



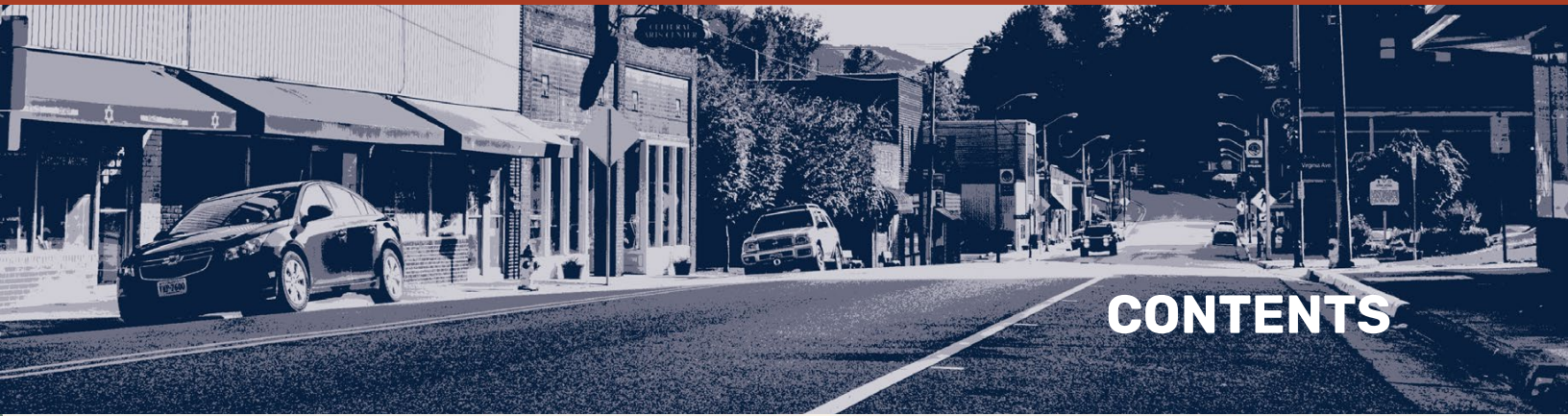
# **NATIONAL TO NEIGHBORHOODS**

**Catalyzing Opportunities for Coal-Impacted Communities**

**A report by:**  
Appalachian Voices  
Coalfield Development  
Rural Action  
Downstream Strategies



*This report was developed by the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition and was made possible through the financial support of the New York Community Trust, Just Transition Fund, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Chorus Foundation, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, JM Kaplan Fund, and Enterprise Partners. We would like to thank all of these supporters who helped make this report possible.*



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## ABOUT THE COALITION

Founded in 2016, the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition is a regional collaboration that seeks to spur mine reclamation projects throughout Central Appalachia that are responsive to community needs and interests and accelerate the growth of new, sustainable sectors.

The Coalition consists of lead non-profit organizations in three states—Appalachian Voices in Virginia, Coalfield Development in West Virginia, and Rural Action in Ohio. Each lead organization works with communities and partners on the ground in their state to identify places where reclamation of legacy mine features could yield transformative economic impacts for the surrounding communities. Then, working with regional technical experts at West Virginia-based Downstream Strategies and other reclamation experts, our coalition develops these ideas into viable project concepts and helps local partners secure funding to implement the innovative project. In some cases our organizations are leading these projects, while in others we provide support to community-led efforts; in either case, these projects are rooted in community needs and vision.

### APPALACHIAN VOICES - VIRGINIA

Appalachian Voices has been a regional grassroots advocate for healthy communities and environmental protection for over 20 years and a leading force in Appalachia's shift from fossil fuels to clean energy and a just future. While the organization works across five states, it serves as the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition's lead organization fostering projects in Southwest Virginia. Appalachian Voices' work in Virginia has led to the funding of the first ever solar project on an abandoned coal mine, as well as funding for numerous outdoor recreation and community revitalization projects.

### COALFIELD DEVELOPMENT (COALFIELD) - WEST VIRGINIA

Coalfield Development is based in Wayne, West Virginia, and has grown into a family of social enterprises working throughout the region as a leader in building a new economy during the wake of the coal industry's rapid decline. Since its time with the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition, Coalfield Development has served as the lead organization for West Virginia, coordinating closely with local organizations and stakeholders on community-based revitalization and workforce development. This also includes supporting the West Virginia-based projects of Downstream Strategies

and other partners throughout the state. Coalfield Development has also pioneered its innovative role within the coalition as a leader in the emerging ReUse Corridor, catalyzing abandoned mine land sites to address and localize the recycling, upcycling, and maker-economies in Appalachia. This overlapping of the two multi-state network structures has created a symbiotic atmosphere of opportunity for the future of mineland remediation—with the potential to generate green collar jobs and training, bio-based manufacturing, tourism enhancement, and infrastructure improvements throughout the region.

