

Dept. of Natural Resources: Awards Brownfield Grant to Marathon City

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced that the DNR awarded brownfield assessment services to the village of Marathon City to assist with the investigation of environmental contamination at the former Weisenberger Tie & Lumber, Inc. facility.

The award is from the [DNR's Wisconsin Assessment Monies \(WAM\) program](#), which provides contractor services for the environmental assessment of eligible brownfield properties.

A brownfield is a property where expansion, redevelopment or reuse is complicated by real or potential contamination. Brownfields vary in size, location, age and past use; they can range from a 500-acre former automobile assembly plant to a small, abandoned gas station.

The award will support the assessment of environmental conditions at the six-acre property where suspected environmental contamination is related to the historical manufacture and treatment of railroad ties and pressure-treated lumber. The sawmill and wood treatment facility operated between 1970 and the 1990s. Although the DNR undertook some cleanup efforts in the early 2000s, the remaining contamination, and suspected contamination from later occupants, have hindered the redevelopment of the property.

The property has been mostly vacant and tax delinquent for more than a decade. The village considers the property a target area for redevelopment because of its proximity to the business and industry district of Marathon City. Assessment and cleanup planning will allow the village to acquire the property and put the community on a path to returning it to productive use.

“The government officials of Marathon City see redevelopment and the expansion of capacity in the business park as key focus areas for the economic growth and health of their community,” said Jodie Thistle, Wisconsin DNR brownfields, outreach and policy section manager. “Assessing the cleanup needs for the Weisenberger Tie & Lumber Co., Inc. property will provide valuable information for better planning and is an excellent next step toward the village’s goals. The DNR applauds the village’s efforts and looks forward to a continued partnership.”

Since 2009, the DNR’s WAM program has provided over \$3.5 million in services and grant funds to over 70 communities across Wisconsin, partnering to help clean up and redevelop often run-down or underused properties that detract from a community’s potential. Because there is no local financial match required, WAM program grants present an attractive opportunity for communities to learn about environmental conditions. [Applications for assistance](#) may be submitted to the DNR at any time.

Interested in learning how cleaning up brownfields can help your community? The DNR’s series of on-demand [Brownfields Fundamentals webinars](#) covers planning, cleanup, liability and other topics as part of a well-rounded crash course in Wisconsin brownfield redevelopment.

The DNR has a wide range of financial and liability tools available to help local governments, businesses, lenders and others clean up and redevelop brownfields in Wisconsin, including [Ready for Reuse](#) financial awards, which may be used for environmental cleanup. DNR staff around the state are available to meet with community leaders, bankers, developers and private individuals to discuss brownfield projects through [Green Team](#) meetings.

More information about the DNR’s brownfield cleanup programs and services is available on the DNR’s [brownfields webpage](#).