

Some musings on the future Title IV Funding in PA

Bruce Golden, Regional Coordinator, WPCAMR Jan 2008

Version F

- 1) Do all Priority 1's. With respect to the Priority 2 inventory of projects, the DEP should
 - a) further update and prioritize those projects with respect to value to the Commonwealth.
 - b) implement an AMR implementation schedule based on the Priority 2 sub-prioritization, anticipating some probability of having inadequate resources to accomplish the entire inventory.
 - c) Address associated AMD problems as a part of the reclamation process.
 - d) Emphasize reforestation using ARRI Forestry Reclamation Approach as post reclamation land use.
 - e) Use geomorphologic principles in designing landscapes which sustainably drain water.
- 2) Take full advantage of the new 30% set-aside provision for AMD by requesting the full 30% annually, allowing for a divergence by taking a lesser percentage only in exceptional situations. (The set-aside money becomes state money that can earn interest and is not subject to time limitations for usage.)
- 3) Advance a comprehensive policy on the wise use of the set-aside funding including:
 - a) Revisiting and being guided by the principals in "PA's Comprehensive Plan for Abandoned Mine Reclamation", and modified to suit times.
 - b) Allowing Operations & Maintenance activities for treatment systems to be funded so systems can operate into the foreseeable future (including strategies that will allow optimal use of funding for the greatest overall benefit, e.g. establishment of trust funds, establishment of BAMR "BD" crews that provide maintenance services and technical services, laboratory analyses of water samples, quick response programs.)
 - c) Use of the most appropriate technologies (to include both active and passive elements, in-stream dosing), in a given situation by performing cost/benefit analyses for various treatment strategies and optimizing short term and long term costs with reliability.
 - d) Encourage research and development of promising treatment methodologies through demonstration projects.
 - e) Establishing engineering standards (perhaps performance standards) when funding (passive treatment) systems.
 - f) Chemically monitoring systems post construction.
 - g) Requiring proper characterization of AMD discharges (generally at least 2 years of monitoring) prior to committing to final design and construction of systems.
 - h) Prioritizing AMD projects with respect to value to the Commonwealth.
 - i) Implementing AMD projects with respect to value to the Commonwealth.
 - j) Establishing a grants program encouraging local watershed groups' participation in sponsoring reclamation projects where monies may be leveraged.
 - k) Expanding BAMR's in-house capabilities with respect to being able to select, develop, and implement AMD projects; gearing-up for large influx of funding, and using outside consulting and construction.
 - l) Emphasizing AMD Source Abatement wherever possible as a generally superior alternative to treatment of AMD.
 - m) Working cooperatively with industry whose economic and civic interests dovetail with reclamation interests.
 - n) Work cooperatively with other agencies and departments with overlapping interests, e.g. with the 319 Program in BWM. Enhance communication channels so one hand knows what the other is doing.

Related –

- Overhauled 105 permitting is needed so it is uniform across the Commonwealth and which recognizes the inherent value of reclamation projects by removing non-productive obstacles.
- Review "Action Plan For MRAB Orphan Mine Discharge Task Force Resolutions" for further recommendations.
- The watershed movement in PA is in jeopardy. Without the state's recognition of the value these volunteer groups bring to the Commonwealth and a willingness to provide a base level of support, a significant portion of this resource will likely wither away.
- The Prevailing Wage Law in PA may cause far less reclamation to be done than if it were not in place. Legislative action is needed.
- With Growing Greener's allocation for AMD all but spent, Title IV funds and 319 funds will be the only significant funding sources left for AMD in the Commonwealth.