

SLOSS PROPERTY

Five-Mile Creek Greenways Project is Turning Idle Brownfields into Recreational Resources

ADDRESS:	3531 Railroad Street, Fultondale, AL 35068
PROPERTY SIZE:	300 acres
FORMER USES:	Coal mining, coking, and strip mining operations
CURRENT USES:	Dormant, wooded area
EPA GRANT RECIPIENT:	PROJECT PARTNERS:
The Black Warrior-Cahaba Rivers Land Trust received a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant.	Alabama Cities of Birmingham, Brookside, Center Point, Coalburg, Graysville, and Fultondale; Jefferson County, AL; Greater Birmingham Regional Planning Commission; local nonprofits; and private organizations.



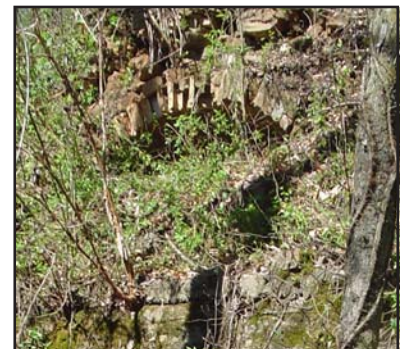
For additional data and geographic information for this and other Brownfields Grants, please visit EPA's:
Envirofacts - www.epa.gov/enviro/html/bms/bms_query.html
Enviomapper - www.epa.gov/enviro/bf

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

As far back as the late 1800s, Jefferson County, Alabama became a hub of coal mining, coking (processing coal to form a condensed, nearly smoke-free fuel), and other industry to support the City of Birmingham's burgeoning steel industry. However, in the decades after World War II, technological advances and a general decline in U.S. steel production led to decreased demand for these industries, and many of Jefferson County's coal-producing and other industrial properties were abandoned. Recognizing that these idle properties—many of which were located along scenic Five-Mile Creek—could provide significant recreational value if restored, a partnership emerged in 2002 to transform this former industrial region into a 27-mile greenway with parks and paths. The partnership is led by the Black Warrior – Cahaba Rivers Land Trust, an Alabama conservation organization focused on land along rivers and streams. At the time of this writing, assessments funded by EPA grants have been conducted on nine properties within the project area. These include the Sloss property, a 300-acre property used heavily for coal mining and coking, and later, for strip mining. Though the site was reforested in the 1980s, approximately 20 of its original, turn-of-the-century coke ovens remain on the property in good condition.

KEY GREENWAY PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Assessments discovered lead and other heavy metals contaminating the soil.
- Leveraged more than \$54,000 in additional assessment funds from local, private, and other federal entities.
- Spent \$3 million for land acquisition totaling more than 350 acres, and \$4.2 million for recreational park development, water quality studies, and remediation of the Creek.
- Conducted community "stream cleanup" events, drawing hundreds of people, and involved local schools in water monitoring and other scientific activities related to the Creek Greenways Project.



A long-dormant coke oven on the Sloss property.

OUTCOME:

Cleanup is ongoing at the 300-acre Sloss property, which will eventually be part of the Five-Mile Creek Greenway Project's 27-mile network of parks, open space, and trails. The partnership plans to preserve the property's remaining coke ovens as reminders of the area's industrial history. While it could take as long as 20 years for the entire Greenway Project's completion, many of the Project's targeted, former industrial areas have already been cleaned up and made available to appreciative local communities as natural and recreational land.