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OTHER OPTIONS



# Remediation Project Guidance

Stakeholder Informed



# Introduction

Remediation involves the cleanup of contaminants from environmental media such as soil, groundwater, sediment or surface water, with the goal of protecting human health and the environment. The cleanup process can be subject to an array of regulatory requirements from a variety of overseeing agencies and legislation. Remediation projects can occur in urban, rural and suburban environments and have the ability to be transformative for both habitat and community.

For the purposes of WHC Conservation Certification, remediation projects will be recognized for the extent with which they have exceeded regulatory requirements in pursuit of a conservation or education program.

# Building Your Program

Projects are divided into four categories: **Habitat**, **Species Management**, **Education and Awareness** and **Other Options**. You can build a program with more than one of each category but you must associate your program with at least one habitat. This Remediation Project Guidance is in the **Other Options** category. You will be able to associate your voluntary project on a remediation site with **Habitat**, **Species Management** and **Education and Awareness** projects.



**Habitat** – Projects that focus on conservation actions to protect, restore and manage different habitats.



**Species Management** – Projects addressing the conservation needs of targeted wildlife species or groups of species.



**Education and Awareness** – Projects to improve awareness, understanding and skills relating to conservation and the environment.



**Other Options** – Specialized projects that add value to your conservation efforts.

Browse the Project Guidance library at [wildlifehc.org/pg](http://wildlifehc.org/pg).

# What Do Remediation Projects Look Like?

Voluntary projects on remediation sites that may qualify for WHC Conservation Certification include any conservation or education project under the conservation themes below, and that are incorporated into the planning, cleanup, or re-use of the property.

- Species Management
  - Avian
  - Bats
  - Pollinator
  - Mammals
  - Reptiles and Amphibians
  - Invasive Species
- Habitat Management
  - Grasslands
  - Deserts
  - Forests
  - Savannas
  - Wetlands
  - Landscaping
  - Marine Intertidal
  - Caves and Subterranean
  - Rocky Areas
- Education and Awareness
  - Formal Learning/STEM
  - Awareness and Community Engagement
  - Training
- Other Options
  - Species of Concern
  - Invasive Species - Coordinated Approaches
  - Integrated Vegetation Management
  - Land Conservation Agreements
  - Green Infrastructure

# Considerations for Corporate Lands

Projects implemented on corporate-owned lands have different circumstances and challenges to those on public lands, protected lands or wild lands.

## **Which types of remediation sites are best suited for voluntary conservation and education projects?**

Most sites involved in cleanup are well suited for incorporation of voluntary projects that could be recognized through Conservation Certification. These sites can include those that are planning cleanup, are in the process of cleanup, or have completed cleanup and require no further action.

## Addressing challenges

The corporate context presents certain challenges for implementing projects on remediation lands. Understanding these concerns and potential ways to overcome them can help your project succeed in the long term.

Concern	Response
Development of voluntary projects that go above and beyond requirements may not be a priority for the company or site.	<i>Exceeding regulatory requirements may allow a remediation project to return to community use quicker if stakeholders are engaged in project design.</i>
The potential for added costs associated with creating and maintaining habitat areas may be unacceptable to site owners.	<i>Increasing habitat functionality can be considered as part of the remedial solution, and may provide a potential cost savings to traditional physical or chemical treatment technologies.</i>
Management of some remediation sites may involve multiple parties.	<i>Develop collaborative relationships between parties and stakeholders, and establish common goals for the site.</i>
Companies may have difficulty justifying ecological reuses for small or urban sites where the potential redevelopment value may be high.	<i>Green spaces can increase the value of the holding and other nearby properties. Ecological reuse of all, or parts of the remediation site, can benefit community relations and result in more positive stakeholder engagement.</i>

Concern	Response
<p>Resources available for voluntary programs may be limited due to factor such as the high cost of the cleanup, monitoring and stewardship of closed or remote sites.</p>	<p><i>Working with partners can help leverage funding or volunteer hours for project implementation, monitoring and maintenance.</i></p> <p><i>Many cleanup sites have scheduled monitoring, which can be used as opportunities for voluntary projects.</i></p>
<p>Community engagement can present logistical or financial challenges on sites in remote locations or with public access restrictions.</p>	<p><i>Community access can be planned to minimize resources and costs.</i></p> <p><i>There may be opportunities to engage partners either off-site, such as through educational programs at schools, or remotely via online platforms.</i></p>

