

WPCAMR Watershed Coordinator's Report

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PROJECT SITE VISITS, PLANNING MEETINGS, PRESS EVENT ATTENDANCE:

DEP SW Regional Watershed Roundtable, Greensburg
Ohio River Watershed Celebration Planning meetings, Pittsburgh
Watershed Specialist Annual Meeting, State College
EPA Region III Volunteer Monitoring Conference, Carlisle
NPDES Strategy Meeting, Harrisburg
Dent's Run Passive Treatment System Site Visit, Benezette
2010 PA AMR Joint Conference, Pittsburgh
Robindale Golf Outing, Blairsville
Lancashire #15 Groundbreaking Ceremony, Spangler
Somerset Watershed Summit, Windber
Loyalhanna Watershed Coalition meetings
Laurel Highlands Conservation Initiative meeting, Fallingwater

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

I continue to work on our Abandoned Mine Post (AMP) Newsletter articles and develop new articles based on interesting and timely events. Archived Abandoned Mine Post articles may be found at the Abandoned Mine Posts blog site: www.amp.wpcamr.org. Plans are to continue publicizing watershed successes, watershed specialists, and newly completed projects...we have a few more articles/videos in the works.

As a result of a suggestion given at the February WPCAMR meeting to use AMP to get the word out about Watershed Specialist funding, we've have started a new AMP series entitled, "Tales from the Creeks". This series is meant to educate the public on the value of Watershed Specialists and instructs them on how to "take action". It will continue for several months. I'll cover this more in my report on the Watershed Specialist Advocacy Project.

I continued to assist Elk County Watershed Specialist, Kim Bonfardine in developing her outreach materials and video. I visited the Dent's Run Passive Treatment System in Elk County during this quarter to film Kim testing stream samples and instructing High School students.

2010 AMR CONFERENCE: LOOKING AHEAD

Bruce and I continue to work with the American Society for Mining Reclamation (ASMR) and the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) on the details of a joint AMR conference in Pittsburgh, June 5-11, 2010. It will be held at the Radisson Green Tree. The theme is: "Bridging Mining Reclamation, Science, and the Community".

The 2010 conference involves: ASMR, The PA AMR Conference, the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI), and OSM's Technical Transfer program...essentially, four conferences in one. There will be two sessions; one for the peer-reviewed technical papers that are a staple for ASMR and OSM conferences, and one session called, "Science, Community, and Reclamation" that will have the mix of technical and non-technical presentations...more of the flavor of the PA AMR Conference. The committee expects this conference to be a big one and one that will be a great experience for everyone.

We've been working with the Joint Conference Committee to craft a call for papers and other submission materials which are now completed. There are two "tracks", the first is one that is more typical of the peer reviewed "ASMR-type" presentations, the other track is more typical of our PA AMR Conference which includes technical as well as non-technical presentations. **If you are interested in presenting at the 2010 Joint Conference, please go to the website and submit an abstract.** Bruce and I have been to several meetings with the 2010 committee and several conference calls to plan for this conference. We hope to have funding in place for scholarships but need to iron out some details with the rest of the Joint Conference Committee. More information will be presented as plans for this conference develop. Bruce is actively working on the conference website with OSM staff. There's a lot yet to be fleshed out on that. The website is: <http://www.pghminingreclamationconf.com/> Check back often during the coming months as more information is posted on the website.

2009 OHIO RIVER WATERSHED CELEBRATION

Originally, the cruise was to be held on Thursday September 24th but, due to the G-20 event, the committee decided to move the cruise to the following Thursday, October 1st. There were two boats again this year, one for the adults to network and the other for school children. This year, the Port of Pittsburgh was the prime sponsor. The Port staff were very excited to be a part of this and are very aware of the good work being done by the districts and watershed groups that leads to improvement downstream. The Port is looking forward to being a part of the 2010 Cruise and looks forward to publicizing the good work going on upstream.

PREVAILING WAGE COALITION UPDATE

No new activity to report this quarter about the coalition however, I have been in contact with Bureau of Labor and Industry staff and they would like to make a Prevailing Wage presentation at the February WPCAMR meeting to answer your questions and explain the ins and outs of working under the Prevailing Wage law.

WATERSHED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT PROGRAM (WCAP)— A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

The language allowing the WCAP funds to be used as match for other federal programs has been re-inserted into the FY10 Appropriations Bill...thanks in part to WPCAMR's constituent Districts and members of our watershed community in Pennsylvania and elsewhere making their voices heard in D.C. The bill was in "conference" in the Senate for quite awhile this summer but in the past week, it passed the Senate and is on its way to the White House to be signed by the President. Why is this important? If we can match WCAP funds with as many other funding streams as possible, that will help local non-profits get more done. If we don't use WCAP funds because of this match problem, it is entirely plausible that WCAP will be used less and less by watershed groups. This chain of events could then lead the appropriators to think that WCAP funding is not needed by the reclamation community. Our friends at the Eastern Coal Regional Roundtable (Bruce in on their Board) were also instrumental in helping to push this issue and alerting their constituency in the rest of the coal states in Appalachia. ECRR engaged US House Rep Nick Rahall who was quite supportive in having the specific language re-inserted into the House version of the bill.

WATERSHED SPECIALIST ADVOCACY PROJECT

We're very pleased to report that the DEP has affirmed the value of the Watershed Specialists by renewing the funding for their contracts from 2010 until June 2012. This is very good news and it is especially meaningful considering the state's financial situation and budget cuts. We understand that there are many supporters of the program from within the DEP and we are grateful to them for coming "to bat" for the Watershed Specialists!

The Abandoned Mine Post e-newsletter requesting that everyone "take action" to extol the virtues of the Watershed Specialist program, met with a great deal of success. We are gratified that members of the watershed community responded with letters to their legislators and Secretary Hanger.

Understanding that this success is merely a "reprieve", we will use the next two years to continue to publicize the value of the Watershed Specialist program with the ultimate goal being some sort of dedicated funding source for that program. We also will continue to offer our assistance to PACD in fashioning a Watershed Specialist Fact Sheet.

ROBINDALE ENERGY ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF OUTING

Many, many thanks to Robindale Energy for once again including WPCAMR as one of the recipients of its Annual Charity Golf Outing. As the case every year, quite a few people turned out for the event and I had a chance to speak about WPCAMR's work and mention the reclamation success stories coming from the field. The donation to WPCAMR exceeds \$9,000.