

FOCUS: **PRESERVING THE PAST**

Archiving the Legacy of the Glen Alden Corporation

EC storage area; courtesy Missy Nerino/IAL

Come into the offices of Earth Conservancy (EC) and, depending on the day, you may spot an archivist from the Industrial Archives & Library (IAL) quietly sorting through stacks of yellowing papers at a large wooden drafting table – or, you may not. They could be hidden behind towers of storage boxes, in the garage vacuuming coal dust from brittle mining maps, or upstairs, hunkered down between long rows of filing cabinets.

This is just a glimpse into the massive task of archiving the records of the Glen Alden and Blue Coal Corporations – a years-long effort now well underway. The project is shaping up to be one of IAL’s largest, second only to its collection from Bethlehem Steel. Spanning more than a century and estimated at over 20,000 linear feet, the Glen Alden archive stands out for its completeness. “In some respects,” says IAL archivist Nick Zmijewski, “it’s as if the employees walked out at 5:00pm on a Friday and just never came back.” The collection includes detailed property and mining maps, structural and mechanical drawings, marketing materials, sales documents, and employee records for the thousands of individuals who once powered the anthracite industry.

For decades, EC sought to preserve the collection intact. While several institutions were approached, *(continued next page)*

2 ARCHIVES (cont.)



IAL archivists Dave Hazel & Missy Nerino, at work at EC

none had the capacity or interest to take on the entire archive. The effort gained new direction when Mike Korb, PE, a former mining engineer and IAL trustee, approached EC's then-President, Mike Dziak, about a partnership. After many discussions and a promising 2020 site visit, plans for a pilot project took shape. Though delayed by the pandemic, the archiving process officially began in 2023, with a formal launch event in April 2024.

Progress has been steady, though archivist Missy Nerino estimates only 5%-8% of the collection has been fully processed. More has been partially sorted, but cleaning, cataloging, and database entry – and transfer to IAL's climate-controlled building in

Bethlehem – all take time. Interesting finds include materials related to Dan Flood and the Anthracite Export Association, RKO Theaters, mid-century advertising pitches, and stockholder correspondence. Full digitization is a future goal, but some items, like Glen Alden's annual reports, are already online. Meanwhile, the archive catalog is available for public research, ensuring ongoing access to a singular piece of northeastern Pennsylvania's anthracite legacy. 🌱



At the agreement signing, from left to right: Nick Zmijewski (IAL), Mike Korb (IAL), Mike Dziak (EC), Steve Donches (IAL), Terry Ostrowski (EC), Rick Ruggerio (EC)

While much of the focus in recent years has been on the reclamation and redevelopment of the first three phases of Bliss Bank, a smaller fourth phase has also been progressing to the north. Funded by a \$2.8 million grant from Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection's AML Pilot Program, the Bliss Bank Phase IV project has now been completed. Work addressed critical environmental concerns, including the remediation of two acres of dangerous piles and embankments, alongside additional improvements to Espy Run. Perhaps most importantly, Phase IV established natural gas, water, and sanitary sewer services to support the entire 220-acre Bliss Bank development. Despite pandemic-related delays, crews broke ground on the project in 2022. With reclamation now finished, the site will be available for commercial development, further supporting economic growth in the region.



Reclaimed Bliss IV property. To the top left is the Hanover Section of Nanticoke. Bliss III is to the top right.

As we reflect on 2024, I'm proud of the continued strides EC has made in advancing our mission to restore the environment, revitalize the economy, and strengthen our communities. One of this year's biggest milestones was launching the first two phases of the Nanticoke Creek Restoration Project, which will rebuild nearly 3 miles of stream channel in a watershed damaged heavily by past mining. The goal isn't just to bring water back to the surface – it's to stop it from disappearing underground. Water lost to the mine pools resurfaces at the Askam borehole as acid mine drainage, coating the creek bed with that familiar orange iron that harms water quality and habitat. As part of the project, nearly 5,000 new trees will be planted along the restored channel, helping to cool and clean the water as it flows. A third phase – focused on replacing culverts along South Main and Hanover Streets – begins early next year.



We also made a key upgrade at our Leaf & Yard Waste Composting Facility in Newport Township with the purchase of a new trommel screener, supported by a \$15,000 Local Share Account grant secured with the help of the Lower South Valley Council of Governments and Hanover Township. With this equipment, we were able to more efficiently process some of the 10,000+ tons of material we received from local municipalities and residents. The resulting compost then is returned to the community – with much of it distributed free of charge – ready to support gardens, lawns, and landscapes across the area.

