

WPCAMR Watershed Coordinator's Report

Andy McAllister

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PROJECT SITE VISITS, PLANNING MEETINGS, PRESS EVENT ATTENDANCE:

Attended Loyalhanna Creek Mine Drainage Coalition meetings in Greensburg.

Participated in monthly Ohio River Watershed Celebration planning meetings in Pittsburgh as part of the celebration's planning committee. This year's Ohio River Watershed Celebration will be held on September 25th. Announcements of the date and the link to the Celebration's website will be made in Abandoned Mine Posts throughout the months of August and September.

Attended and took notes for the DEP Treatability focus group meeting in State College in June . Notes are posted on BAMR's website.

Attended and exhibited WPCAMR display at the West Br. Susquehanna River Symposium in State College.

Continued to perform final reviews and comment on revised C-SAW fact sheets and handouts and attended C-SAW meeting in New Cumberland. Also assisted with a Growing Greener application for this round for CSAW.

Attended Blacklick Creek Watershed Association meeting in Indiana.

Attended a meeting called by PFBC at the Dawes farm in Alexandria. Those involved in AMR work were called together to discuss public access opportunities in areas affected by Abandoned Mines.

GENERAL OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND MEETING/EVENT ATTENDANCE:

Continued writing Abandoned Mine Post Newsletter articles, sending them out and archive the postings on the blog site. Archived Abandoned Mine Post articles may be found at the Abandoned Mine Posts blog site: www.amp.wpcamr.org.

Assisted Regional Coordinator and AML Campaign with crafting response to OSM's Proposed SMCRA rulemaking document.

Continued various work-related administrative duties. Compiled meeting notes from last WPCAMR quarterly meeting on May 15.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT OUTREACH

Attempts were made to get appointments with three Conservation Districts this quarter. However, due to various scheduling conflicts they were unable to meet with the Watershed Coordinator during the quarter. The Watershed Coordinator will continue his Conservation District outreach and expects to complete all district visits by the November WPCAMR quarterly meeting.

Continued assisting Elk Conservation District on AMD/Mining History educational materials development.

Assisted Huntingdon CD with finding help on creating an OM&R Plan as part of their Watershed Planning efforts.

Toured the site of a Watershed Renaissance Initiative project, Bear Run, in Indiana County to discuss project details and needs. Accompanied by Indiana County Watershed Specialist, Anne Daymut and Tom Clark from SRBC, the Watershed Coordinator learned about the work being done and conducted on-camera interviews for a future “WPCAMR Video Diaries” segment.

2008 AMR CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

The organizational conference calls continued on a regular basis for the 2008 Pennsylvania AMR and Coal Mining Heritage Conference. WPCAMR played the lead role for this year’s conference: taking meeting notes and organizing communications and meeting dates with other members of the committee and subcommittees. The Watershed Coordinator had been responsible for communicating with the host facility (Ramada Conference Center, State College) regarding logistics and orchestrating details surrounding the food, rooms, and conference schedule. Additional work responsibilities involved coordinating the entertainment, awards, and work assignments for the volunteers manning the registration desk and serving as moderators, etc. and serving as the Master of Ceremonies at the Conference. The incredible effort put forth by members of the planning committee helped to make this year’s conference one to remember.

The conference activities began on Monday August 11th with an optional pre-conference bus tour of AMR/ARD sites between State College and Philipsburg. Thirty-one people attended the bus tour. From the feedback Bruce and Andy got from the tour attendees, the tour was a success thanks to the efforts of DEP and Dr. Art Rose.

Fifty-one presenters gave talks over the three day conference with a total number of attendees over 180. A day and a half was dedicated to AMR presentations with a day and a half dedicated to Coal Mining Heritage presentations. Two “Mayfly” awards were given out at this year’s conference—one to Russ Wagner and one to Margaret Dunn in recognition of all their efforts over the years to further Abandoned Mine Reclamation.

Nationally renowned Guitarist Ken Bonfield drove down from Massachusetts at his own expense to entertain the crowd at the reception on Wednesday evening and Andy presented a rough draft of his historical documentary, “Out of the Ground—Western Pennsylvania’s Coal Mining Experience”.

Presenters' powerpoints and papers from some presenters who didn't have powerpoints will be available on the conference website: www.treatminewater.com

The conference planning committee will soon begin analyzing the conference evaluations and planning for next year's conference. From all indications and preliminary reviews from the evaluations and exiting comments, the conferees were very happy with this year's conference. They found it enlightening as well as enjoyable and found the AMR presentations particularly informative. We've also heard a lot of positive comments about the mining heritage segment.

With all of the extra work involved in adding the Mining Heritage component, the conference planning committee will be considering whether or not the mining heritage component should continue for the 2009 Conference and beyond.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTARY

After 14 months of work, the vast majority of which has been on personal time and at personal expense, the Watershed Coordinator has completed a very rough draft of an historical documentary entitled, "Out of the Ground—Western Pennsylvania's Coal Mining Experience". Western Pennsylvania's coal history remains largely unknown to the general public and, as time continues to pass, our largely unknown and perhaps unappreciated heritage will pass with it. The purpose of this project is to educate a broad audience about Pennsylvania's bituminous region history. While not comprehensive in its treatment of all events in the bituminous region, "Out of the Ground" seeks to give the audience a sense of what life was like during the nearly 100 year period of coal's industrial reign in Western PA and by doing so, hopes to spur interest in our shared history and foster a renewed sense of pride in our reclamation efforts. For those who are interested in viewing the rough draft, it is scheduled to be presented at the end of the August 2008 WPCAMR meeting. Comments are welcomed.

PREVAILING WAGE

The Watershed Coordinator recently received a communication from his prevailing wage contact at the Pennsylvania Association of Builders and Contractors. The contact explained that some groups/associations will be meeting to see if they can form a coalition to address the prevailing wage issue and wanted to know if WPCAMR would like to have me attend the meeting. The meeting will be held on September 3rd at the PA State Association of Boroughs office in Harrisburg. The group wishes to address two things:

1. What specific, focused, prevailing wage issue can we join together and go after? (eg. raising the prevailing wage threshold, etc)
2. How to go about achieving that goal (legislation, time frames, public outreach, etc.)