



CALIFORNIA LAND RECYCLING CONFERENCE

Imagine | Innovate | Implement
September 29 – October 1, 2026 | Foster City

Building Stakeholder Confidence in Self-Directed Cleanup 9/30/2026



OFFICE OF BROWNFIELDS
Department of Toxic Substances Control | Cleanup in Vulnerable Communities Initiative



CENTER FOR CREATIVE
LAND RECYCLING
RECLAIM. CONNECT. TRANSFORM.

SPEAKERS



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GSI Environmental, Inc.



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Cox, Castle & Nicholson, LLP



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Winefield & Associates, Inc.

Today's Agenda

- Developer and investor brownfield acquisition criteria
- Challenge 1: no LSRP program
- Challenge 2: agency NFA rates
- Guiding principles for self-directed remediation projects
- Examples



W&A Brownfield Acquisition Criteria

1. \$2M – \$20M “clean” market value
2. Cash flow projection with >10% annual IRR
3. Highly-desirable development potential and/or ability to “remediate and operate”
4. Nice to have: third-party funding sources
5. Preferably in California (where Cal-EPA’s new attenuation factor has upended everything)

**Criteria Can Only Be Met with
Definable Schedule and Costs**

Time and Costs: LA Gas Station Example

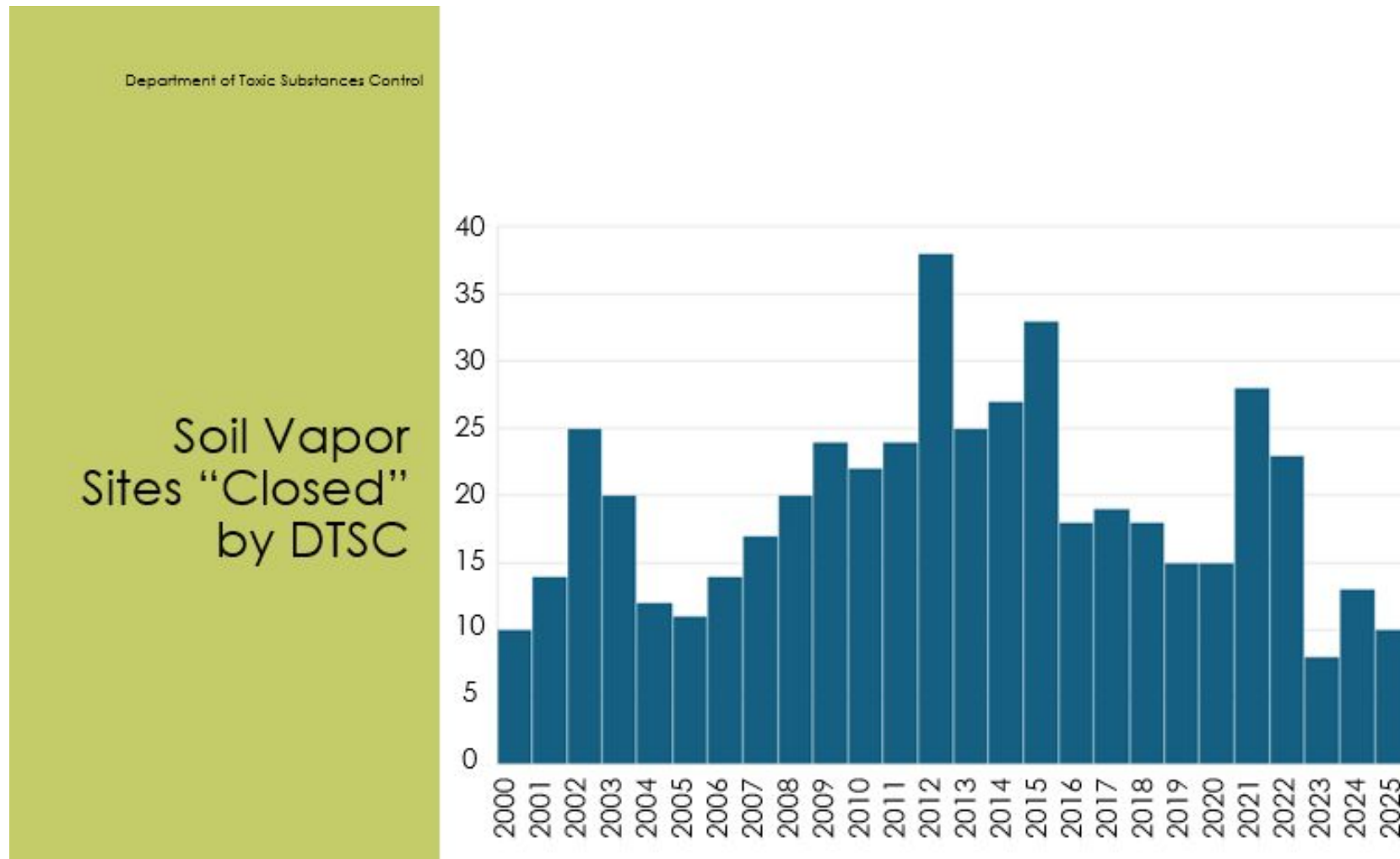
Owner	<i>Original Owner</i>	<i>Winefield & Associates</i>	<i>Current Developer</i>
Environmental Activities	1999-2016	2016-2020	2020-Present
Environmental Costs	\$1,500,000	\$1,300,000	\$700,000

