

Team Name & School: GroundBreakHers, Mundy's Mill Middle STEM School

Teacher Name: Gentry, TeLisa

# Green Heart Action Plan

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## Problem Definition/ Problem Statement

Clayton County has a history of pollution from factories, landfills, and places like Fort Gillem. Over time, harmful chemicals have soaked into the soil. This can make the ground weaker and unsafe in some areas. It can affect homes, parks, plants, and even cause more flooding. Many people may not know that pollution from the past still affects our community today. The problem is figuring out how this pollution has harmed our soil and how we can make our county safer and healthier.

## Root Cause of the Problem

Fort Gillem was a U.S. Army base in Forest Park, Georgia, that opened in 1941 and closed in 2011. The base helped move supplies and equipment and support the military for many years. Over time, some dangerous chemicals, called PFAS or "forever chemicals," got into the soil and water. These chemicals can stay in the environment for a very long time. People living nearby were worried that harmful fumes might come into their homes. Cleanup is happening now, and scientists are still studying the area to make it safe.

## List at Least Three Credible Resources that Support Your Problem Statement

[Fort Gillem PFAs Lawsuit](#)  
[Clayton County, GA Water Quality Report](#)  
[IDR Environmental Services - When Soil Becomes Contaminated With Toxic Substances. What Happens?](#)  
[Where Does Volcanic Soil Contribute To Farming In Hawaii?](#)  
[Volcano Watch — Kīlauea Volcano's East Rift Zone eruption: here's what happened in 2016](#)

## Proposed Solution

Scientists have studied how metals can help clean and improve soil and water. In 2016, Hawaii had a long drought, with very little rain. Rivers and streams had less water, underground water went down, and the soil became worse, making it hard to grow crops. At the same time, a volcano erupted, spreading ash and lava full of nutrients like iron, magnesium, potassium, calcium, and phosphorus. These materials helped fix the soil and made it healthy again. That's why Hawaii's soil is so fertile. It gets important nutrients from volcanic activity. We propose that creating a similar



situation in Clayton County could help to repair the damage caused by pollution.

## How We Will Measure Our Success

We can test the soil over time to see if the added materials have helped the soil. We would need to test the soil for the important minerals that we know are healthy for the soil. The proof will also be seen in how healthy the soil becomes through the growth of trees and plants.

## Who are Decision Makers We Need to Reach

U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff  
Congressman Hank Johnson  
Governor Brian Kemp

## Our 3-5 Step Plan for Change

1. Study the soil: Scientists could test the soil in different places around Clayton County to see where it is the weakest and to see which important nutrients are missing from the soil.
2. Add mineral-rich materials to the soil: We could add small amounts of crushed metal-rich materials, like iron and magnesium, to the soil to mim the volcanic ash in places like hawaii that have very fertile soil]
3. Composting: Using food scraps, yard clippings, and leaves from the community could be turned into compost and added to the soil to add nutrients and improve the soil.
4. Plant more trees and plants: After improving the soil in different areas, new trees, grass, and gardens could be planted.
5. Monitor the soil: Scientists test the soil over time and add more or new materials, if needed.

## Impact & Equity

We need to make sure that we are speaking up about how companies and factories are sometimes dumping pollution into Clayton County. They know they cannot do the same thing in other counties, so they take advantage when people do not speak up. We need to bring more awareness about pollution in Clayton County as well as other places around the United States.

## What Help We Need to Be Successful

School should teach us more about how to test the soil and how to hold companies and factories accountable for how they dispose of their waste.

