

Toolkit for Greener Practices
Showcase of Ideas
Option 1-4: Green Space Development

Enhanced or Restored Habitat: Sandhill Crane Natural Area, East Bethel Closed Landfill

Site conditions:

The East Bethel Landfill was removed from the federal Superfund Program's National Priorities List after the MPCA and the site owner signed a Binding Agreement. Environmental cleanup for a variety of landfill-related problems is now under way through the innovative Minnesota Closed Landfill Program.

Preventive activity description:

As part of the Closed Landfill Program, a land management plan must be implemented. The East Bethel Landfill land management plan led to the integration of the site into the Sandhill Crane Natural Area. The municipality and MPCA created open space suitable to migrating Sandhill Cranes, offsetting the encroaching development around the East Bethel closed landfill. Conservation practices will be instituted under the Master Plan to maintain native plant diversity and prevent invasion by non-native plant species.

Benefits realized through the Pollution Prevention/Sustainability approach:

- The Sandhill Crane Natural Area (533 acres) integrates a federal Superfund site into green space.
- With the completion of the land management Master Plan for the natural area, the managing partnership will apply for moneys, which were collected from insurance carriers through the Natural Resource Damages (NRD) provision of the federal Superfund law. The Closed Landfill Program (CLP) should be eligible for NRD moneys, which are administered through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). NRD is a provision that provides for replacement of lost habitat due to impacts regulated under the Superfund law. The CLP gets its authority from the state Superfund law. Under that authority, the CLP can offer each of the insurance carriers for the 106 eligible landfills within the CLP the opportunity to take care of their NRD liability at the same time they are taking care of their redemption liability. Once deposited in Minnesota's NRD kitty, the funds recovered for NRD liability can be distributed towards habitat replacement efforts. Although the MPCA and the DNR are co-trustees of the NRD kitty, NDR administers it. MPCA CLP staff will be requesting a distribution directly to the East Bethel Sandhill Crane Natural Area now that the Master Plan has been published.

Keys to Success

- Joint partnership between the DNR, East Bethel City Council and Parks Commission members, Anoka County and the MPCA (Interagency Management Committee, or IMC)

- Funding commitments from each member of the IMC
- Steering committee made up of residents and DNR experts
- MPCA staff champion, deftly working the innovative provisions of the Minnesota Closed Landfill Program

Regulatory administrative/legal tools:

- Memorandum of Understanding and a Management Plan
- Natural Resource Damages, Superfund Law
- Innovative state Closed Landfill statute