

(An) Abandoned Drycleaner Brownfield in Rural Alberta: A Costly and Dangerous Family Legacy

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This presentation explores the decommissioning, assessment, and remediation of an abandoned drycleaner in a small town in central Alberta. The drycleaner was abruptly abandoned in the early 2000s, and remained untouched and unoccupied until 2017, when the executor of the family will was notified of the property.

The drycleaner closed with little notice in the early 2000s following a family tragedy. The clothing, linens, equipment, residence, and chemicals were left largely untouched until 2012. Sometime in 2012, a broken water pipe resulted in approximately 2 metres of standing water persisting in the basement (and residence) for several weeks. The water was removed, and the property again remained dormant until 2017, precipitating the growth of mould and significant damage to the residence and site.

Trace Associates Inc. was contracted to evaluate the environmental status of the Site, including the potential environmental liability for the purposes of divestment. Work included the removal of clothing, linens, and process equipment. Materials were recycled or donated where possible. Derelict dry cleaning equipment required special environmental and health and safety considerations. Chemicals required specific assessment and disposal. Flood-damaged property included a former living space, process equipment, chemicals, a kitchen, and a full freezer that had sat inoperable and untouched for years. This decommissioning process incorporated the unique considerations of stakeholders, including the family, the former occupants, neighbours, and former customers.

Soil and groundwater impacts were identified during subsequent environmental assessments, which precipitated the development of site-specific guidelines. Remediation considerations included the presence of underground utilities, as well as the proximity to adjacent structures, including the derelict property. Following successful remediation, the property was sold to a local landowner in consultation with another third-party environmental professional.

Michael Lupart

Michael Lupart is a Partner, Senior Environmental Scientist, and Division Manager, Calgary, with Trace Associates Inc. (Trace), and has been working in the environmental industry since 2005. At Trace, Michael is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and leads the Calgary office. Michael oversees work as the Principal-in-Charge for a variety of market sectors and clients. He is responsible for senior technical oversight, client liaison, and successful project execution within the real estate, government, oil and gas, and industrial sectors.

Michael directly supervises and mentors junior, intermediate, and senior consultants. Mr. Lupart's expertise and passion is in managing and conducting technically challenging projects on expedited turnaround times or with unique stakeholder considerations.