On the educational front, we continued to tell the story of our region's coal mining history – and our work towards a brighter future. From hosting an event for Anthracite History Month, to presenting at statewide conferences, to engaging students through our ongoing WeReclaim! afterschool program, we've connected with people of all ages and backgrounds, showing how damaged lands can be brought back to life. As part of WeReclaim!, student artwork was submitted to a regional exhibit focused on peace – and two participants received awards for their contributions.

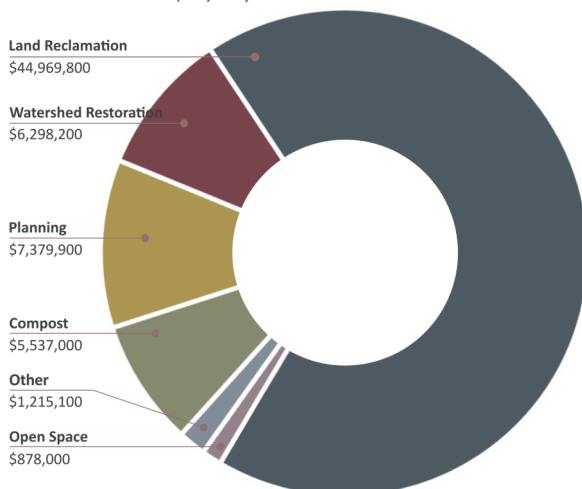
All of these efforts – streams restored, trees planted, conversations started – are steps in a longer journey. In 2025, we look forward to building on this progress as we continue our work toward our vision of a more resilient, vibrant future.

EC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the legacy impacts of anthracite mining 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.

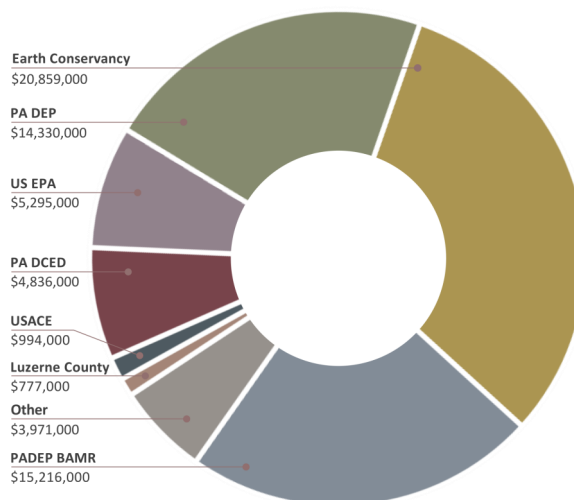
Financial statements are audited annually by an independent accounting firm. Overviews of EC's project expenses and funding sources since inception are provided in the charts below.

Project Expenses through 2024

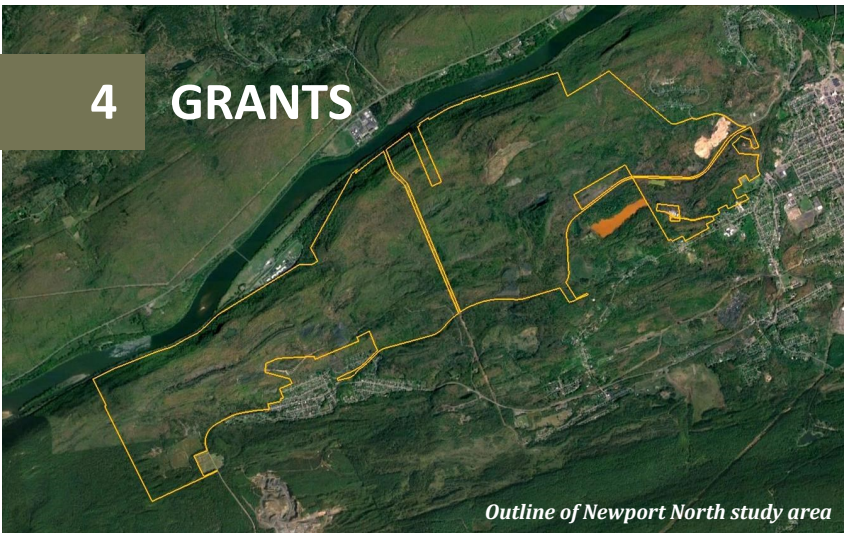
Total Investment: \$66,278,000



Sources of Project Funding through 2024



4 GRANTS



Outline of Newport North study area



AML Grant announcement by US Senator Bob Casey

NEWPORT NORTH | EC's original *Land Use Plan* (1996) prioritized reclaiming large sites near existing infrastructure. It began at the Preston, Sugar Notch, and Huber Banks, then moved west along SR 29 to Loomis Bank and Hanover 9. Construction of the South Valley Parkway spurred additional projects along Middle Road at EC's Bliss and Truesdale Bank locations. There remain, however, several thousand acres left in EC's holdings, mostly to the west of Nanticoke. A preliminary review in 2019, resulting in the *Newport Township Master Plan*, found much of the land to be remote and challenging. With support from a \$1.35 million grant from PADEP's Abandoned Mine Land Program, announced in April by US Senator Bob Casey, the Newport North project will further evaluate the area, using surveys, environmental testing, agency coordination, and permitting to identify legacy mining issues and develop a clear plan for future reclamation, one that advances both economic development and community revitalization goals.



