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Brownfields Grant to provide momentum for 11 projects statewide

From Weirton in the northern panhandle to the Upper Guyandotte in the southern coalfields, eleven projects throughout the state have received \$5,000 grants through the 2010 FOCUS WV Brownfields program. These grants will help communities address barriers to redevelopment at local brownfield sites.

The Foundation for Overcoming Challenges and Utilizing Strengths (FOCUS) West Virginia Brownfields program funds were awarded by the West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Centers through funding from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation. Administered through a unique partnership between West Virginia and Marshall Universities, the program provides financial and technical assistance enabling communities to create a redevelopment vision for brownfield properties of strategic community interest.

The following 11 projects were selected to receive 2010 FOCUS WV grants:

- Arthurdale Revitalization: *Arthurdale Heritage, Inc.* seeks to conduct a community needs assessment and redevelopment visioning effort to create a revitalization plan for the Arthurdale school buildings in Preston County.
- Barton Bench Ecological Restoration: The *Wes-Mon-Ty Resource Conservation & Development Project, Inc.* seeks to conduct ecological site planning and restoration, as well as community visioning and outreach for mine-scarred lands on Cheat Mountain in Randolph County.
- Coal Heritage Discovery Center: The *Coal Heritage Highway Authority* seeks to conduct community meetings, and develop a business plan and funding strategy for restoration and reuse of a historical structure in Mt. Hope to use as an interpretive facility in Fayette County.
- Horse Creek Lake: The *Upper Guyandotte Watershed Association* seeks to conduct community and stakeholder visioning efforts, perform an environmental assessment, and develop a site revitalization plan for Horse Creek Lake in Wyoming County.
- JG Bradley Campground: The *Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone of West Virginia* seeks to provide community education and outreach, and develop a site specific business plan and operational procedural manual for the campground that was a previous rail yard and brownfield in Clay County.
- Little Kanawha Riverfront: The *City of Parkersburg* seeks to develop a conceptual land use plan for the abandoned FoamCoat property that was once a marble making factory and a petroleum storage facility along the Little Kanawha River in Wood County.

- MCWA Environmental Educational Learning Center: The *Morris Creek Watershed Association (MCWA)* seeks to conduct an environmental assessment and develop a schematic design for a state of the art “green” building that will be used as a community environmental learning center between Fayette and Kanawha Counties.
- Pioneer Rocks Gateway: *Friends of Deckers Creek* seeks to analyze site conditions, conduct meetings with local stakeholders, and create a site revitalization plan for a former service station at Pioneer Rocks in Monongalia County.
- Reiss-Viking Redevelopment: The *Webster County Economic Development Authority* seeks to conduct environmental assessments and involve community in revitalization efforts at an abandoned magnetite processing plant along the banks of the Gauley River outside Camden in Webster County.
- Landfill to Library: *Shepherdstown Public Library* seeks to create visual presentations and host a mini conference to involve community in the reclamation of a dormant dump for use as a new, state of the art “green” library.
- Weirton North End: *Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning & Development Council* seeks to develop a private sector site leveraging plan for Weirton’s North End.

Brownfields are abandoned or underutilized properties that have not been redeveloped due to real or perceived environmental barriers. Examples of brownfields include former gas stations, glass factories, machine shops, manufacturing and processing facilities, dry cleaners, and mine scarred lands.

Sera Zegre, FOCUS WV Program Manager says, “These projects each provide a stepping stone for revitalization efforts of Brownfields properties at a site specific scale, initiating redevelopment progress and spurring community involvement.” Beyond cleaning up waste and contamination, which improves the health and wellness of communities, “brownfield redevelopment is ultimately land recycling that helps to preserve undeveloped green spaces”.

The program was funded by a grant from the Benedum Foundation through the WVU Foundation, a private non-profit corporation that generates, receives and administers private gifts on behalf of West Virginia University.

Information about the FOCUS WV Brownfields Program can be found at www.wvbrownfields.com. The Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center is located at the West Virginia Water Research Institute, at WVU’s National Research Center for Coal & Energy; the WV Brownfields Assistance Center at Marshall University is located in the Center for Environmental, Geotechnical and Applied Sciences.

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