

August 28, 2013 Environmental Justice Workshop,
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“Brownfields” are defined as abandoned or under-utilized commercial and industrial properties, typically in urban areas, which can be beneficially revitalized. Brownfields are inseparable from issues of social inequity, racial discrimination, and urban decay, because of the clearly established relationship between race and class and disproportionate environmental burdens.

Brownfields revitalization must address community needs and goals including housing and educational and employment opportunity. Further, ‘revitalization’, is not the same as ‘redevelopment’, which too often results in community displacement through gentrification.

The EPA, and by extension the State and local programs, are required to include:

- Public Participation and Community Vision and
- Informed and Empowered Community Involvement.

Funding from the Brownfields program requires that there is an opportunity for meaningful involvement for all people, and is the reason we are here today.

My experience is that this can be summed up as the Golden Rule: treat others as you would like to be treated. To me this means informed consent; respecting that as adults we have a right to all of the information necessary to make decisions for ourselves.

In the Southwest District, I have been impressed with the work of groups and individuals to accomplish this, including the projects in Tampa for the health care clinics, the IKEA store, the Encore area and Ella housing development, and in the Heartlands (Central Florida area) in also meeting community needs. In these efforts we see that a timely and complete evaluation of a cleanup proposal is important to those who work for property revitalization.

In the Southwest District office, we are dedicated to offering our expertise and assistance in helping to negotiate the State Waste Cleanup rule so that properties can be assessed, cleaned and the contaminated property cases resolved as efficiently as possible. This is a priority of the District Brownfields coordinators, the Environmental Services Administrator, the District Director, and our management in Tallahassee. Please contact me, the Northeast District Brownfields coordinator, Darrin McKeehen, or our Statewide Brownfields Liaison, Kim Walker, at any time.