

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program

Bennington Landfill, Vermont

The Problem

Located in rural southwestern Vermont, the Bennington Landfill was initially a site for sand and gravel excavation. In June 1969, the landfill began receiving residential, commercial, and industrial wastes, including highly toxic substances such as paint thinner, inks, glues, solvents, and scrapped capacitors containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Harmful concentrations of PCBs, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and metals in sediments and surface waters in wetlands adjacent to the site prompted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 1989 designation of the landfill as a Superfund Site. Further research demonstrated that elevated concentrations of PCBs and metals in wetlands had reduced and contaminated the food supply for migratory birds.

Restoring the Resources

After determining that the landfill had contaminated surrounding wetlands used by migratory birds, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the State of Vermont negotiated a settlement with the Responsible Party, the Town of Bennington. As part of the settlement, the Town agreed to protect and restore wildlife habitat. At a nearby location, the Town permanently protected 14 acres of forested habitat, including approximately 6 acres of wetlands. In addition, natural hydrologic conditions at the property were restored by removing an antiquated water collection system of concrete cisterns and underground pipes. A committee of interested citizens oversaw the restoration work and created trails and interpretive signs.

A Partnership for Success

This restoration quickly developed into a strong, efficient partnership between the Town of Bennington and the USFWS. With USFWS oversight, Town employees began construction activities less than four months after the restoration agreement was reached. Use of Town

Highlights

Restored 2.8 acres of wetland and protected 14 acres of wetland and upland in perpetuity.
Total Project Cost: Funded by the Town of Bennington for approximately \$40,000
Partners: USFWS, Town of Bennington
Status: Restoration was completed in 1998; monitoring was completed in 2001.



An antiquated cistern altered natural hydrologic conditions and provided only limited access to wildlife prior to restoration.



After the cistern's removal, the natural hydrology of this woodland pool is restored and access to wildlife is improved.



Spotted salamanders inhabit the restored pools.



Interpretive kiosks inform visitors to the restoration site.

employees streamlined costs and increased the Town's commitment to the project. The Town Manager commented that "the project had been transformed from a significant financial burden on the townspeople to something that will benefit the entire community by providing an outdoor sanctuary for everyone's personal enjoyment".

For more information, contact:
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