
- The Committee membership has included representatives from FRCOG member municipalities, Greenfield Cooperative Bank, Greenfield Savings Bank, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition, Community Action Pioneer Valley, and the US EPA New England Region 1 and MassDEP.



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## Assessment Activities

- An Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) is conducted and reported using established standards accepted by the EPA and MassDEP. All reports completed under this program are available to the public.
- A **Phase I ESA** assesses a site's potential contamination by conducting historical research and reconnaissance of the site.
- A **Phase II ESA** or **Hazardous Building Materials Assessment (HBMA)** assess the impact of potential contamination through sampling and laboratory analysis of soil, groundwater, or building materials.
- If contamination is found, a **Phase III Remediation Plan** outlines how to conduct the clean-up and estimates the cost for clean-up.
- A **Site Reuse Plan** clarifies the vision for how a site will be reused or redeveloped after clean-up.
- EPA rules require sites potentially contaminated by hazardous substances or petroleum products be assessed under separate grants. The FRCOG's current EPA grant cannot assess sites only contaminated by petroleum products, such as gas stations and fuel storage sites. The current grant can assess eligible sites with a variety of potential contaminants, including petroleum, such as asbestos, heavy metals, VOCs, PAHs and more.



2012  
Former Usher Mill site in Erving.



2015  
Former Lunt Silversmith Building in Greenfield.