NEVER AGAIN!

Challenge 1: No LSRP Program

1. A rigorous state licensing program that oversees contracted environmental professionals who manage investigation, assessment, and remediation activities as well as issue NFA/closure letters. They are held to a strict code of conduct and continuing ed requirements.
2. NOT a program to replace existing regulators
3. Can effectively reduce report review backlogs
4. Dramatically increases the number of NFAs issued annually, thereby bringing many more brownfields to beneficial use
5. Exists in NJ (LSRP), CT (LEP), MA (LSP) but not here!
6. Note: California trying to pioneer City self-certification under AB 304

Challenge 2: Case Closure Rates



Challenge 2: Case Closure Rates (cont)

- **Cost and time to closure of regulatory engagement**
 - Project timelines not material in regulatory process
 - Rigidness of agency process
- **Oversight agency staffing challenges**
 - Changes in agency staff causing repetitive work or changes in direction
 - Increased review times
- **Site closure uncertainty**
 - Is there a path to NFA?
 - What does the end-point look like?

Challenge 2: Case Closure Rates (cont)

DTSC and Regional Boards New Flavors of Case Closure

- **No further action**
- **Low-threat underground storage tank (UST) case closure policy** – Water Board's policy specific to petroleum USTs
- **Certified remedy with land use control** – annual inspections and five-year reviews
- **Remedy construction complete** – remedy in place as designed with long-term operation and maintenance
- **Suitable to occupy** – Remedy functioning such that proposed occupants will not be exposed to acceptable risks

Guiding Principles for Self-Directed Remediation Projects

Hardly all-inclusive!

1. Hire a consultant with a successful track record for the oversight agency and strong balance sheet.
2. Meet debt provider's environmental criteria.
3. Remove contaminant sources.
4. Confirm that groundwater is not threatened.
5. Establish a site-specific attenuation factor for VOCs.
6. Establish that there is no unacceptable human health risk.
7. Act as if our consultant is an LSRP – robust documentation.
8. Consider paying for an environmental consultant, loyal solely to debt provider, to peer review.

Self-Directed Remediation Examples (1 of 3)

Southern California:

- Acquired a suspected contaminated lot in Ventura County
- Expected development of multi-family housing
- Former dry cleaner operations
- Conducted a Phase I and Phase II ESA with focus on VOCs
- PCE/TCE vapors slightly exceeded residential ESLs (but < commercial), pivoted to commercial/industrial
- Groundwater recorded at > 200 ft bgs
- Develop site-specific AF and conducted a HHRA
- Shared data with financiers and received their blessing
- In escrow with self-storage developer as “clean”

Self-Directed Remediation Examples (1 of 3)

