

# AmeriCorps Outreach Assistant Report

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As a relatively new addition, I have now been a part of the WPCAMR team for three months while my service term will extend until the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, 2009. Within this period, my service as an AmeriCorps resource is geared towards public outreach and the overall promotion of abandoned mine reclamation efforts. Specifically, our efforts focus on the expansion of current ideas and the development of new methods to increase the efficiency of WPCAMR outreach efforts.

## Getting Started

As a new addition, I spent time with Andy and Bruce to learn about WPCAMR and the core issues dealing with abandoned mine reclamation. Understanding the nature of the abandoned mine waste is a key in getting people involved in reclamation efforts. As the year progresses, I expect this theme to continue to influence our outreach efforts.

As part of this process, I've been attending project meetings with Andy and meeting Conservation District staff and going on site visits to understand the outreach needs of the Districts and our AMR community.

In addition, I spent time examining the methods currently used by WPCAMR for promotion and outreach. With the remainder of my service, I hope to help WPCAMR develop techniques and find ways to make effective use of their outreach efforts.

## Abandoned Mine Posts

In November 2008, Andy videotaped segments of the Casselman River Watershed Tour and Summit in Somerset County, PA. The tour promoted the scenic beauty of the area and many of the water quality improvement projects located within the watershed.

I gathered all of the video footage from the tour and put together a short video diary to promote the efforts of the watershed association and the conservation district to restore the watershed. This video was posted on the Abandoned Mine Post Blog in January 2009. A DVD was also created for the Somerset Conservation District.

I've also assisted with editing Abandoned Mine Post Articles, working on new topics, and archiving existing AMP articles on the blog site: [www.amp.wpcamr.org](http://www.amp.wpcamr.org)

## Water Monitoring Workshop

At a conference hosted by the Eastern Coal Regional Roundtable (ECRR), Bruce and Andy videotaped a day-long workshop on water monitoring. The idea was to be able to make and distribute a video of the workshop as a low-cost substitute to actually being there. I was charged with assembling the videos into a number of chapters using video editing software to produce a DVD. I was successful in arriving at the end goal. However it became clear this was a very cumbersome process. We discussed that doing it this way was too inefficient as a low cost way of providing this kind of service in general. As a result, I began to think about other, more efficient ways to achieve the same goal.

## Examining Other Outreach Efforts

In exploring alternatives, I asked the question, "Wouldn't it be nice to simply record a computer screen as someone was presenting a PowerPoint?" A Google exploration yielded just the thing. "Screencasting" software does just that, but can be a bit pricey. To save money, I wondered if it would be possible to have the screencasting software only be on a WPCAMR computer and have that computer accessed from someone else's computer who would give the presentation. I thought back to free software we used in college called "Logmein" that does just that. It seemed the marriage of screencasting and remote access software might be the ticket to easily and efficiently record PowerPoint Presentations by someone who might be half a world away and be captured on a WPCAMR computer. I brought the idea to Bruce and Andy and they loved the idea. They had some suggestions of their own.

We've decided to pursue this idea to record presentations on a variety of topics so that they can easily be distributed by DVD or over the Internet to anyone who might need them. I'll be exploring this approach and report on how it's worked at the next WPCAMR meeting. Hopefully this project will perfect the techniques needed to put these ideas into practice, allow us to easily capture presentations on a bunch of timely topics, and make them available to a wider audience cheaply.