

# **GOLD COUNTRY COALITION 2017 BROWNFIELDS COMMUNITY-WIDE ASSESSMENT FINAL REPORT**

**Cooperative Agreement Number:** BF-99T62701

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**Submitted to:**

City Council of Grass Valley,  
City Council of Nevada City,  
Board of Supervisors of Nevada County,  
and

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**Program Summary**

In late 2016, the Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City, along with Nevada County partnered in a coalition grant application for the Brownfield Community-Wide Site Assessment program. The intent of the partnership was to obtain funds to complete assessment work on properties that may have been impacted by hazardous substances and petroleum products. On September 9, 2017, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the Gold Country Coalition partners a grant in the amount of \$598,312. The City of Grass Valley managed the coalition grant and was responsible to EPA for management of the cooperative agreement, and for compliance with the agreement's terms and conditions, as well as the applicable statutes and regulations. The area of assessment primarily included mine-scarred lands that were vacant or constrained for development. The Coalition members recognized that many abandoned mine sites present obstacles to planned development, and present exposure risks for nearby residents, casual recreational users, and the natural environment. After initial community outreach, the Coalition Partners selected priority sites in the region to begin assessment work.

Overall, the grant funded various levels of site assessments and cleanup plans on twelve (12) properties. As a result, five (5) of the Brownfield locations were cleared for some form of redevelopment and reuse and five (5) cleanup plans were approved. The last page of this report includes a table of the properties assessed with this grant.

**Overall Project Goals**

The approved Workplan for this grant included multiple goals to promote public health and safety, increase public education, clear properties for redevelopment or provide a path for cleanup, and reuse the land for housing or economic development purposes. As noted in this report, five of the twelve properties were cleared for some form of redevelopment. Additionally, the outreach efforts afforded to by the grant and work with the Sierra Fund has resulted in extensive public education of potential hazardous legacy sites in the community.

### **Successes**

As noted in the Summary above, the work efforts created by this grant have resulted in multiple successes in clearing properties for reuse. As the grant progressed, the City successfully utilized the funds to work on three unanticipated sites/projects. Specifically, to assist in the assessment of three properties owned or purchased by the City of Grass Valley for a new Corporation/Maintenance yard, and for two sites to be used for parking and trail access for the Wolf Creek Trail.

### **Lessons Learned/Best Practices**

Working with organizations like the Sierra Fund can greatly assist a community and the Sierra Foothill region in the public education and outreach efforts. Though much improved upon with this grant compared with past Brownfield Grants, a continued difficult lesson learned, is the costs and time it takes to work with DTSC. DTSC's general oversight, budget costs, and billing processes creates some uncertainty and additional local staff time monitoring the cleanup plan process. There appears to be a common goal with local, state, and federal agencies to identify hazardous sites and develop a path forward for cleanup and redevelopment, but the costs and time to accomplish this tends to make this effort too complex. However, because of staff's persistence and involvement in a DTSC-sponsored working group, DTSC has recognized these issues and are making efforts to improve its review processes.

### **Partnerships/Leveraging**

This coalition grant established a partnership between the Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City and Nevada County. The three entities worked together to identify and prioritize properties in need of assessment. We believe the success of the 2017 EPA coalition grant was partially due to the leveraging and partnerships established by the three previous Brownfield grants. This grant also allowed the City to work with Habitat for Humanity on securing additional assessment funds and to create a partnership for possible reuse of remediated Brownfield sites that met residential standards for affordable housing.

Coalition staff members formed a working group with a purpose of determining if the County Environmental Health Department was interested in once again becoming the lead regulatory authority for less complex Brownfield sites. Staff held several meetings some of which included consultation with state and federal agencies to review less complicated sites. The Coalition's informal working group, with input and technical assistance from EPA, DTSC and RWQCB, discussed the oversight of less complicated Brownfields sites. However, during this process, State legislation was passed requiring local agency certification for oversight of Brownfields sites, and the DTSC developed a local agency certification process. Because the local health department is not certified to oversee Brownfields characterization and cleanup, we anticipate that State oversight by the DTSC or RWQCB will be necessary for cleanup and revitalization of most Brownfields sites.