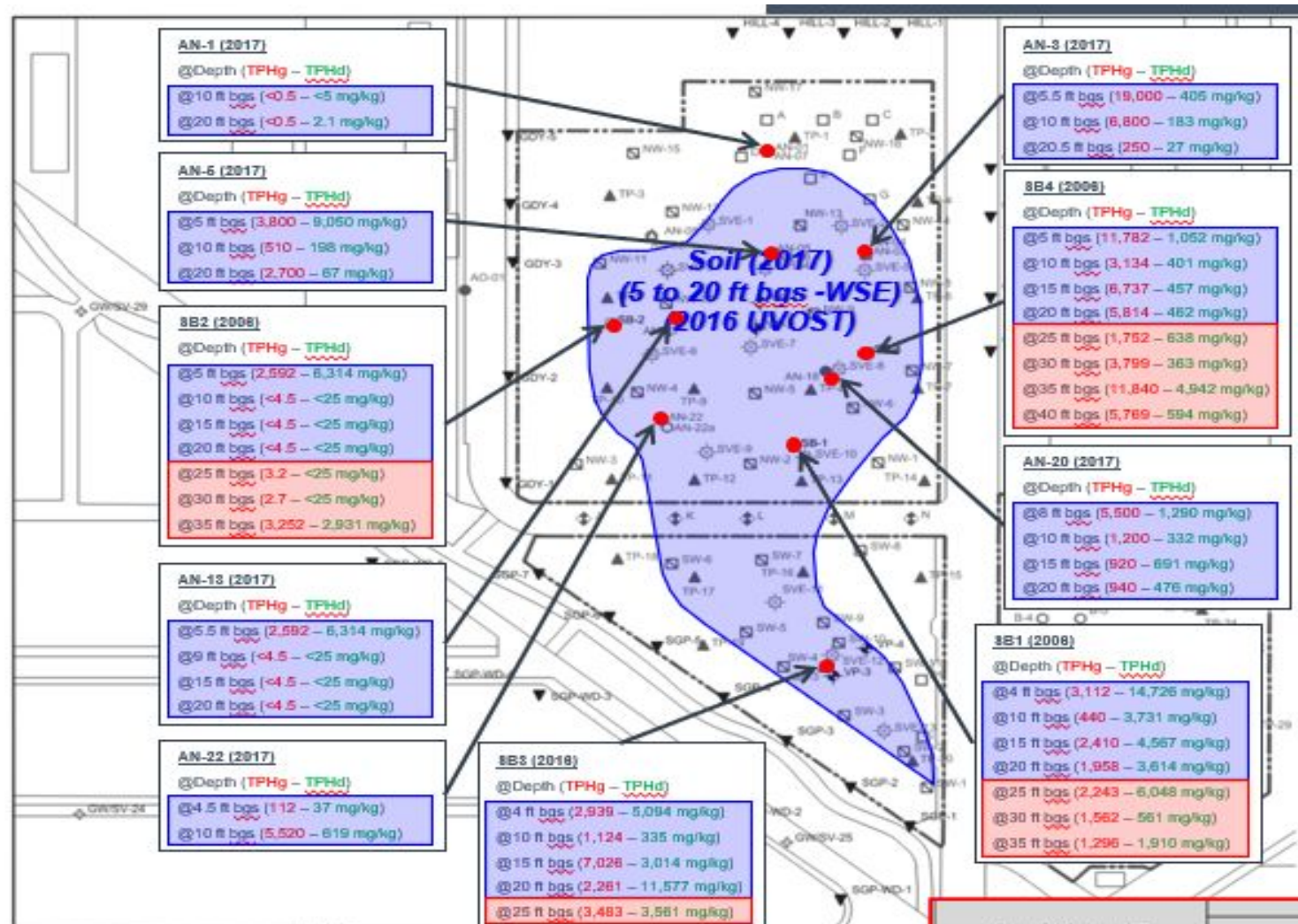
Southern California:



IN PROGRESS – Former Oil Refinery Aerial Photograph (1994)