Concern	Response
<p>Remediation sites may be perceived negatively by the community, resulting in reluctance to visit or engage with the program.</p>	<p><i>Directly engage community members to demystify the site and its cleanup, such as by inviting community members to guided tours or open houses at the site.</i></p> <p><i>Help the community understand and support these restrictions by communicating where restrictions exist and the reasons behind them.</i></p> <p><i>Seek input from community members to provide a sense of ownership in the ultimate outcome.</i></p>
<p>Companies may have concerns about liability and may therefore be reluctant to allow employees or community members to access the site.</p>	<p><i>Companies can develop internal agreements or waivers and can offer appropriate personal protection equipment to participants.</i></p> <p><i>Companies may also wish to limit which activities can be conducted by volunteers, and require credentials for other activities.</i></p> <p><i>Many companies have insurance to cover visitor liability concerns.</i></p>



# Getting Started with Remediation Projects

**For a project to qualify toward Conservation Certification, you must be able to answer “yes” to five questions.**

1. Is the project locally appropriate?
2. Does it have a stated conservation or education objective?
3. Does it provide value or benefit to the natural community?
4. Have outcomes been measured and is there supporting documentation?
5. Does it exceed any pertinent regulatory requirements?

## **Conservation and education objectives**

It is a requirement of Conservation Certification that projects on remediation lands be designed to meet one or more conservation objectives. Objectives can guide the direction of the project, help motivate others to participate and provide a basis for evaluation.

The following are suggested objectives for projects on remediation lands. Your team may choose one or more of these objectives, or develop your own relevant objectives.

- Incorporating one or more lasting beneficial or productive reuses into the end-use of the site, such as wildlife habitat, species management, community recreation or conservation education
- Building and maintaining community support for the selected site reuses and voluntary projects
- Creating continuity with any conservation or educational uses of neighboring properties, such as integrating with adjacent parks, green spaces or educational spaces

**The following strategies are recommended to strengthen the conservation impact of your project:**

- Identify and incorporate all conservation and education goals for the site into the remediation process starting from the initial investigation and risk assessment phase
- Proactively engage and involve the community and other stakeholders in the planning, establishment and stewardship of voluntary conservation and education projects at the site, such as using required public notice or engagement periods as educational opportunities, organizing community meetings, creating a project website, or establishing partnerships with community groups
- Apply established best practices in remediation aimed towards optimizing the environmental outcomes of the project in a way that directly enhances the positive outcomes of voluntary projects
- Maintain at least one voluntary project on the ground for five or more years
- Participate in a company-level standard that commits to accomplishing cleanup, restoration and reuse of all remediation sites in the company portfolio in a way that creates positive, measurable conservation and community benefits
- Share best practices and results of conservation and education focused approaches to remediation site reuse at conferences and webinars, or through industry-wide organizations and publications
- Implement efforts to address environmental justice issues created by the contamination or cleanup
- Avoid negative environmental or societal impacts to other locations outside the site during remediation

## Partnerships

The involvement of outside groups is extremely important to the success of both the cleanup and the implementation of voluntary conservation or education projects on remediation sites. There are two types of outside group involvement: stakeholder engagement and partnership development.

Stakeholder engagement is an important aspect of the cleanup process and can greatly influence long-term success. Stakeholders may include local residents and businesses, local conservation organizations and government agencies. Actively seeking and incorporating stakeholder input can be instrumental in clarifying regulatory requirements, developing remedial goals and selecting remedial alternatives, understanding public desires for land re-use and impacts to the community, and identifying potential funding opportunities.

Partnerships forged from the early stages of remediation can help guide the vision for project development, identify local species and habitats with the greatest conservation needs, potentially cultivate volunteers for long-term project stewardship and monitoring, and align the objectives with regional conservation priorities. Partnerships with local conservation organizations such as environmental NGOs, land trusts and natural resource agencies can help to leverage funding from grants for restoration work or public access to the projects. Partnerships also provide opportunities to educate employees and community members. For example, remediation and restoration processes can be used to spark interest in science related careers among youth, and teach about environmental health, conservation, and restoration processes.

## Resources

Your project may benefit from online or printed resources available for your region to support the design, delivery, maintenance and monitoring of remediation projects.

A search for “remediation” in the Conservation Registry returns over 20 projects implemented through WHC’s certification program. This is a great place to find inspiration for your project and see what others are doing in and around your location.

