

# Brownfields

## Success Story

### A Tasteful Redevelopment for a Former Gas Station

*Northampton County, Virginia*

Every town has one: a once historic and central automotive stop on the main street corner turned abandoned eyesore. The pattern was no different for the small town of Cheriton in Northampton County, Virginia. A Texaco Gas Station had been lying idle for years, after its long life housing several businesses since 1936. While in a great location for potential business, the site's history in petroleum transfer and automotive repair left the property with potential environmental and community health concerns warding off any investors. Instead of continuing to drive by and turn a blind eye, the Barrier Islands Salt Company, with help of Northampton County, saw an opportunity to better both their business and community by taking on the property.

#### The Opportunity

With funding from a US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), supplemented by a Phase II ESA, identified historic petroleum releases and a 27-year-old underground storage tank (UST) system as recognized environmental concerns of the site. In response, the buyers were able to negotiate with the site owner to have current UST system properly closed and removed in accordance with state requirements. The tanks and dispensers were removed, and the samples collected during a Phase II showed no impacts from petroleum products above regulatory levels. The former gas station was now ready for redevelopment and the Sea Salt Production company was ready to start renovations.



Uncertainties of what remained from a Former Gas Station & Auto Repair Shop property dissuaded potential businesses from making an investment.

**EPA Grant Recipient:**  
County of Northampton

**Grant Types:**  
EPA Assessment Grant

**Former Uses:**  
Gas Station & Auto Repair Shop

**Former Uses:**  
Commercial Sea Salt Production



Aided by an EPA assessment grant, the former gas station was revitalized into a sea salt production facility.



The new Barrier Island Salt Company production facility is located near the Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve. The environmental protection helps keep the salty water pure for production.

**“We created  
Barrier Islands  
Salt Co. to celebrate  
the wild & pure  
waters surrounding  
Virginia's barrier  
islands.”**

David & Anna Lee,  
Owners  
Barrier Island Salt Company

## Present

Owners David and Anna Lee opened the Barrier Island Salt Company and Tasting Room in Cheriton to produce pristine barrier islands sea salt. Their technique has not changed much from the old days when gallons of sea water were boiled in large kettles to create salt crystals. The Lees were delighted when water tests from around the barrier islands showed the purity of the water with toxins and pollutants registering very low.

Anna Lee explains, "Because these barrier islands are protected by the Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve, the environment has been allowed to flourish...The water here is naturally filtered. The restored eelgrass meadows, oyster reefs and the unique ecological structure of the area all play a part."

The Lees also explain their motivation and provide more history on their [website](#). "We created Barrier Islands Salt Co. to celebrate the wild & pure waters surrounding Virginia's barrier islands. We love creating a product that captures the flavor of this magical coastal wilderness for customers to take home and enjoy. The Barrier Island Salt Co. is currently the only commercial hand-harvested salt producing company on the Eastern Shore."

As coastal restoration of the Virginia barrier islands brought great ecological success to the region and Barrier Island Salt Company, we hope this brownfield restoration will bring even more triumph. By locating Barrier Island Salt Company and Tasting Room on this property and relying on the traditional process of making sea salt, the Company has preserved a historic practice in a historic building, all the while highlighting the value of the pristine coastal lands in the County.

### For more information

Visit the brownfields website at  
<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields>  
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