IN PROGRESS – Former Oil Refinery Representative TPH in Soil



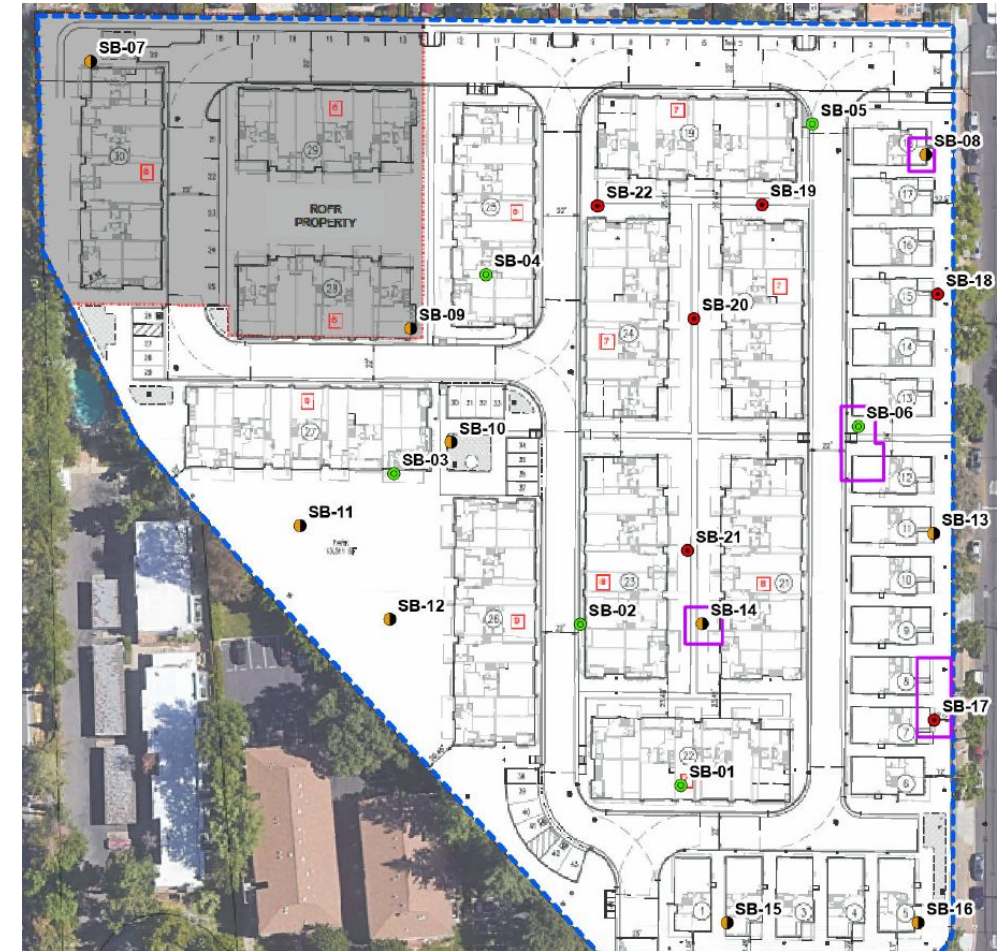
IN PROGRESS – Former Oil Refinery Planned Townhome Development



Self-Directed Remediation Examples (2 of 3)

Northern California:

- Former outpatient/residential mental health facility □ residential
- Phase I ESA identified historical agricultural use: 1930s-1950s
- Phase II ESA identified arsenic and pesticides co-located and exceeding residential screening levels in shallow soil at four locations
- Remedy – excavation at four locations
 - Remedial goal – concentrations of arsenic and pesticides below screening level
 - Sidewall and excavation bottom samples collected
 - Excavation areas expanded until remedial goal met
- Post-excavation SLRA
- Site Management Plan prepared outlining soil remediation and general soil management procures
- Remediation completion report documenting removal action and post-remediation conditions