### **Project Management**

City staff performed programmatic management of the grant, including the development and procurement of a qualified consultant team. This procurement, along with other approved procurements, complied with terms of the EPA Brownfield Cooperative Agreement. The City developed a project plan; held regular project team meetings; prepared periodic project reports and quarterly reports to EPA; completed required ACRES, MBE/WBE, and other financial reports; facilitated meetings with regulatory/oversight agencies to review the project progress; and prepared this Final Summary Report.

### **Inventory of Potential Sites and Re-Use Planning**

The extent of Brownfield sites in and around the Grass Valley and Nevada City area is very large. As such, the City had a very positive response and participation rate in the City's three previous EPA Brownfield grants. The past grants helped establish an extensive inventory of potentially contaminated sites. When the City concluded 2013 grant, many priority sites remained unaddressed. The purpose of this task in 2017 was to identify priority sites within both cities and the respective Spheres of Influence which, based on prior site uses, may have known or suspected contamination, and have development or redevelopment potential. Of those identified in the inventory, sites determined to be of greater potential for development, were considered a priority site. Once the priority sites were determined, the City refined the list to separate petroleum sites from hazardous substance sites, using EPA's Brownfields criteria. The outcome was the City inventoried and ranked sites for assessment and refined re-use strategies based on information from the assessments. As the project progressed, the City of Grass Valley purchased several properties with expected contamination. These properties were added to the inventory and assessed.

### **Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (Site Historical Research)**

This task consisted of performing Phase I ESAs for petroleum and hazardous substance sites in general accordance with ASTM 1527-13/21 standard and *All Appropriate Inquiry* (AAI) under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The grant provided funds for Phase I assessment of ten (10) properties:

- Roundhole Parcel, APN 09-690-37-000, Whispering Pines Lane
- Sierra Terrace Property , APN 008-210-014-000, West Berryhill Drive
- Bitton Property, APN 009-190-007-000, East Main Street
- Old Nevada City Airport, Airport Road and Picton Way
- 530 Freeman Lane, APN 029-290-024-000
- 131 Colfax Avenue
- 309 Mill Street
- La Barr Meadows North, APNs 009-620-003, 022-031-009 and 022-140-035
- Bear River Mill Site East, La Barr Meadows Road
- Idaho-Maryland Road and Sutton Way Trailhead Property

### **Phase II Assessments (Field Sampling and Testing)**

This task consisted of actual field testing of properties in which Phase I reports concluded contamination may be an issue. The planned outcome of this effort was to is to clear the properties from further assessment or move these sites forward to clean-up planning and remediation to the level required for planned re-use. The grant provided funds for workplans and Phase II assessments of ten (10) properties:

- Roundhole Parcel, APN 09-690-37-000, Whispering Pines Lane
- Sierra Terrace Property , APN 008-210-014-000, West Berryhill Drive
- Bitton Property, APN 009-190-007-000, East Main Street
- Old Nevada City Airport, Airport Road and Picton Way
- Berriman Ranch, Taylorville Road
- South Auburn Street Properties (south of Adams Lane)
- Empire Meadows Property (east of South Auburn Street and North of McKnight Way)
- 530 Freeman Lane, APN 029-290-024-000
- 309 Mill Street
- Bear River Mill Site East, La Barr Meadows Road

### **Clean-Up Strategies (Approved Strategies for Site Clean-up)**

This task consisted of developing clean-up strategies coordinated with the EPA and the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). The City completed a Draft Remedial Action Workplans (RAWs) and Remedial Design and Implementation Plans (RDIPs) and submitted these reports to DTSC. DTSC provided comments on the draft reports, and the City issued final reports that were approved by the DTSC. The City completed cleanup plans for eight (8) properties as part of the 2017 EPA grant. Cleanup planning for seven of the properties was approved by the DTSC, and the eighth (309 Mill Street) was approved by the NCEHD.

