

Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessment

What makes a property a “Brownfields site?” Historical information tells us every property with commercial history does not necessarily require environmental cleanup. It is impractical to go to every **potential** Brownfield and collect samples for identification of chemicals present at the site. Even if money were no object, you still couldn’t test for everything, everywhere on every property. So, where does a community begin?

Brownfields Assessment – Phase I

The Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) is a preliminary look at a potential Brownfield property. It is a “limited” evaluation which involves records research and an on-site visual reconnaissance. Phase I ESAs do not require sampling or laboratory testing. Phase I ESAs identify whether or not a recognized environmental condition¹ exists. If a recognized environmental condition is identified, it does not necessarily indicate that contamination exists or that cleanup is required. The Phase I ESA report does not require regulatory or other action except in special circumstances of imminent threat to public health. Conducting Phase I ESAs for the Carter Lake Brownfields Assessment project provides essential information to:

- Provide liability protection to owners
- Help decide where actual testing should occur when necessary

Brownfields Assessment – Phase II

The Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) includes a more thorough review of conditions at the site. Phase II investigations typically include:

- Advancing soil borings and collecting soil samples;
- Installing groundwater monitoring wells and collecting groundwater samples from each well; and
- Analyzing samples for the presence of contaminants.

Phase II investigations involve evaluating the types of contaminants present on the property and how much of the contaminant is present. If contaminant concentrations are severe, some form of remedial action is likely.

*ASTM E1903 Standard Practice:
Phase II Environmental Site Assessment
Process*

“The purpose of this practice is ... to provide assistance to users in satisfying the appropriate inquiry element of CERCLA's innocent purchaser defense, as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 9601(35)(B), where a previous assessment satisfying that element identified recognized environmental conditions. This guide also is intended to assist a user in gathering reliable information about a property's environmental conditions to guide the user's business decisions.”



For questions and comments, please contact:

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¹ Recognized Environmental Conditions are defined by ASTM E 1527-05 as “the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products on a property under conditions that indicate an existing release, a past release, or a material threat of release of any hazardous substances or petroleum products into structures on the property or into the ground, groundwater, or surface water of the property.”