



Earth Conservancy

Volume 17
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Dedicated to Mine Land Reclamation, Conservation, & Economic Development in the Wyoming Valley

Bliss Bank



A Reclaimed Bliss Bank, Phase I

Once a massive bank of mine spoils, this reclaimed section of Bliss Bank is part of 200 acres of legacy minelands that extend into Newport Township, Hanover Township, and the City of Nanticoke. Earth Conservancy's (EC) initial recovery of the site began in 2005 through a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) Energy Harvest grant, which allowed for the removal of residual coal waste for cogeneration. Reclamation of Phase I, seen above, began in 2014, supported by the PADEP Growing Greener and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Brownfields Cleanup programs. Work was completed on the 70 acres in 2016. Reclamation activities for the 54-acre Phase II project are expected to begin in the spring of 2017, again made possible through PADEP, USEPA, and EC. Planning for Phase III is also underway, which will reclaim another 22 acres of mine-scarred land and restore 1,000 feet of Espy Run. Bliss Bank's prime location across from Luzerne County Community College and its abutment to one of the South Valley Parkway's roundabouts makes reuse of this land for mixed-use development, including conservation areas, ideal. To date, over \$2.5 million has been invested in the Bliss Bank site.

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Construction on Chewy.com Facility on Hubers III & IV

Huber Bank: As reported last year, EC's reclaimed Huber III and IV properties were purchased by international developer Prologis. NorthPoint Development then acquired the site in 2016 and quickly began construction on an 800,000sf fulfillment center for online pet retailer Chewy.com. Approximately 600 jobs will result. Two additional buildings are also planned for the 180-acre property, which could support another 400 jobs. Huber I and II are undergoing changes as well, with a proposed convenience store and business expansion on the lots. EC began the Huber project back in 2005, funding reclamation through PADEP, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PADCED), and EC. Final reclamation activities were completed in 2012. Together, these projects will complete development of the S.R. 29/Exit 1 intersection with Main Street and New Commerce Boulevard.



New Development on Franklin Bank

Franklin Bank: Located in Hanover Township, Franklin Bank was one of EC's early reclamation projects supported by the USEPA's Brownfields Cleanup program. The 15 acres of mine spoils were situated next to an existing residential neighborhood. Thousands of tons of mining waste were removed, eliminating a source of acid mine drainage runoff into local stormwater systems and the Solomon's Creek watershed. Once completed, a local residential developer purchased the property. Forty-six two-story duplex homes are currently under construction.



Mike Dziak, EC President/CEO, Speaking at SVP Press Conference

South Valley Parkway: Work on the South Valley Parkway (SVP) is well underway, with one of six roundabouts and large spans of bridge complete. In addition to increasing safety in the area, the road will connect local highways directly to 2,000 acres of EC's legacy minelands that are available for redevelopment. EC was honored to speak about its role in the project at a June press conference, which featured Pennsylvania's Secretary of Transportation, Leslie S. Richards. EC proposed the SVP in its original *Land Use Plan*, and has donated 70 acres of land towards the project, valued at over \$1 million. The project is expected to finish in 2020.



Readied Wilt I Site

Wilt I: EC's Wilt I parcel, located off Bear Creek Boulevard near the Wyoming Valley Sports Dome and Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center, benefits from an excellent location with easy access to local amenities and transportation. In order to facilitate its development, EC decided to improve the 32-acre property with site grading and construction of a stream crossing and access road. The property is zoned R3 for medium-density residential development.

Additional Lands to North Branch Land Trust

EC was pleased to collaborate again with North Branch Land Trust (NBLT) and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to add two more sections of woodlands to the State Forest system through a Community Conservation Partnership Program grant awarded to NBLT.

The first parcel is located in Plains Township. At more than 400 acres, it includes what will become another link in the Delaware & Lehigh Trail, running from the Seven Tubs Natural Area to Northampton Street in Laurel Run Borough. Eventually, planners intend to extend the trail to Wilkes-Barre's Riverfront Park. The second tract comprises over 1,110 acres of forest along Little Wilkes-Barre and Penobscot Mountains' ridgeline in Newport Township. Already a favorite recreational spot, this uninterrupted expanse of woods boasts scenic views, diverse animal and plant life, and picturesque sections of Newport Creek. Part of the area also borders EC's Penobscot Ridge Mountain Bike Trail.

These tracts are featured in several local land use plans, such as the *Luzerne County Natural Heritage Inventory* and the *Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties Open Space, Greenways, and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan*. Additionally, in its original *Land Use Plan*, EC committed to dedicate 10,000 of its nearly 16,500 acres to recreational spaces and green-ways. Conferring these 1,550+ acres brings EC's total of greenspace to 7,733 acres. For the acquisitions, half of the appraised value of the land was gifted by EC. The properties eventually will be deeded to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry. Under its control, the Bureau will ensure the lands remain available for public enjoyment and protected from development in perpetuity.



