

Blackfeet Tribe

**Blackfeet Environmental Office
Brownfields Program**
62 Hospital Road
PO Box 2029
Browning, MT 59417

Overview

- **Location:** Northwestern Montana
- **Land Area:** 1.5 million acres
- **Population:** 17,000 enrolled members, approximately 8,000 living on or near the Reservation
- **EPA Grants:** Assessment Grant, Job Training Grant, and Section 128(a) Tribal Response Grant
- **Environmental Ordinances that Cover 128(a) Work:** Yes, Solid Waste Ordinance No. 105
- **IC/EC Tracking and Public Record Website:** Yes, www.blackfeetenvironmental.com
- **Project Partners:** Blackfeet Tribe, EPA Emergency Response & Preparedness Program
- **Project Coordinators:** Blackfeet Tribe- Shawn Lahr TRP Manager, Austin Bear Medicine TRP Technician, EPA On Scene Coordinators- Curtis Kimbel, Kari Guy

General Tribal Website: <http://www.blackfeetenvironmental.com/>

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Program

The Blackfeet Tribal Response Program Grant involves identifying potential brownfield sites on the reservation; establishing oversight and enforcement authorities; establishing a public record; providing opportunities for public participation; and developing mechanisms for approval of a cleanup plan. Accomplishments achieved using Section 128(a) Tribal Response Program funding includes:

- Completed a property inventory
- Conducted environmental assessments on properties on its reservation
- Created a Public Record



Blackfeet Mainstream building was one of 13 designated Brownfields Properties demolished during this project on the Blackfeet Reservation

Project Background

Between 2005 and 2012, the Blackfeet Tribe's Brownfields Tribal Response Program completed environmental assessments and field inspections of 13 buildings located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The buildings included in this demolition project were as follows: Bakery, Big Sky Standard, Blackfeet Transit, Evan's Chevron, Fish & Game, Kipco, Mainstream, Margie Kennedy Center, Medicine Bear Shelter, Red Eagle, Seville Community Center, Sleeping Wolf, and Warbonnet Lodge. In general, the buildings were determined to be unsecured, abandoned, structurally unsound and unsafe. Several of the buildings contained trash that was improperly disposed of or abandoned containers with unknown contents. According to the Brownfields Program field inspections, a large number of homeless individuals were living in the abandoned buildings due to the closure of the Blackfeet Reservation's Medicine Bear Homeless Shelter, which contained friable asbestos, lead paint, Hantavirus, mold and methamphetamine manufacturing contamination. In addition to the homeless, children play in the abandoned buildings, tearing out insulation and further releasing debris into the environment. The Brownfields Program hired Smart Consulting and Maxim Technologies to complete Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments for several of the properties. In addition, the Tribe hired Earthtech Environmental to perform pre-demolition asbestos surveys of several additional properties. Complete field inspection reports are in the administrative record.

In August 2012 the Blackfeet Tribe's Environmental Protection Program requested that OSC Kimbel visit the reservation to view the abandoned buildings and review the field inspection reports. All the buildings in question are known to contain asbestos and, nearly all, also contain lead paint, mold and Hantavirus. One building is known to have TCE contamination which leaked from an abandoned underground tank. In November 2012 the Blackfeet Tribe formally requested assistance from the EPA Emergency Response Unit in demolishing the Medicine Bear Homeless Shelter and several additional abandoned buildings and properly disposing of the potential asbestos, lead, and TCE contaminated materials, abandoned trash, and unknown containers. Given the hazards present at the Site and the proximity to community residences and children, EPA conducted a time-critical removal action at the Site utilizing EPA's emergency response contractors.

Key Accomplishments

Brownfields TRP provided Tribal oversight for demolition of 13 structures. TRP assisted Curtis Kimbel, EPA, during the Emergency Response's demolition of the 13 sites identified by the Blackfeet Tribe and EPA as being imminent threats. All the structures were sampled to reveal more than 1 % of asbestos containing material. The demolition project began August 20, 2013 and the last building to be demolished was completed September 24, 2013. With the demolition of these sites it paved the way for future redevelopment in these vacant properties. The Blackfeet Tribe has been contacted by interested developers to open a fast food restaurant where the Big Sky Standard property is located. The Blackfeet Planning Department will be responsible for redeveloping these areas which are located in prime commercial real estate.

Demolition Sites Before & After



Browning Bakery



Big Sky Standard



Blackfeet Transit



Evan's Chevron



Fish & Game



Kipco



Margie Kennedy Center



Medicine Bear Shelter



Red Eagle



Sleeping Wolf



Warbonnet Lodge