Healing Our Land,
Growing Our Future:
Innovative Mine Reclamation in Southwest Virginia
Control Panel

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- **Grab Tab:** From the Grab Tab, you can hide the Control Panel, mute yourself (if you have been unmuted by the organizer), view the webinar in full screen and raise your hand.
- **Audio Pane:** Use the Audio pane to switch between Telephone and Mic & Speakers.
- **Questions Pane:** Ask questions for the staff.
## Current Federal Initiatives Aimed at Coalfield Economic Revitalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POWER</th>
<th>RECLAIM Act</th>
<th>Pilot Program</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>A program to “align and invest federal economic and workforce development resources in communities and regions negatively impacted by changes in the coal economy.”</td>
<td>A bill to “accelerate $1 billion in available funding in the Abandoned Mine Reclamation (AML) Fund to revitalize coal communities hardest hit by the downturn of the coal industry.”</td>
<td>A 2016 federal budget appropriation loosely based on the goals and language of the RECLAIM Act.</td>
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<td>- $64.6 million in grants made available through 2016 budget;</td>
<td>- Would provide $200 million per year over five years;</td>
<td>- Provided $30 million each to PA, WV and KY in FY 2016;</td>
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<td>- Similar expected in 2017 budget.</td>
<td>- About $6 million would be earmarked for Virginia.</td>
<td>- Expected to be renewed in FY 2017;</td>
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<td>- Expected to broaden the scope in FY 2017 to include $10 million each for VA, OH and AL</td>
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RECLAIM Act

- 24+ local resolutions
- Congressional support
- Prospects for passage
Congressional Districts of RECLAIM Act Cosponsors
Why an AML analysis in SWVa?

- Appalachian Voices’ office in Norton with focus on economic diversification
- 7 coalfield counties
- Collaborative state agency
- Existing projects with AML intersection
AML study outcomes

- Demonstrate need for RECLAIM funding
- Identify innovative projects
- Engage local government entities in RECLAIM opportunities
- Serve as model for other states
Findings:

- Over $16 million in cleanup costs

- Over $52 million in construction investment
Project team

- Regional environmental and economic nonprofit
- 30-year career coal mining engineer
- Cutting-edge economic analysis firm
Collaboration

- Va. Dept. of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME)
- Local planning districts and Industrial Development Authorities
- Mayors and town managers
- Growing interest from public, other agencies, funders
Abandoned Mine Lands
AML sites in Southwest Virginia

Virginia / Kentucky state line

Interstate 77
Criteria for selecting AML sites

• Size
• Proximity to towns
• Availability of infrastructure
• Existing project idea, momentum
• Land ownership
DATA

- Here we mean site specific information derived from GIS data.
- Includes:
  - Elevation/slope
  - Broadband availability
  - Road distance
  - Other as needed
DATA, cont.

● Eligibility:
  ● VA DMME AML inventory
  ● VA DMME mining permits
  ● VA Impaired Stream inventory

● Renewable specific:
  ● EPA RePower - https://www.epa.gov/re-powering
  ● PV Mapper - http://pvmapper.org/ (provided other useful data as well)
  ● AIRE - App. Voices collaborator; provided assumptions for energy modeling as well as general information
  ● Utility service area maps
Data, cont.

- **Ownership:**
  - State of Va. GIS parcel service
  - Individual county GIS parcel maps (minus Russell County)
Residents, elected officials, project partners, etc.; These folks provide:

- CONTEXT - What are your needs?
- INSIGHT - anecdotal evidence; “I have to send them to Kingsport...” (Cox)
- PERSPECTIVE - “This must have a regional focus.” (Ramey)
- NEW IDEAS - What would YOU like to see?
- “CLUES” - Who else should I talk to?

Included: Larry Yates, Richard Davis, Daniel Kestner, Fred Ramey, Brad Mullins, Charlotte Mullins, Dave Skinner, Barry Gartin, Pam Cox, Craig Kaderavek, Michael French, and many others.
Site profile development categories

1. Pre-existing efforts
2. Matching ideas, needs
3. Raising profile of AML sites for variety of activities
Industry clusters

- Nature-based recreation
- Agriculture, forestry
- Renewable energy
- Industry, commercial
- Mixed use
Category 1: Pre-existing effort

Clean up costs: $100,000 to $300,000

Construction costs: $531,680
Category 1: Pre-existing effort

Clean up costs: $200,000 to $300,000

Construction costs: $250,000 to $300,000
Category 1: Pre-existing effort

Clean up costs: $200,000 to $1,000,000

Construction costs: TBD
Category 2: Matching ideas and needs

Clean up costs: $20,000 to $30,000

Construction costs: $31,800,000
Category 2: Matching ideas and needs

Clean up costs: $180,000

Construction costs: TBD

Foxfire Farm is an approximately thirty-acre farm located in Dickenson County, Virginia. It was purchased by Tammy (Tammy) Owens and her daughter, who has been actively involved in the farm's operations. The farm is well-known and respected for its organic farming practices.

“My property is clearly representative of the majority of land that has been mined and reclaimed. Even after almost 50 years, the land is unproductive and nowhere near what it was before it was mined. It is my vision and goal to exemplify through intense cultivation and methods to transform this land into both viable farmland and forest farming.”

Tammy Owens

Issues and Eligibility

Portions of the farm and surrounding properties were surface mined throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s and into the very early 80’s. Interestingly, mining operations were active after the passage of SMCRA, but before the establishment of Miners’ Reclamation Priorities. This period of time saw extensive surface mining operations. The passage of federal legislation and the establishment of the state agency responsible for administering the law is known as the “Interim Period.” Sites such as this would be eligible for RECLAIM funding is contingent on OSMRE altering the wording of the existing guidance to extend include AML mining sites. These sites have protections because they fall in this interim period. Common practice extends eligibility of low-impact mining operations that were completed within this interim period to be eligible for traditional AML funding. However, current language in OSMRE’s guidance for the Pilot Project indicate that interim period sites are ineligible for funding. Thus, unless such sites are specifically included in a revision of the guidance, Foxfire Farm would be ineligible for Pilot Project or RECLAIM funding.

Additionally, while portions of Foxfire Farm are technically eligible for traditional AML funding, there are currently no
Category 2: Matching ideas and needs

Clean up costs: $2,020,000 to $2,960,000

Construction costs: $16,000,000
Category 3: Raising the profile

Clean up costs: $2,000,000

Construction costs: TBD
Issues, challenges and recommendations

• Eligibility

• Need to update federal AML inventory

• Sites outside AML program (tipples, post-SMCRA bond forfeited lands)

• Funded projects should be founded on principals of sustainable development and just transition

• Land ownership
What’s next

• Continue working with allies to pass RECLAIM Act and pilot funding

• Act as regional resource on RECLAIM

• Apply added capacity to our top AML sites
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