Conservation News

Askam Borehole AMD Treatment System Wayside Exhibit

In the spring of 2016, under the guidance of teachers Meredith Falchek and Jared Meehan, 7th and 8th grade students from Solomon/Plains Jr. High School worked with Dr. Elizabeth W. Hughes, EC's Director of Communications, on the design of four interpretive signs for EC's Askam Borehole AMD Treatment System. Students also received instruction on acid mine drainage and its treatment with staff from the Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR). At present, the signs have been fabricated and work on the walking path is underway. The trail is anticipated to open to the public in the fall of 2017. Our thanks to the Wilkes-Barre Area School District and EPCAMR for partnering on the project. In addition to a grant from ARIPPA in 2015, the wayside exhibit project was made possible through support by a PADEP Environmental Education grant and a Luzerne County Recreation and Conservation Fund award.



Education



Bliss Bank, Phase II

EC values the assistance we receive from funders at the federal, state, and local level, as well as that from individual and corporate grants and donations. Thank you to all those who support EC in its efforts towards revitalizing the environment, economy, and communities of the Wyoming Valley.

Bliss Bank Reclamation, Phase II

In 2015, EC was awarded two \$200,000 USEPA Brownfields Cleanup grants for Phase II of its Bliss Bank reclamation project. In 2016, the project received \$734,600 in additional funding through an award from PADEP's Growing Greener program. Approximately 50 acres will be reclaimed during the project.

Espy Run Stream Restoration, Segment A

Espy Run, a tributary to the Nanticoke Creek, once ran through what is now the Bliss Bank site. Unfortunately, mining operations destroyed the stream's natural flow. EC intends to reestablish this missing segment to improve local hydrology and the watershed's health. The USEPA awarded EC a \$200,000 Brownfields Cleanup grant in 2016 to support the first phase of work, which will restore 1,000 feet of channel.

Askam Borehole AMD Treatment System

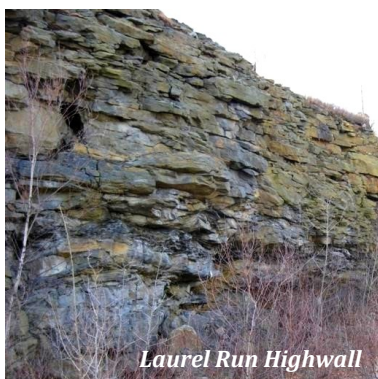
In operation for over two years, EC's Askam Borehole AMD Treatment System has been working steadily to mitigate acid mine drainage into the Nanticoke Creek. In 2016, PA DCED awarded EC \$85,000 through its AMD Abatement & Treatment Program, part of the Act 13/Marcellus Legacy Fund. The monies will help underwrite upgrades to the system and operation and management costs for the next three years.

Laurel Run Highwall

EC received a \$50,000 Growing Greener grant from PADEP to address six acres of mine-scarred land in Plains and Wilkes-Barre Townships. Of particular issue were the unsafe highwalls on the site, which rose to about 30 feet and were prone to collapse. Reclamation of the tract was completed in the fall of 2016, which included new vegetation to mitigate acid mine drainage runoff into the watershed.

Askam Borehole AMD Treatment System Wayside Exhibit

As noted, EC is constructing an educational exhibit at the Askam Borehole AMD Treatment System in Hanover Township. In 2016, EC received two grants for the project: a PADEP Environmental Education grant for \$2,996 and a Luzerne County Recreation and Conservation Fund award for \$4,646.



Laurel Run Highwall



Nanticoke Creek at Askam



Espy Run, Segment A

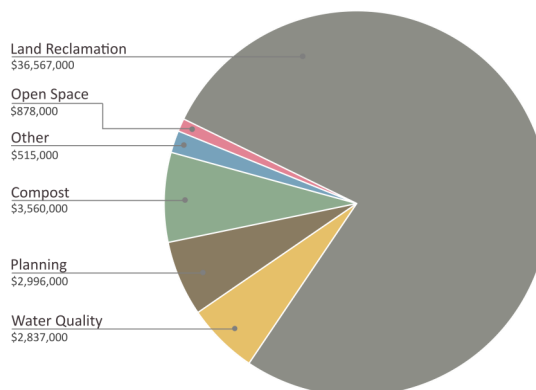
About Earth Conservancy

EC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the impacts of historical coal mining practices in northeastern Pennsylvania. EC seeks to lead our communities in the reclamation of mine-scarred lands and streams, returning strong economic, environmental, and social value to the region by creating a well-planned, vibrant valley, protected by green ridgetops. To this end, EC develops sustainable land-use plans; leads reclamation efforts of damaged minelands and watersheds, and guides their reuse; commits to provide 10,000 acres for recreation and open space; partners with local communities to achieve our mission; and educates the community on our work.