Tree sapling planted along Espy Run

ESPY RUN STREAM RESTORATION | Just in time for the holidays, EC was notified in December it had been awarded a \$5,000 Stream & Watershed Enhancement Grant from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. This funding will support the planting of 50 new trees along Espy Run, enhancing EC's efforts to restore and protect the Nanticoke Creek Watershed. This replanting is especially important, as earlier tree plantings suffered losses due to drought. The project will be bid in the spring of 2025.



New bridge spanning Maelstrom Oxidizer at Askam

ASKAM AMD TREATMENT SYSTEM | EC is excited to share a key upgrade to our Askam Borehole AMD Treatment System, made possible by a \$4,800 grant from ARIPPA and EPCAMR. The funding supported the purchase of a new aluminum gangway bridge with handrails, replacing the aging wooden decking. This upgrade improves durability, safety, and access for maintenance. The grant also helped cover routine system cleaning, ensuring the treatment system's long-term efficiency in treating acid mine drainage in the Nanticoke Creek. We're grateful to ARIPPA and EPCAMR for their ongoing support in protecting local water quality and revitalizing our region's environment!

HIKE & SIP | We couldn't have asked for a more spectacular October day – or for a better group of adventurers – for North Branch Land Trust's Hike & Sip event along the Sugar Notch Trail. Once part of EC's holdings, the trail became part of the Pinchot State Forest in 2023, through PA DCNR's acquisition of the Hanover Reservoir. About 30 hikers took part, and our guides, Megan Finnen of PA DCNR and Emma Thompson of NBLT, brought the landscape to life, with interactive lessons about native trees, local ecology, and invasive species challenges. Afterwards, the group made its way down Main Street to the Bell House Winery, where everyone gathered in the beautifully-restored historic rectory to enjoy local wines and great conversation.



HAPPENINGS

5

PADCNR's Megan Finnen (center) demonstrates how to identify leaves

LOCAL & STATE PRESENTATIONS | EC highlighted its current projects at several presentations during 2024, engaging audiences from a variety of sectors. Two talks were given during Anthracite Mining Heritage Month. Other venues included the PA Brownfields conference, the PA Art Educators Association conference, and the PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation conference. EC's history, Espy Run, and WeReclaim! were among the featured topics. These speaking engagements introduced EC's collaborative approach to a wider audience, showcasing how partnerships across different sectors support our work to heal landscapes, improve waterways, and strengthen communities.



EC's Jason Tarnowski (left) talks about the mechanics of breakers during Anthracite Mining Heritage Month

EC Donates to the SHINE Program

EC joined forces with the AllOne Foundation & AllOne Charities, the Luzerne Foundation, the United Way of Wyoming Valley, and the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund to support the SHINE After-School Program of Luzerne County at Wilkes University. Together, we raised \$500,000 to continue SHINE's essential programs, including homework help, hot meals, STEM learning, and more. Over the past decade, SHINE has reached nearly 5,000 students, strengthening families and building stronger communities throughout the region.



SHINE students and staff and funding partners, courtesy of Wilkes University

WE RECLAIM!

In 2024, EC continued its WeReclaim! program, partnering with students at Wilkes-Barre Area's Kistler Elementary and Wyoming Valley West's State Street Elementary through the SHINE After-School Program. We're continually impressed by the depth of our conversations. Students are so eager to explore nature, reflect on the sacrifices of anthracite miners, and share their visions for a healthier, more peaceful, and sustainable world. And their collages – filled with images of clean air and water, beautiful sunsets, friends, and safe spaces to play – never fail to inspire! In September, the artworks were displayed in the annual Interdependence Hexagon Project exhibit in Scranton. Special congratulations to Hector Rojas and Alexander Hernandez, who each received an award for their outstanding pieces!



SHINE Director Katie Lykon-Bond with award winners Hector and Alex



Northern Green Frog, Espy Run, Hanover Twp.



\$66.3
million
invested



2,093
acres
reclaimed



9,377
green acres
preserved

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reclaim | conserve | revitalize