

WPCAMR Regional Coordinator's Report

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Grants:

319 Grant Renewal

WPCAMR's current 319 operations grant runs out on June 30, 2012. However, in June we received another grant to extend our 319 grant until June 30 2013. We're very grateful to the DEP for this new grant!

Iron Oxide Recovery Grant

WPCAMR was awarded an extension to its Iron Oxide Recovery Grant with Hedin Environmental. The gist of the grant is to provide trucking subsidy for transporting the iron to a processing plant and to make it easier to retrieve the iron at certain selected sites. This grant extension will expire on June 30, 2012.

Quick Response Continues to be Successful

Shortly after being granted an extension for Quick Response III, we were able to complete that grant and send the final report to DEP in early August. \$130,000 was expended on eight projects—all but one were AMD projects.

Quick Response continues to be a successful avenue for emergency funding for repair of Growing Greener eligible projects. Currently, we are expending funds from Quick Response IV which has a deadline of June 30, 2012. At the rate we've been going in all of our Quick Response projects, I suspect we will be closing Quick Response IV by or just after the deadline.

With the Board's approval, we will be applying for a Quick Response VI grant for the current round which closes on August 26th

Unless Growing Greener is funded adequately, we are unsure of the future of the Quick Response program after all available funds are expended. Quick Response is currently funded through 2013. WPCAMR recently received \$15,000 the in-kind match funding from the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds to assist us with Quick Response III and IV. This match funding is vital to the continuation of the program.

NPDES Issue Update

WPCAMR continues to work with partners such as Trout Unlimited in exploring ways to protect our citizens' investment in AMD treatment systems. The state is very concerned about this issue as well. Progress is painfully slow at times but in speaking with various government agencies, we recognize that there is support for our cause. Sometimes, this is a

“hurry up and wait” situation. We will continue to work through this issue to find a solution, either through an amendment to SMCRA or the Clean Water Act or through some other vehicle.

DEP Secretary Krancer At AMD Sites

Over the winter, WPCAMR invited PA DEP Secretary Michael Krancer to tour AMD/AML sites in western Pennsylvania. After some scheduling difficulties, we were able to take the Secretary out at the end of May. We traveled to several sites within 2 counties. The Secretary was fascinated with what he saw and we were able to explain our community’s concerns about issues ranging from Watershed Specialist and Growing Greener funding to NPDES permits and streamlining permitting processes to creating a protocol for encouraging use of AMD water by the Marcellus Gas industry.

Also, at this time we still don’t have a Deputy for Minerals Resource Management however, we understand that a new Deputy may be appointed by the next WPCAMR meeting. As soon as a new Deputy is appointed, we will arrange for a meeting with him/her to discuss our community's needs as they relate to funding for operations and maintenance of existing passive treatment systems and how to best protect our community's investment (and the Commonwealth's investment) in clean water through a Federal Good Sam Act or other avenue.

Annual AMD Conference

The 2011 Statewide AMD Conference was held from August 4-6 in Hazelton, PA. The mayfly award was presented to Dave Hess for his past and ongoing involvement in assisting the watershed community in Pennsylvania. DEP Secretary Krancer was the opening speaker on Thursday. He repeatedly stated how impressed he is with our community’s work and how important that work is. Apparently, the tour earlier in the spring helped the Secretary know our community and the good work being done. He expressed his gratitude to WPCAMR for making that tour happen.

Another speaker during the Conference was OSMRE Director, Joe Pizarchik. Joe explained some of what is proposed in the next fiscal year’s budget for OSM.

Watershed Specialist Program Extended

The DEP announced this summer that the Watershed Specialist Program is renewed until 2013. We are very grateful to everyone at DEP for their support for this valuable program. We’re also grateful to the Watershed Specialists from Washington and Allegheny Counties who participated in the AMD tour with the Secretary back in May. I believe that seeing, first-hand, the valuable work of our Watershed Specialists and getting to meet some of them, was important.

ARIPPA Award

Anne and I are pleased to recommend two organizations for the 2011 ARIPPA Award. See Anne's report.

Robindale Golf Outing

I'm proud to say that Robindale has chosen WPCAMR to be one of the recipients of the 2011 Golf Outing. The Robindale Golf Outing will be on Wednesday, September 21st. For details, see me.

Long Time Friend of WPCAMR Retires

Russ Wagner at DEP, retired on June 30th. Russ has been a long time friend of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (AMR), having come from the Schuylkill Conservation District (SCD) before joining DEP's Non-point source section. Of course, his tenure at the SCD gave him the experience he needed to understand much of what goes on in our AMR community. We appreciate Russ's assistance and guidance over the years and wish him a great retirement!