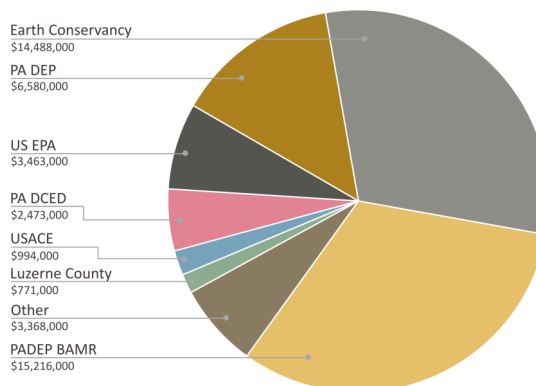
Financial statements have been prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States and recommended by the Financial Accounting Standards Board. The following charts give an overview of EC's project expenses and funding sources since inception. EC's IRS Form 990 is available at GuideStar. Print copies are available upon request.



Project Expenses through 2016



Sources of Funding through 2016



Financial Overview

Board of Directors

EC welcomes Holly T. Frederick, PhD, PE, to its Board of Directors. A licensed professional engineer and a board-certified environmental engineer, Dr. Frederick is currently an Associate Professor at Wilkes University in the Department of Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences. Dr. Frederick's research focuses on water quality, specifically the removal of chemical compounds in treatment systems. She earned her PhD in Environmental Engineering from Pennsylvania State University. She serves as advisor of the Student Chapter of the National Society for Professional Engineers and is current president of the Keystone Northeast Chapter of the Pennsylvania Society for Professional Engineers.



Leaving EC's board is long-time director Marleen Troy, PhD, PE. Dr. Troy, also an Associate Professor of Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences at Wilkes University, joined EC's board in 2007. Over the past decade, she has contributed her time, expertise, and unwavering support. All of us extend our sincere thanks for her efforts toward EC's mission.



Other News

EC Supports New Vehicle for Newport Township Police

On November 1, 2016, EC joined State Senator John Yudichak, State Representative Gerald Mullery, Newport Township officials, and others to congratulate the Newport Township Police Department on the acquisition of two new vehicles to help in off-road patrols. EC helped fund the purchase of the new ATV, which will be used in ongoing work to prevent illegal dumping, trespassing, and vandalism, especially on hard-to-reach sites.

EC Testifies at Hearing on the Benefits of Coal Waste Facilities

On October 11th, Earth Conservancy presented testimony to the Pennsylvania Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee about the role coal waste facilities play in its reclamation work. These facilities remove previously unburnable coal waste from legacy sites, and use it for energy production, thereby cleaning up the environment and supporting the economy with zero costs attributed to taxpayers.

EC Presents at 2016 WV Brownfields Conference

EC was invited by the USEPA to discuss its reclamation work at the 2016 WV Brownfields Conference in Charleston, WV, in September. Hosted by the WV Brownfields Assistance Center, the three-day event covered all aspects of brownfields redevelopment, including planning, financing, and community engagement. EC's presentation, given during a session on "Formerly Mined Lands," reviewed the organization's history, the role of land use planning in its efforts, and some of its notable accomplishments over its 25 years.

EC Celebrates National Trails Day 2016

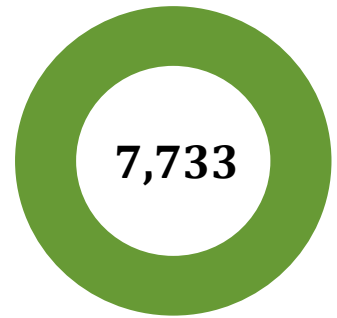
EC celebrated National Trails Day on June 4th with a hike through the Sugar Notch Loop as part of the Keystone Active Zone Passport Program, sponsored by LiveWell Luzerne. The walk began at the Broadhead Avenue trailhead with the group passing over boulders, through woods, and across formerly mine-scarred property with plenty of wildlife, wildflowers, and scenic views along the way.



acres reclaimed



million invested



green acres preserved

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**Earth
Conservancy**

Earth Conservancy is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation and is dedicated to conducting its affairs in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and fiduciary responsibilities. Board meetings are open to the public and are held on a quarterly basis at 8AM at Earth Conservancy's offices, 101 South Main Street, Ashley, PA 18706. Call the office at 570.823.3445 for more information on meeting dates and times.

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