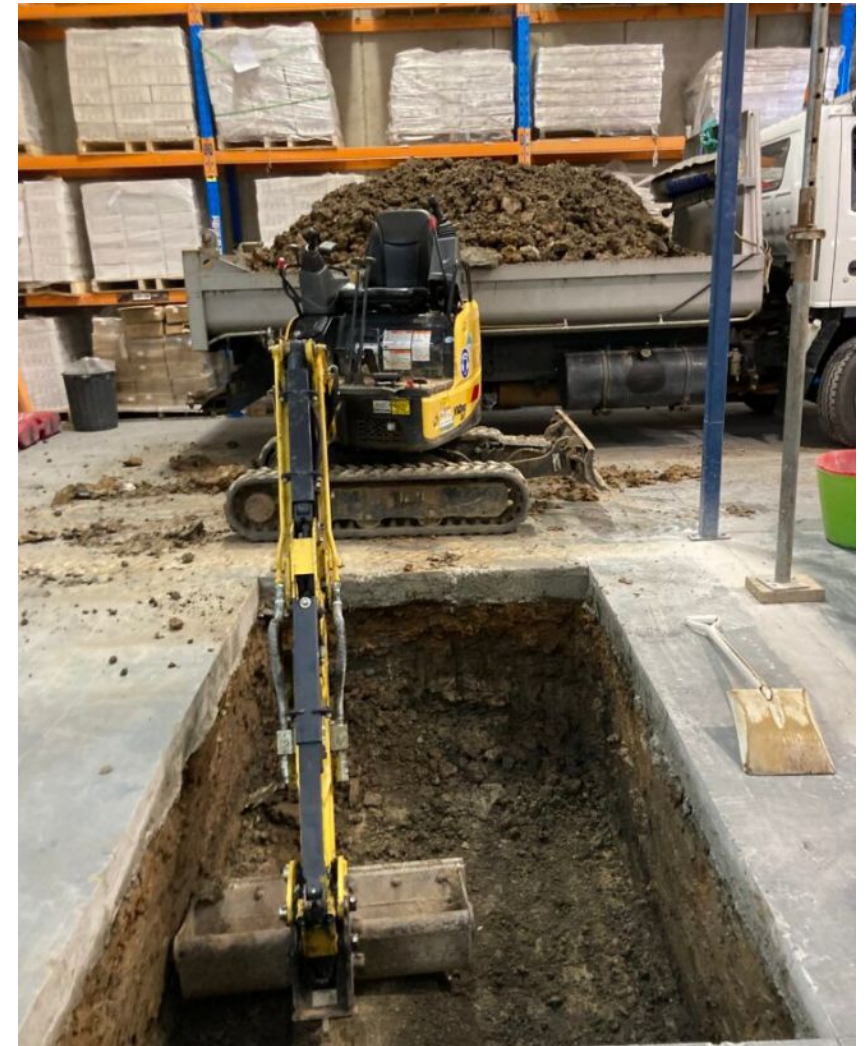
Self-Directed Remediation Examples (3 of 3)

- Auto-Body Repair □ Industrial Building
- Phase I ESA identified auto-body use and associated site features as RECs
- Soil and soil vapor sampling performed during due diligence
- PCE found at low concentration in near-surface soil beneath paint booth, but not detected in deeper or surrounding soil samples
- Soil vapor sampling identified low concentrations of PCE in soil vapor originating from paint booth
 - < Residential SL at site boundaries
 - > Industrial SL near former paint booth



Self-Directed Remediation Examples (3 of 3)

- Targeted soil removal
- Confirmation soil sampling
- Post soil removal site wide soil vapor survey
 - All detections < Industrial SL
- Soil Management Plan (SMP) implementation during slab removal and site-wide grading
 - No observed potential impacts or soil with PID readings on targeted and grid screening
- Letter reports of removal work and post removal soil vapor data and SMP implementation
- Stakeholders, including project lender and insurer, satisfied and project completed



Questions / Discussion

Matt

Winefield, MS, MBA, PE

Winefield & Associates
REAL ESTATE VENTURES



Keith
Walker

 COX CASTLE



Jennifer

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 **GSI**
ENVIRONMENTAL





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THANK YOU!

IMAGINE, INNOVATE, IMPLEMENT
THE FUTURE OF LAND RECYCLING



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