

WPCAMR
Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2017
Cambria District Mining Office, Mine Safety Annex, Ebensburg PA

In attendance:

Denny Beck, President, Delegate
Chelsea Walker, Treas., Delegate
Jim Eckenrode, VP, Blair Delegate
Andy McAllister (Staff)
Anne Daymut (Staff)
Brook Esarey, Indiana CD Delegate
Jamie Douthie, Evergreen Conservancy
Rob Cronauer, Westmoreland CD

Len Lichvar, Somerset CD Delegate
Eric Cavazza, PA DEP
Tom Keller, Sewickley Cr Watershed
Jared Zinn, (Phone) Green CD Delegate
Robb Ritchie, Cambria CD
John Dryzel, Cambria CD
Dave Lieford, PA DEP

WPCAMR BUSINESS MEETING:

Meeting called to order at 10:15 am.

Secretary's Report (Anne Daymut):

Review of past meeting minutes.

Motion (Lichvar/Esarey) to accept the November 10, 2016 minutes. Passed.

Treasurer's Report (Chelsea Walker):

See report for details.

Motion (Esarey/Zinn) to accept the treasurer's report. Passed.

Correspondence (Andy McAllister):

OLD BUSINESS

Regional Coordinator's Report (Andy McAllister):

See report for details. Report on meeting webpage.

Watershed Coordinator's report (Anne Daymut):

See report for details. Report on meeting webpage.

PA DEP Update (Eric Cavazza)

Eric gave a presentation on restoration projects going on in and around Cambria County. Little Conemaugh restoration has been going on for a long time with a lot of partners. The active plant they are working on now will treat three major discharges. An update was given on Ehrenfeld Coal Refuse Pile reclamation. The Wehrum project will eliminate the 3 sisters bore hole in Vintondale. The AMD & Art project will be redirected and the area will be cleaned up. Cresson is open for bids tomorrow. Hopefully it will be under construction mid summer. The contractor will have 2 years to construct. St. Michael is an interesting project because it doesn't meet the letter of the law but EPA and OSM agreed to it based on benefits outweighing costs. The trust fund is held by the commonwealth. This was a project that would have been done under the AML program, but the state is getting basically for free.

Eric also gave an update on the Pilot project. 8 of the 17 projects were in WPCAMR's region. 8 of the 17 are also grants to non-profits. This funding is in addition to normal AML fund money. It is likely that PA will get an additional sum for 2017. An issue is that the money expires if not used within 3 years. Further, it will be very challenging to use the money, especially if RECLAIM comes through. Eric is concerned that the money gets used wisely.

Eric gave an update on Reclaim Act and RECLAIM 2.0. 2.0 has not been introduced yet. It will accelerate disbursements from AML trust fund of \$1 Billion per year for 5 years. Each state that is eligible will get an amount based on amount of coal mined in that state prior to 1977. PA is the biggest, which in original RECLAIM was \$67 Million. RECLAIM 2.0 has changed how it is calculated and says that PA's share is only \$57 Million. This could be a problem if reauthorization does not occur. It is estimated that money will run out in 2036 without RECLAIM, with RECLAIM it will exhaust the fund by 2025. They are currently spending \$3.5 Million on emergencies. In other states, Pilot program is not being used exclusively for AMR projects. The problem is that it is law that RECLAIM money is used only for AMR projects. The Wolfe administration supported the Pilot program. To Eric's knowledge, they have not officially made comment on RECLAIM 2.0.

The matter of Good Sam registration for during construction versus post construction is under review by PA DEP attorneys. There is still interest for a Federal EGSA. There will most likely be two separate tracks, one for coal and one for hard rock. It could be an amendment to SMCRA. It would primarily deal with Clean water Act liability.

BAMR is short on positions due to proposed eliminations in the governor's budget. Eric noted that BAMR is 100% funded by the annual federal government. 29% of staff will be of retirement age in 3 years. Beck asked who we could talk to about this situation.

NEW BUSINESS

Financial Committee Recommendations (Finance Committee)

It was suggested that staff be accompanied by a board member to visit potential funders. The working document for potential funding opportunities and potential funders was circulated and discussed. It was discussed that the increase in dues should be divided over several years and that the change should be announced plenty early. It was suggested that we start the trust fund prior to asking funders to contribute to it. The strategic plan was reviewed. The working funder document will be tailored to individual funders. It is planned that the working document for funders will be available for review and approval at the next meeting. The board will develop a policy for website advertising.

State Good Samaritan and Growing Greener (Anne Daymut)

Discussion was had and it was recommended to wait for formal guidance from PA DEP attorneys on the matter.

Conservation District/Agency/Watershed Association reports (All present):

Those in attendance reported on current and future activities within their respective organizations that relate to WPCAMR interests.

- Rob Cronauer reported on still trying to work out a deal with the railroad.
- Rob Ritchie would like to know what is going on with Cresson.
- Jim Eckenrode shared news from a highwall project in Blair County.
- John Dryzel reported on some things that Jackie Ritko is working on and would also like to know what is up with Cresson. Denny Beck added that there should be several other projects in the coming years in the Little Conemaugh. He noted that there is already some good fishing.
- Chelsea Walker is doing some final reports on Growing Greener projects.
- Indiana County is still partnering with Tom Clark of SRBC on efforts in Bear Run. They have a reforestation project on Game lands. Adam reported that the concerns that were expressed earlier this

year with new mandates for the Watershed Specialist program are no longer an issue with the new DEP Secretary. Blacklick Creek is looking at expanding their QHUP.

- Tom Keller applied for a Growing Greener grant. Sewickley was awarded a FPW convening grant for a field trip at Lober. He is also working for a teaching certification at Lober.
- Jared Zinn talked about a project he would like to do in Dunkard Creek. He also has some outreach projects in the makings.
- Somerset is doing a project in Ovenrun, for which they have a Growing Greener grant. There are other pending and partials failures across the Stoney Creek that are threatening the watershed. Rehab is needed at Flight 93. They are doing a mass balance in another watershed so that they know where to prioritize new funding that is coming to them. They are also doing work on the Castleman on a mine shaft that is still under active permit but it is still causing issues. Hedin is contracted to address these issues. The SCRIP meeting is March 17 at the Winber Hotel. Lichvar is coauthor of Keystone Flyfishing, a book on conservation. The book is \$29.95.

Remaining meetings for the year include May 11, August 10 (Len's birthday), and November 9, 2017.

Meeting adjourned at 2:28pm.

Minutes taken and prepared by Anne Daymut

Approved by Jim Resh on