

Acme Power Plant Project Update



An Island of Debris ~ The former Acme Power Plant sits on approximately 5.8 acres situated along the banks of the Tongue River, near the old Acme townsite. The site houses a coal-fired power plant that operated from approximately 1910 to 1976. Later, the site was used for automobile salvage and crushing, battery recycling, and other activities. The surrounding area is a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts and the Acme site, in particular, is an important piece of the area's mining history. Despite being near public access and recreation areas, the site itself is unable to support any public uses. **Anyone accessing the site (especially illegal trespassers) has the potential to track contaminants to surrounding areas and/or injure themselves amid the debris.**

Hazardous Conditions ~ Initial environmental assessments confirmed land impacted by petroleum hydrocarbons, asbestos, lead-based paint and other concerns. Contamination was identified in surface soils, groundwater, sediments, and building materials throughout the site. Additional assessments are needed to define the full extent of contamination and recommend appropriate remediation activities.

Site Stabilization ~ Limited site stabilization was completed in 2018 with funding through the State of Wyoming. Contractors for the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality removed some of the most pressing and accessible contamination at the site. While not addressing all concerns, these activities will prevent further contamination of the site and surrounding area.

Drum Contents: Over 50 unlabeled 55-gallon drums and their contents were removed from the site and taken to approved incineration facilities.

Bulk and Loose Asbestos removal: Over 60 cubic yards of loose asbestos containing materials from the buildings, storage areas, and around the grounds were removed and hauled to a licensed facility.

Other Materials: Various paints, greases, and other materials were collected and disposed of with the drum contents. Two additional truckloads of empty buckets and containers were removed.



Before and after photos of asbestos storage area in main building.
Photo credit: WWC Engineering



Before and after photos of one of the main drum storage areas.
Photo credit: WWC Engineering

For more information ~ The site is owned by the Sheridan County Conservation District, who is coordinating reclamation efforts with multiple other partners. The project website (www.acmeprojectwyoming.org) has information on the site, photos, project updates, and opportunities to share stories and ideas and make donations.

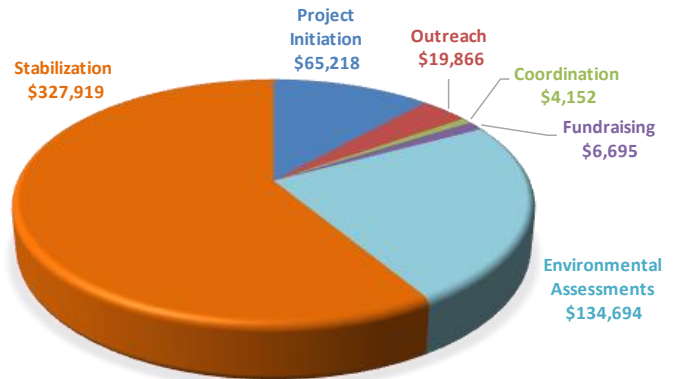
Project Vision~ The Tongue River watershed provides the water resource that drives the recreational, agricultural, municipal and wildlife opportunities for the region. Restoration of the Acme site will improve wildlife habitat and enhance existing recreation opportunities within the area. At an August 2017 visioning session facilitated by the

While no specific future uses have been determined, project partners identified expectations that must be maintained:

- ~Ensure Public Access/Use
- ~Protect Water and Land Quality
- ~Capture Historical Importance

Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields group, participants heavily favored uses that included some sort of outdoor recreation and an appreciation of the area history. These sentiments were echoed at a January 2019 public update meeting. The site's proximity to the Kleenburn Recreation Area, the Black Diamond Interpretive Trail, the Tongue River Water Trail, and other public access areas make it an ideal location for expansion and continuation of those uses.

Project Investment~ As of December 2018, over \$550,000 have been invested in the project from a combination of state and federal programs, foundation grants, private donations, local government sources, and other partner contributions. Assessment and stabilization activities constitute approximately 85% of the project costs, most of which have come from state and federal programs. As the project progresses, expenses associated with reclamation, outreach and reuse planning will increase. Private grants and donations help leverage state and federal grant programs.



Next Steps~ To realize the Project Vision, the site must be reclaimed to be safe and suitable for public use. Final completion of the project is expected to be achieved within a 5 to 10 year timeframe, depending on the level of contamination and reclamation needed.



Additional site assessments. Comprehensive site reclamation of soil and groundwater require further assessment to determine the extent of contamination and develop a remediation plan. The site was awarded a 3-year EPA Assessment Grant that will also include development of a remediation plan with cost estimates. These activities are expected to begin in the summer of 2019. Regular public updates will be offered through meetings, local media, and the project website.

Building assessments. Although architecturally and technologically innovative for its time period, the building itself has been identified as impacted by asbestos, PCBs, lead-paint and various hydrocarbon products. No decisions have been made on whether it can be incorporated into future uses. Structural evaluations and other assessments will be completed as funding becomes available.

Site Reclamation. Site reclamation will be funded by programs through the WDEQ, EPA, various public and private partners, and donations, upon completion of assessments and a final remediation plan.

Future use decisions. Specific remediation alternatives will depend on future community reuse preferences. While focused discussions will be more appropriate after the assessments, community input will continue to be sought throughout the process.

Photo credit: Kevin Knapp, Little Goose Multimedia

Acme Working Group~ Formed in December 2017, the Acme Working Group serves in an advisory capacity to the Sheridan County Conservation District, who currently owns the site and is responsible for overall project coordination. The purpose is to provide input and assistance for the technical aspects of assessment and reclamation; the group will be expanded to include other interests as necessary.

- ~Sheridan County Conservation District
- ~Sheridan Community Land Trust
- ~The Nature Conservancy
- ~Sheridan County
- ~Wyoming Game and Fish
- ~Padlock Ranch
- ~Sheridan Travel and Tourism
- ~Montana Dakota Utilities
- ~Sheridan County Historical Society and Museum