

Rural Brownfield Redevelopment

Lessons Learned from Crescent Mills

RCDI Workshop

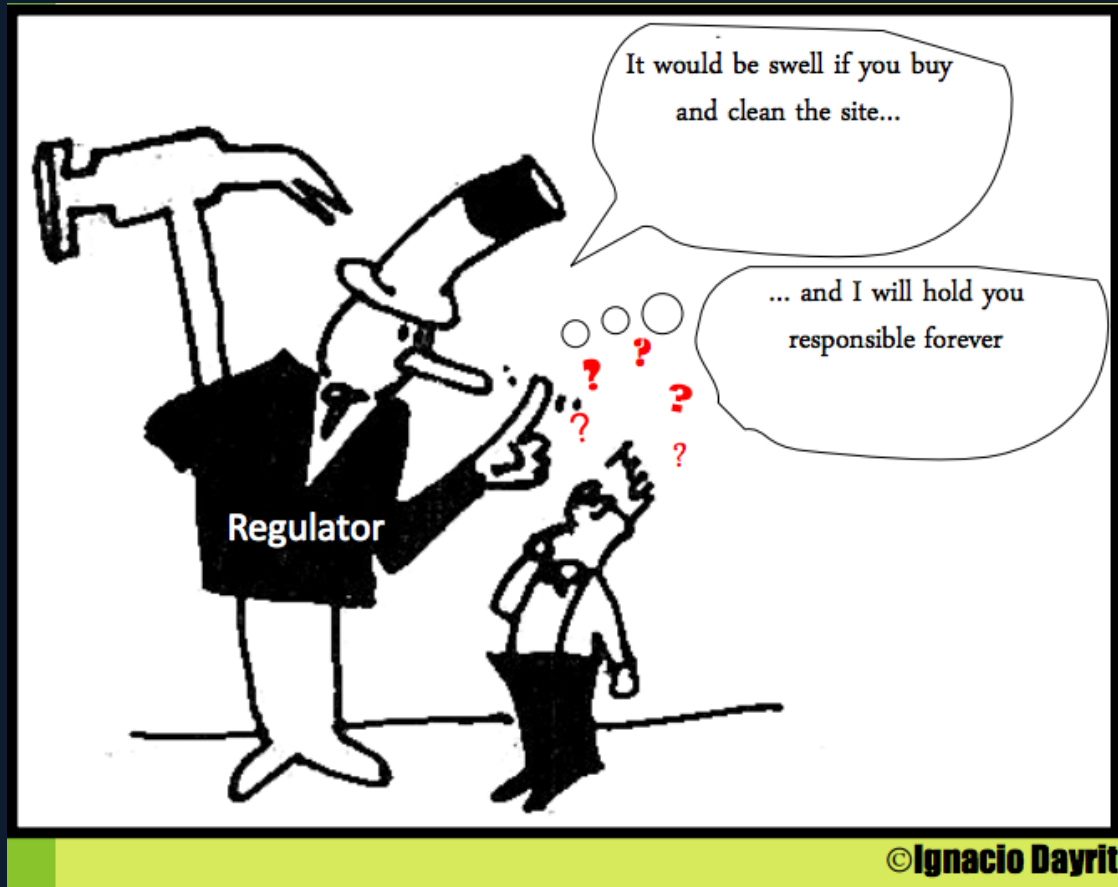
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Old sawmill sites=contaminated



Not just about toxicity, but liability



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Our story and process

- Phase I/II in 2014
- EPA and SI staff turnover=lost track of next steps
- Challenge of rural brownfields: counties lack capacity to be oversight agency
→DTSC comes in

DTSC: Data gaps!

- Not enough data for:
 - Clearance to redevelop
 - Determining appropriate cleanup method
 - Purchasing the site liability free



Phase II only covered some of the property

More sampling...

- Secured a TSI grant (DTSC), report finalized April 2017



→ Results: contamination is manageable, not significant

Moving forward...

- Contamination is understood, but how to ensure SI is free of liability?



Prospective Purchaser Agreement requires financial assurance

- Small community-based organization \neq financial assurance

Alternatives?

- Cannot afford to take on any liability
- Worked with DTSC to identify alternative strategies
- Comfort letter → Purchasing the site in next 1-2 months!

Challenges/Barriers

- \$\$
 - DTSC oversight costs
 - sampling
 - cleanup planning
 - cleanup
 - legal needs
- Schedules and timelines: lining it all up
- Lack of clarity and communication on process

Challenges cont.

- Unclear assessment and cleanup process
- What constitutes “sufficient data”?
- Investments and grants: site must be clean

Recommendations

Too many to list! =new initiative for SI

- Engage oversight agency (DTSC, RWQCB, or city/county) early.
- Map out timeline of grant deadlines
- Understand DTSC costs

Recommendations cont.

- Serious contamination? Are alternatives worth it?
- Track the process, push for what's realistic, suggest alternatives
- Secure really good legal counsel

Recommendations cont.

- EPA is a resource—use them
- Engage local stakeholders
- Brownfield cleanup=positive movement for community

Moving Forward: New Sierra Institute Initiative?

What's needed?

- Recognize that non-profits are often the only institutional entity willing to advance brownfield redevelopment in rural areas
- Remove excessive costs and delays for non-profits
- Develop a more efficient and effective process

Brownfields play a critical role in rural economic development!

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