- Buoma Erickson Toms Property, East Bennet Street
- Sierra Terrace Property , APN 008-210-014-000, West Berryhill Drive
- Bitton Property, APN 009-190-007-000, East Main Street
- Berriman Ranch, Taylorville Road
- South Auburn Street Properties (south of Adams Lane)
- Empire Meadows Property (east of South Auburn Street and North of McKnight Way)
- Bear River Mill Site East, La Barr Meadows Road
- 309 Mill Street

### **Public Outreach**

The City of Grass Valley disseminated program information; provided community updates; and communicated and coordinate efforts with owners and the public. The purpose of this outreach was to increase community awareness of the program and its objectives.

As a subconsultant, the Sierra Fund (TSF) assisted NV5 and the City with a Community Outreach Plan and coordinated outreach efforts. Public meetings were held on June 27, 2018, and on February 17, 2022.

Public outreach documents included:

- A Community Involvement Plan
- Press releases to local media, including The Union, YubaNet, KNCO and KVMR
- Publicity Plan and Timeline
- Web postings and email blasts to announce the meetings
- Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions document for meeting attendees
- Evaluation and comment forms for meeting attendees
- Media coverage of the meetings by The Union and YubaNet
- Discussed the 2012, 2013, and 2017 EPA Brownfield grants on local radio stations KVMR and KNCO in Spring 2018
- Public meeting on the 2017 grant included updates to the 2012 and 2013 grant, June 27, 2018, and a second public meeting on February 17, 2022.

This summary report will be presented to the public at the March 14, 2023 City Council meeting and provided to the City of Nevada City and Nevada County representatives at the same time.

### **Green and Sustainable Site Assessment Efforts**

The City incorporated green and sustainable techniques into the project:

- Minimized energy consumption by using energy efficient equipment for the Phase II investigation;
- Used machinery equipped with advanced emission controls; and
- Avoided damage to environmentally sensitive areas when performing the investigation.

## **EPA Acknowledgement**

Throughout the grant process, the City acknowledged EPA as the source of funding and as a partner through each of the public outreach means noted above.

## **Use of EPA Funding**

Use of EPA Brownfields funding for the project is summarized below. The project was completed on time (acknowledging two EPA-approved time extensions) and within budget. Most of the delays and extension requests were a result of COVID 19 impacts.

<b>Object Class</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Final Costs Incurred</b>
Salaries	\$25,600.00	\$29,512.22
Benefits	\$12,800.00	\$12,581.59
Travel	\$6,352.00	\$3,513.01
Supplies	\$1,500.00	\$1,358.41
Contractual H&K	\$454,300.00	\$455,867.00
Contractual: DTSC	\$97,760.00	\$95,479.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$598,312.00</b>	<b>\$598,312.00</b>

## **Properties Assessed with the 2017 Brownfield Grant**

<b>Property Address</b>	<b>Hazard (H) Petroleum (P)</b>	<b>Phase I - Final Date</b>	<b>Phase II Final Date</b>	<b>Cleanup Plan Final Date</b>	<b>Regulatory Approval Date</b>
Roundhole Parcel	H	8/7/18	8/7/18	Not required	Not required
Buoma Erickson Toms Property	H	10/7/15	1/12/17	11/12/19	9/19/19
Sierra Terrace	H/P	1/16/19	9/23/22	9/23/22	* Under DTSC review
Bitton Property	H	1/16/19	9/23/22	9/23/22	* Under DTSC review
Old Nevada City Airport <sup>1</sup>	H/P	6/25/19	6/25/19	Not required	Not required
Berriman Ranch <sup>2</sup>	H	8/7/07	5/18/22	Final 9/7/22	10/19/22
South Auburn Street (Empire Meadows & Village at South Auburn)	H	n/a	6/22/22	Final 6/22/22	8/3/22
309 Mill Street	H	3/28/18	9/10/19	10/4/19	10/2019
La Barr Meadows Property <sup>2</sup>	H	4/22/20	Not required	Not required	Not required
Bear River Mill Site East <sup>2</sup>	H	6/28/19	10/25/21	10/25/21	12/16/21
530 Freeman Lane	H/P	10/22/19	10/22/19	Not required	Not required
131 Colfax Avenue	H/P	10/28/21	n/a	Not required	Not required

<sup>1</sup>Property in Nevada City

<sup>2</sup>Property in Nevada County annexed in 2022

\*Cleanup plans to be completed with 2022 EPA Brownfield Grant