



Ely Shoshone Tribe Transforming Former Dump into Recreational Park and Economic Opportunity

Ely Shoshone, Nevada

A proposed recreational park and economic opportunity await members of the Ely Shoshone Tribe once redevelopment is completed at a five-acre portion of a former landfill. With nearly \$100,000 in EPA assistance, the Tribe conducted assessments at the landfill and, finding that contamination levels were lower than anticipated, conducted cleanup and closure activities at the property to prepare it for reuse.

Ely Shoshone Tribal lands are located in White Pine County in the eastern part of Nevada. EPA awarded the Tribe a \$200,000 Brownfields Assessment Pilot grant in 1998 to address the landfill and other contaminated properties under Tribal jurisdiction. One of the properties targeted by the Pilot is the five-acre Tribal portion of a 20-acre White Pine County landfill. The landfill, opened in the 1900s and abandoned in 1948, was suspected of being used by mining companies to deposit leaching chemicals used in gold and silver recovery. Private owners purchased portions of the property in the 1950s and 1960s, and in the 1970s, five acres were put into the Tribal Trust. The landfill is surrounded by private homes, and the property's potential contaminants not only hindered future redevelopment opportunities, but were thought to threaten drinking water for the surrounding homes.

The Pilot hired a consultant in 1999 to conduct an initial assessment of the five-acre portion of the landfill, and in 2001, EPA Region 9 provided a Targeted Brownfields Assessment to conduct a more detailed assessment. These assessments revealed that contaminants—including volatile organic compounds, herbicides, pesticides, and metals—were at levels low enough to allow the waste to be classified as non-hazardous, allowing the Tribe to properly remove the waste and dispose of it at the operating Ely Regional Landfill. The Tribe partnered with Indian Health Services' Office of Environmental Health and Engineering to execute cleanup activities. The area was capped with approximately 11,000 cubic yards of soil. The Ely Shoshone Tribe also procured the services of a local contractor to perform the capping of the five-acre landfill after cleanup. The cleanup for the Ely Shoshone

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Aerial view of the Ely Landfill.

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JUST THE FACTS:

- EPA awarded the Tribe a \$200,000 Brownfields Assessment grant to address part of an abandoned landfill and other contaminated properties under Tribal jurisdiction.
- Contamination uncertainties with the abandoned landfill were lowering surrounding property values and raising concerns about drinking water for local residents.
- Assessments alleviated these contaminant concerns and allowed plans for safely capping the landfill with clean soil to proceed.

One of the Tribe's former brownfields has been redeveloped into a Travel Center that includes a convenience store, gas station, deli, gift shop, and smoke shop; and amenities such as a lounge, showers, and laundry facilities. This project has served as a catalyst for the area's economic and social growth—bringing the Tribe into a new era of economic development.

Tribe's Brownfields project was completed in October 2003 and cost \$56,815 with the Tribe leveraging \$15,354 of the total amount.

The Ely Shoshone Tribe has involved its members throughout the reuse planning process to ensure the Tribal community supports the five-acre landfill project. Pilot funds supported outreach efforts that included public meetings with site reuse discussions and production of a monthly "Environmental Newsletter" that provided project updates. The Ely Shoshone Tribe is considering development of a recreational facility on the property and is currently seeking funding for this end use.

The Ely Shoshone Tribe was awarded funds totaling \$1.3 million dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. These funds were used to construct a 5,100 square foot Travel Center, which opened for business in May 2004, on a neighboring 30-acre parcel of Tribal Trust Land. The Travel Center houses a convenience store, gas station, deli, gift shop, smoke shop, and trucker amenities consisting of a lounge, showers, and laundry facilities. This project brought the Ely Shoshone Tribe into a new era of economic development. The construction of the Travel Center is a catalyst for the economic and social growth of the area, and provides infrastructure for further development of the former landfill.

The Tribe is also working with White Pine County Commissioners to address the county's portion of the landfill. The Tribe and the County hope that eventually the entire former landfill will be redeveloped. The Ely Shoshone Tribe looks forward to undertaking preparations for reuse of the former landfill.

CONTACTS:

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>