The following terms, in any combination, may be useful when searching online for items related to this theme:

<b>remediation</b>	<b>sustainable remediation</b>
<b>site cleanup</b>	<b>green remediation</b>
<b>toxic site cleanup</b>	<b>contaminated site reuse</b>
<b>stakeholders</b>	<b>remediation BMPs</b>
<b>biodiversity</b>	<b>corrective action</b>
<b>Superfund</b>	<b>greener cleanups</b>
<b>brownfield</b>	<b>site revitalization</b>
<b>beneficial reuse</b>	
<b>ecological reuse</b>	

# Understanding the Application Process

## Documentation

When applying for Conservation Certification, you will provide documentation of the planning, implementation, maintenance and monitoring of your project on remediation land. The following is required documentation for projects on remediation lands; however, you may submit additional supporting materials.

**Remediation/Land Use Plan** that outlines the vision for the remediation process and includes descriptions of the roles of trustees and stakeholders, a clear vision of the desired end-use, the level of clean-up and habitat restoration needed to achieve that end-use, and nearby land uses that may impact long-term restoration and reuse. WHC Conservation values higher quality plans, which will include more of these aspects.

**Map/image** of the project area, showing the relative size and approximate location of the project (other relevant information can be shown in the map as well, but is not required).

**Photographs or videos** that depict the progress of the project implementation and management.

**Meeting minutes** or other documentation for stakeholder meetings, team meetings, etc.

**Best Management Practices** used as part of the voluntary project.

## Application questions

As you complete the application online, you will be asked the following questions about your remediation project. These questions will help us understand and evaluate your project.

	Question	Why this question is important
<b>Overview</b>	What are the conservation or education goals of this project?	<i>This provides us with an additional description of your project and how it fits into the remediation work.</i>
	Briefly describe activities taking place to address the conservation or education goals of this project.	
<b>Design Phase</b>	At what phase is the cleanup?	<i>The earlier conservation and education priorities are identified and incorporated into the remediation design, the higher the likelihood of successful implementation and strong outcomes.</i>
	When were the conservation or education goals incorporated into the overall remediation project?	
	How were the goals incorporated into the overall remediation project ?	
	Upload documentation showing the goals incorporated into the project.	
<b>Community Involvement</b>	Was the community involved with developing the conservation and education goals?	<i>Education and conservation objectives identified by community members add greater value to the project.</i>
	How was the community involved with developing the conservation and education goals?	

	Question	Why this question is important
<b>Best Practices</b>	Have industry best practices for environmental outcomes been implemented for this project?	<i>The adoption of industry best practices can decrease costs and increase successful outcomes.</i>
	What practices were used and how did they improve the project?	
<b>Alignments</b>	Is the project part of a corporate level commitment to producing environmental and community benefit through site cleanup and reuse?	<i>A corporate commitment to green remediation will create a stronger project and allow for long-term investment of time and talent.</i>
	Upload documentation of your corporate commitment.	
<b>Knowledge Sharing</b>	Does your site participate in any efforts to share the results of its conservation or education focused approach to site remediation and reuse?	<i>Knowledge sharing drives change and accelerates adoption of new approaches.</i>
	List the efforts including dates, descriptions of how the information was conveyed, and the targeted audience.	
	Upload documentation of presentations, papers or other publications.	
<b>Regulatory Requirements</b>	Are any aspects of the conservation or education project done in relation to remediation requirements?	<i>Going beyond compliance is a requirement of certification.</i>
	Explain how the project exceeds requirements.	

## Content development for Conservation Certification

To inform the development of Conservation Certification, WHC analyzed the projects it was recognizing through its certification program to assess whether they were aligned with contemporary conservation and education priorities.

Following this assessment and using information from it, WHC convened Advisory Committees around conservation and education themes to develop the content that would guide practitioners and applicants in the future. This content is the basis for the Project Guidance and the online application process.

The following provided feedback on the initial draft of the Remediation Project Guidance:

**Ann Carroll**, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
**Doug Fletcher**, DuPont  
**Frank Gallagher**, Rutgers State University  
**Rich Henry**, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior  
**Debra Hopkins**, Office of Restoration & Damage Assessment, U.S. Department of the Interior  
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**Larry Zaragoza**, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

More information can be found about this process in the “Our Impact” section of [wildlifehc.org](http://wildlifehc.org) under “Commitment to Transparency.”

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The WHC Strategy and Planning team can help you build a successful project by identifying needs, making connections with partners and resources, and providing strategies that meet business and conservation goals. Contact us today.

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Every act of conservation matters.

