

**INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
REVITALIZATION PROJECTS
(2003)**

In 2003, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Justice announced the selection of fifteen Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (IWG) Revitalization Projects. These projects seek to showcase collaborative interagency and multi-stakeholder partnerships in the area of environmental justice and community revitalization. These partnerships involve two or more federal agencies working in cooperation with state and local governments, tribal governments, community-based organizations, academia, business and industry, and/or non-governmental organizations. The intent of these projects is to examine lessons for the development of collaborative models that ensure problem-solving and sustainable solutions to a range of environmental, public health, social and economic issues associated with environmental justice.

The Office of Environmental Justice is committed to developing tools for constructive engagement and collaborative problem-solving. The development of collaborative models represents a significant contribution to the environmental justice dialogue. The IWG Environmental Justice Revitalization Projects are living examples of local partnerships seeking to implement such a model. Some key elements of such an environmental justice collaborative model include the following:

- Issue identification, community vision, and strategic planning;
- Community and stakeholder capacity building;
- Consensus building and dispute resolution;
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships;
- Facilitative and supportive role of government at all levels;
- Implementation; and
- Evaluation and dissemination of lessons learned.

The IWG is composed of representatives from federal agencies and White House offices identified in Executive Order 12898. (“Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations”, February 11, 1994) The IWG’s primary goal is to work with each federal agency to integrate environmental justice within its programs, policies, and activities. An important strategy to promote such integration is greater interagency cooperation and coordination within the context of multi-stakeholder collaborative partnerships. Interagency coordination and cooperation is needed to effectively identify available federal government-wide resources which are available to meet environmental justice opportunities presented by the stakeholders. In 2000, the IWG sponsored an initial round of fifteen IWG demonstration projects. Due to the success of these projects, a coherent collaborative model to address environmental justice emerged. The IWG decided to undertake a second round of such projects, to be designated IWG Environmental Justice Revitalization Projects.

Two reports which documented the development of an environmental justice collaborative model are the IWG Status Report entitled *Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: A Framework to Ensure Local Problem-Solving* (EPA300-R-02-001, February 2002, www.epa.gov/compliance/environmental_justice) and *Towards an Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: An Evaluation of the Use of Partnerships to Address Environmental Justice Issues in Communities* (EPA/100-R-03-001 and

EPA/100-R-03-002, January 2003, www.epa.gov/evaluate). For more information, please contact Danny Gogal of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice at 202-564-2576 (gogal.danny@epa.gov).

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF IWG ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE REVITALIZATION PROJECTS

Chelsea Creek Restoration Project Chelsea and East Boston, Massachusetts

In 1997, a coalition named the Chelsea Creek Action Group (CCAG) was formed around a dream that the Chelsea Creek was something more than the polluted industrial waterway that it has been for at least a century. By building community capacity to effect change and seeking environmental justice, the Chelsea Creek Restoration Project (CCRP) intends to transform the neglected, polluted Chelsea Creek into an environmental, recreational, and economic resource for Chelsea's communities as well as the region. Specific efforts include community involvement in the Municipal Harbor Planning Process, sustainable redevelopment of the Hess Oil Terminal site, and development of open spaces in Chelsea. CCRP will provide a regional model for community-based, multi-stakeholder programs to research, restore and protect urban natural resources.

Revitalization of the Magic Marker Brownfields Site Trenton, New Jersey

To reclaim the former Magic Marker site and revitalize the neighborhood, the City of Trenton, Isles—a local Community Development Corporation, and the New Jersey Institute of Technology have been engaging residents in capacity building workshops and facilitating the informed involvement of residents in the clean-up and redevelopment planning process. Over the next few years, the City plans to clean the site, build medium density housing and develop a linear park on the site. This redevelopment will be complemented by a proposed elementary school adjacent to the site and a proposed retail complex targeted for the site directly across the street from the Magic Marker site.

Empowering Communities to Secure Drinking Water in Rural Puerto Rico Puerto Rico

In 1993 approximately 20 institutions and government agencies, under the initial guidance of US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Partnership for Pure Water (PPW), and the Center for Education, Conservation & Research (CECIA-UIPR), formed an alliance to aid 250 of the low income communities in rural areas of Puerto Rico. This project will provide training and support for communities to comply with applicable regulations and to develop water infrastructure throughout Puerto Rico, focusing initially in the three municipalities of Patillas, Caguas and San Germán.

Utilizing Compliance Assistance to Achieve Community Revitalization in Park Heights Baltimore, Maryland

An innovative approach to compliance assistance for the low-income inner-city Park Heights neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland has created the partnerships and the vision for community revitalization efforts. The Park Reist Corridor Coalition (PRCC), has been working to provide auto body and repair shops in Park Heights with compliance assistance to ensure compliance with

environmental laws and to encourage environmentally sound practices. The present focus on auto body and repair shops will serve as a catalyst for much needed economic development, environmental protection, and sustainable development activities.

Vision 2020: For the Children of Anniston—Children’s Health Environmental Justice Project Anniston, Alabama

In a city historically plagued by industrial contamination and military waste and its associated controversies, a healing vision of health for children has arisen. *Vision 2020* seeks to address the health and developmental problems of children growing up in the midst of decades of environmental contamination, most notably lead and PCBs. The initiative seeks to provide Anniston with a world class education, screening, early detection, and treatment program to identify and treat health and developmental disorders at the earliest stage possible.

