

WPCAMR Regional Coordinator's Report

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The Potential For WPCAMR's Involvement With A Mine Water Use Project

At the May WPCAMR meeting, the Board agreed to get an attorney on retainer to look over the confidentiality agreement for this potential project. Over the summer, Greg Phillips and I had discussions with our Attorney and the Attorney for the gas company. WPCAMR's attorney had questions regarding the agreement and the questions are now in the hands of the gas company. We are waiting on their response before things progress.

A Forum To Discuss AMD Use By Gas Industry

Together with Trout Unlimited, WPCAMR put together a forum in June to discuss the challenges and potentials for the use of AMD by the gas industry. Attendance was good and we had representatives from Conservation Districts where gas reserves and AMD resources overlap,, select watershed groups in that same area and representatives of the gas industry and DEP to discuss hurdles and ways to make the idea of using AMD a reality. We see this as a stepping stone to build bridges between industry and our reclamation community. We suspect there will be more events in the future.

WPCAMR 2013 Proposed Budget

I've put together the proposed 2013 WPCAMR budget for the board's consideration. As you can see, I've put the 2012 budget numbers alongside it as well as the estimated total expenditures for 2012. Given that our 319 operating grant remains flat lined and our expenses continue to rise, we wind up drawing more and more every year from other sources, principally our General Fund. Robindale energy did not have its golf outing this year and we're not entirely sure if it will happen next year. This lack of funding creates a serious shortfall in our income. The budget will be presented in New Business.

Grants

We've continued to have applications for our Quick Response program since the May WPCAMR meeting. The program continues to be a successful avenue for funding for urgent repairs of Growing Greener eligible projects. A Growing Greener application was made for Quick Response VII this fall.

We were contacted by DEP regarding a new 319 grant for 2013 to 2014. We had to put in an application through the Growing Greener process.

For several years, we have had a Growing Greener Grant to provide subsidizing funds for iron oxide recovery. Bob Hedin was the contractor. Due to the economic downturn several years ago, the industry wasn't very interested in the recovered iron oxide. Fortunately, just before the grant was to expire in June 2012, Hedin was able to complete the work recovering iron oxide.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

STATE

Senate Bill #1346 in the PA General Assembly

In November 2011, Senate Bill #1346 was introduced in the Senate. The sponsors are: Kasunic, Yudichak, Soloby, Hughes, and Fontana. The Bill was referred to the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee in the Senate on the same day. In a nutshell, the bill addressing liability issues for landowners and shale gas companies who wish to use AMD for gas well development. The last action reported on this bill is that it was passed by the Senate last month. It is unlikely that any further movement will occur on this bill until perhaps, spring of 2013.

FEDERAL

AML Funds Update

In July, 2012, the federal transportation bill was introduced in the US Senate. Senator Baucus of Montana proposed an amendment to SMCRA which limits the payout to certified states to \$15 million annually. At this time, that affects Wyoming which had been getting \$150 million/yr. The President signed that bill into law. Afterward, there was considerable concern about how the language in the amendment would affect uncertified states. We worked with the DEP and the PA Delegation regarding these concerns. The result was language inserted into the Continuing Resolution at the end of September which, according to the Congressional Research Service, rectified any potential shortfall in funding to uncertified states such as Pennsylvania. However, another issue is looming on the horizon. If sequestration occurs, the AML fund distributions to the states could be cut by over 7%.

OTHER ITEMS

WPCAMR Strategic Planning

Since the May 2012 meeting, the WPCAMR Strategic Planning efforts have been going strong. We have been working on the plan with Tom Grote throughout the summer. With the plan nearing completion, Tom will be present at this meeting to update the Board on the strategic planning activities and guide us through a prioritization process.

2012 Statewide AMR Conference

The 14th Annual Statewide AMR Conference was August 2-4, 2012. The venue for the Conference was the Ramada Inn and Conference Center in State College. Overall, the conference was another success with approximately 120 attendees. Presentations ranged from Operation and Maintenance to concerns about tick-borne diseases while working in the field. WPCAMR continues to be part of the planning committee for 2013 and we've already begun planning activities for the 15th anniversary conference in August. The conference website is: www.treatminewater.com

Anne will also provide more information on the activities surrounding the conference planning in her report.

Speaking at the Shale Gas Insights Conference

I was very proud to have been invited to speak for WPCAMR at the 2012 Shale Gas Conference in Philadelphia in September. I was part of a panel speaking on the potential for using AMD. As far as I could tell, WPCAMR was one of only two environmental organizations asked to speak at the conference. We hope that future dialogue with that industry will result in a productive relationship with the reclamation community.

Speaking at the Ohio River Basin Alliance

I was asked to speak to the ORBA in Pittsburgh in September about the power of partnerships in Pennsylvania, specifically on how Conservation Districts and Watershed groups work with all parties to get the job done. Attendees were primarily from government organizations (Army Corps of Engineers) but was also comprised of watershed-related non-profits from multiple states in the Ohio River Basin.

WPCAMR's Annual Audit for 2011 and Upcoming for 2012

WPCAMR's annual audit was completed in May by Henninger and Associates from Greensburg. Overall, the audit was very positive and management recommendations were provided. A copy of the letter is provided for the Board. If the Board decides to choose Henninger for 2012, we will be working closely with Henninger and Associates to provide information for the 2012 audit beginning in January.