

## Post-Remediation Habitat Restoration Provides Long-term Benefits to an Underutilized Site A Case Study of the CSXT Valley Park Conservation Certification Project

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CSX Transportation (CSXT) continues to seek beneficial reuse options for its non-operating, postremediation properties. To that end, in 2012, CSXT partnered with the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC), a nonprofit, non-lobbying organization dedicated to increasing the quality, quantity, and diversity of wildlife on corporate, private, and public lands. The WHC works with CSXT and other stakeholders to identify opportunities for habitat enhancements on underutilized railroad properties and then implement and monitor those habitat enhancements through its Conservation Certification™ program. This presentation presents a case study of a habitat restoration projects at a former remediation site that was entered into the Conservation Certification™ Program and the benefits that CSXT has realized through the program.

CSXT's Valley Park Site, in Hagerstown, Maryland, encompasses approximately 125 acres including approximately 41 acres that were used as a rail tie treating facility between 1932 and 1953 and then as a staging and switching yard for railroad cars by the Western Maryland Railway Company into the early 1980s. The Site was remediated under the Maryland Voluntary Cleanup Program in 2007, and remediation activities included clearing, excavating, backfilling, and revegetating a large portion of the site and lowerpermeability capping of a major stormwater diversion channel running the length of the site that was constructed by the City of Hagerstown as part a municipal storm-water management improvement project. A post-remediation redevelopment option was not available following site work, and the site remained vacant and unutilized. In 2014, CSXT decided to implement several habitat enhancements and to enroll the site in the Conservation Certification™ program.

Working closely with a wildlife management team consisting of the WHC, Geosyntec Consultants, and CSXT, two habitat restoration projects were implemented, including (i) an early successional habitat management project that maintains meadowland areas in the remediated areas and provides diverse habitats for nesting and cover; and (ii) a raptor management program. In addition to the obvious ecological benefits resulting from the habitat enhancements, CSXT has also realized multiple additional social and economic benefits, including, but not limited to: (i) improved community relations and employee morale; (ii) reduced maintenance costs through the implementation of a rotational mowing program for the early successional habitats; (iii) increased site activity and a site profile that helps to identify and deter littering and illegal dumping activities; and (iv) an active, viable raptor habitat that helps control burrowing animal populations that could potentially damage the capped areas.