Green Cleanup Standard Initiative

June 2009 Update

Purpose

To develop, through a consensus process, a green cleanup standard and verification system that evaluates and recognizes efforts to maximize the net environmental benefit of cleaning up contaminated sites, an approach known as green remediation or green cleanup. The goal of the standard is to establish a uniform approach, with incentives, to encourage property owners, regulators, responsible parties, developers, and communities to use green cleanup practices during project planning and implementation.

Approach

In conformance with the Standards Development Organization Advancement Act of 2004 and the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1996, EPA will not develop or adopt a standard. Instead, EPA will collaborate with a standards development organization (SDO) accredited by the American National Standards Institute. A green cleanup standard would increase the use of green approaches by:

- Providing uniform definitions, consistent methods, mutual expectations, and common goals that can be used by all state and federal cleanup programs without modification to current policy, guidance, or regulation
- Offering a consistent approach that overlays the various regulatory frameworks making it easier for the regulated community to implement
- Rewarding responsible parties for the extra effort involved in green cleaups
- Offering a framework for the new tools being developed to evaluate impacts from cleanups
- Building upon existing state and local government incentives being developed for green cleanups

EPA established a federal and state cross-program workgroup to: (1) identify the potential benefits associated with a national standard for green cleanups; (2) provide recommendations on the process for developing a standard and options for verification and incentives; (3) develop a draft framework for a green cleanup standard; and (4) ensure input from the cleanup community during standard development. EPA anticipates that use of the standard would be voluntary for the federal cleanup programs.

Potential Components of a Green Cleanup Standard

- Minimizes total energy use and maximizes use of renewable energy
- Minimizes air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions
- Minimizes water use and impacts to water resources
- Reduces, reuses, and recycles material and waste
- Optimizes future land use and enhances ecosystems
- Optimizes sustainable management practices during stewardship

Benefits

Benefits for site owners may include federal and state agency recognition, enhanced public acceptance and corporate reputation, and possible qualification for government tax credits, loans, or rebates. Benefits to cleanup programs include increased sharing and leveraging of resources to develop, implement, and promote greener cleanups. Additional state incentives will be identified in a paper being developed by the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials (ASTSWMO) Greener Cleanups Task Force. Communities will benefit from enhanced quality of life associated with a more holistic approach to the cleanup and reuse of contaminated land.

The Green Cleanup Standard Initiative is sponsored by the U.S. EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) and EPA Region 3's Hazardous Site Cleanup Division and Land & Chemicals Division. The Green Cleanup Standards Workgroup includes representatives from all OSWER cleanup programs, EPA regions, and states.

Project Progress

- Researched similar standards and their development processes
- Coordinated with EPA's Standards Executive and the National Institute of Standards and Technology to ensure compliance with government policies associated with standards development
- Developed a communication plan to ensure EPA's framework for a green cleanup standard meets stakeholder needs
- Finalized a workplan to describe objectives and document activities to move the concept forward
- Provided updated briefings to OSWER and Office of Site Remediation Enforcement (OSRE) senior managers at EPA
- Continued to coordinate with ASTSWMO's Greener Cleanups Task Force, the Interstate Technology & Regulatory Council (ITRC) Green and Sustainable Remediation Team, and similar efforts related to green cleanup
- Developed criteria to evaluate expertise and interest of perspective SDOs and conducted interviews with SDOs
- Opted to collaborate with ASTM International as an SDO
- Conducted outreach on EPA's approach and draft framework through webinars and presentations at numerous conferences and meetings across the country
- Solicited and incorporated public feedback on the draft framework posted on EPA's CLU-IN website from April 1 through April 30
- Posted project updates on EPA's CLU-IN website periodically

Upcoming Activities and Working Timeline

- Finalize EPA's framework for a green cleanup standard (June 2009) and post it on the CLU-IN website
- Meet with ASTM International on the standards development process and begin collaboration to ensure EPA's framework is incorporated in future ASTM International standards (June 2009)
- Finalize an option paper on green cleanup incentives and certification (September 2009)
- Continue outreach to stakeholders

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Web Links

EPA CLU-IN/Green Remediation: http://www.cluin.org/greenremediation/subtab_b5.cfm

ASTM International: http://www.astm.org/DATABASE.CART/WORKITEMS/WK23495.htm

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