Glades Area Environmental Justice Training Collaborative Belle, Florida

Federal public health and environmental agencies are assisting a partnership, led by Active Citizens Together Improving Our Neighborhoods, Inc. (ACTION) and Florida Atlantic University-Center for Urban Redevelopment and Empowerment (FAU-CURE), to provide environmental justice training and capacity building for residents of the Glades Area in the Florida Everglades. The project seeks to create an informed citizenry, armed with the information and skills necessary to be a meaningful part of the decision-making process. The initial focus of this project will be drinking water quality issues and community health concerns.

The Sustainable Redevelopment and Revitalization of Princeville Princeville, North Carolina

In the wake of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Floyd in 1999, the residents of the historic town of Princeville, North Carolina made a pivotal decision to rebuild rather than abandon the first city of the United States founded by former slaves. What emerged is a bold new plan not only to rebuild the town but to make it better than before. This project seeks to ensure coordinated federal support to assist Princeville, North Carolina to achieve its vision of sustainable recovery, redevelopment, and revitalization.

The Arcade-Westside Area Revitalization Project: A Community-Based Collaboration Rock Hill, South Carolina

The Rock Hill Council of Neighborhoods, which represents 18 neighborhood associations in the City of Rock Hill, South Carolina, has resolved to engage in community revitalization to address the environmental justice concerns and remediate the devastating effects of the loss of the textile industry. Projects already underway include renovation of two abandoned textile mills into a senior citizens housing and activity center, and creation of affordable housing and business space. This partnership is now poised to aggressively seek federal assistance to fulfil the community’s multi-faceted vision of a revitalized urban core.

Waukegan Cleanup and Revitalization Plan Waukegan, Illinois

Recent experience throughout the Nation has shown that by properly linking environmental cleanup to community revitalization goals, environmental remediation projects can be a vital catalyst for unleashing tremendous environmental, economic and social benefits. An emerging case-in-point is Waukegan, Illinois, an industrial “rustbelt” city on the shores of Lake Michigan in northeast Illinois. The Waukegan community is planning and seeking ways to implement a city revitalization plan that will include a new waterfront, community sports complex, and recreational land uses.

**Project ReGeneration: Building Partnerships for Livability and Sustainability in the Greater Kelly Area
San Antonio, Texas**

The overall goal of *Project ReGeneration* is to increase efforts to identify, mobilize, and make use of federal, state, and local resources to benefit the environmentally and economically distressed communities affected by the Kelly Air Force Base conversion activities. The project will focus on identifying ways of ensuring constructive dialogue and building effective partnerships between community-based organizations, relevant federal, state, and local agencies, and other stakeholders.

**Development of a Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Park: A Tribal Lands Conservation Partnership
Eagle Butte, South Dakota**

A partnership including the National Wildlife Federation, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in South Dakota, the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeks to create a Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Park. Completion of a planning document to guide the park’s creation is the immediate goal of the effort. Ultimately, the CRST Park will increase tribal capacity in the management of tribal lands and support tribal self-determination. EPA Region 8 will also support the project by providing input on the guide as to any regulatory permitting activities that may be necessary.

**Northeast Denver Environmental Initiative
Denver, Colorado**

While it is clear that the communities of northeast Denver experience a disproportionate amount of environmental and public health risks, it is also clear that there is a broad range of groups that are working together to improve these communities. The Northeast Denver Environmental Initiative (NDEI) is poised to develop a comprehensive environmental plan to substantially improve the quality of life of northeast Denver citizens. To arrive at the plan, EPA will use a collaborative decision making model that puts the community in the forefront when identifying issues and setting priorities and provides a mechanism for government, industry, non-profits and community to work together to develop interventions. Northeast Denver will serve as a living laboratory for collaborative multi-stakeholder multi-media pollution reduction and prevention strategies.

**Tribal Wind Power – A Viable Strategy for Community Revitalization and Capacity
Rosebud Indian Reservation, South Dakota**

The Intertribal Council on Utility Policy (ICOU), a confederation of federally recognized tribes in the Northern Great Plains, has completed the unprecedented installation of a 750 kW wind turbine to be owned and operated by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. In partnership with federal agencies, ICOU seeks to demonstrate that the development of wind energy can be a viable strategy to provide for future economic, cultural and community revitalization through the development of sustainable homeland tribal economies. By promoting renewable energy generation to federal and private markets within

and beyond the region, the project also helps meet the Nation's need for renewable, clean and environmentally safe energy sources.

**Effective Solid Waste Management for the Native Village of Selawik
Selawik, Alaska**

This project addresses the critical and ongoing solid and hazardous waste sanitation problems in the Native Village of Selawik, Alaska. Institutionally, the project is bringing stakeholders into closer partnership, and strengthening recently formed valuable cross-stakeholder relationships to reduce the human health threats. The project lays the groundwork, and is a necessary step, for future planned revitalization projects.

**Enhancing Tribal Consultation to Protect Cultural and Historic Resources
Colorado, Louisiana, and New Mexico**

Through an innovative program to enhance the government-to-government relationship, this project will assist federal agencies in identifying those federally recognized tribes to be consulted regarding historic properties of tribal religious and cultural significance. The project will develop a management tool for preventing impacts to tribal traditional and cultural properties. Such a tool will utilize a dedicated interactive Web server, which when designed, built, and deployed will include information that has been verified with the participants prior to going on line or having any public access. The tribes who will be the first to benefit from this project reside in the states of Colorado, Louisiana and New Mexico.