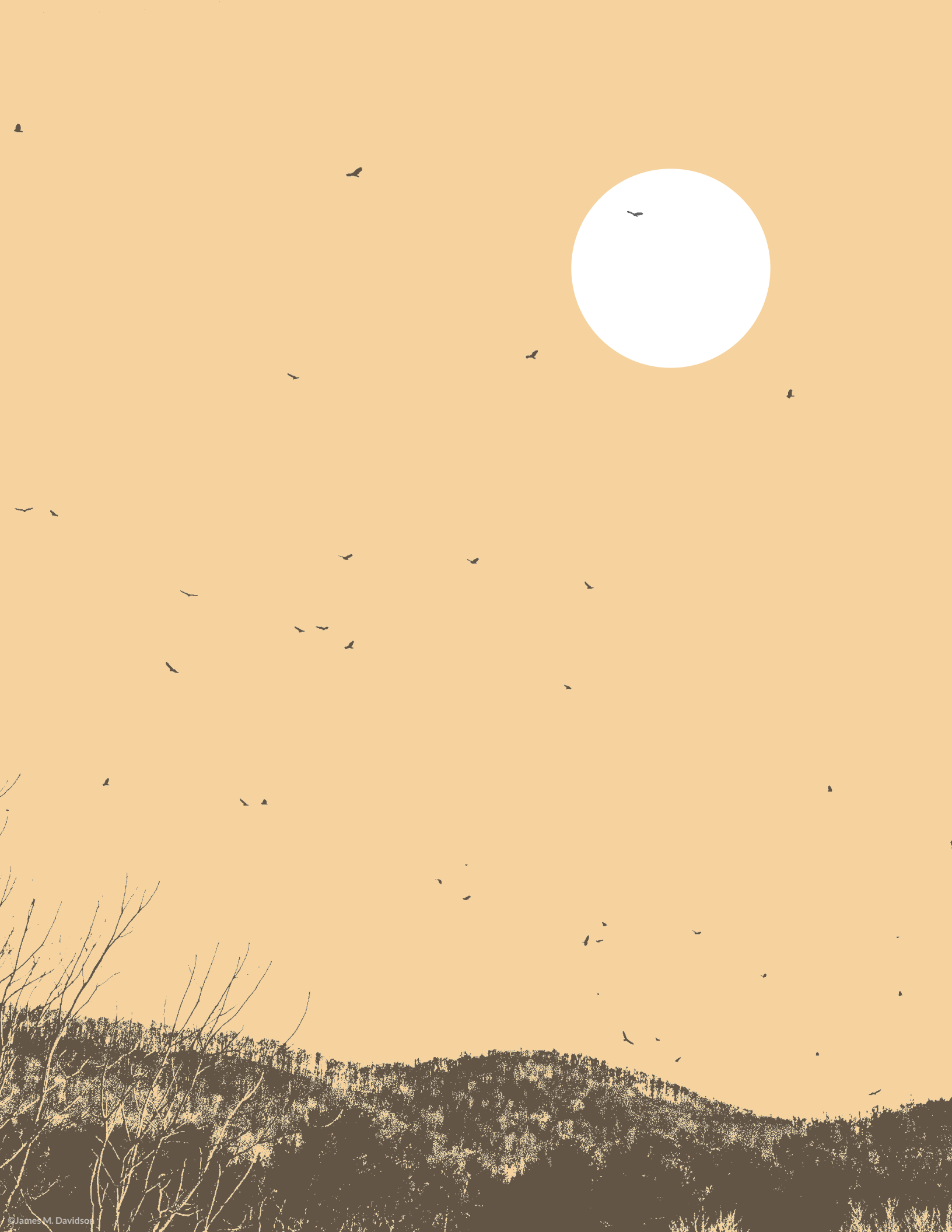
### RURAL ACTION (RA) - OHIO

Rural Action has a mission to foster social, economic, and environmental justice in Appalachian Ohio, working at the grassroots level to grow sectors built from the region's assets—sectors that have the potential to expand sustainable economic development. These include projects, programs, and social enterprises in watershed restoration, zero waste/recycling, forestry, agriculture, environmental education, resilient communities, and energy and climate. As the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition's lead organization for Ohio, Rural Action conducts community engagement while identifying project areas and economic development ideas and helping prepare applications for consideration by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

### DOWNSTREAM STRATEGIES - REGIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Downstream Strategies is an environmental and economic development consulting firm based in West Virginia. Through decades of work within the region, the firm is proud to be recognized as a leader in innovative economic development. Since 2017, Downstream Strategies has served as the regional technical expert for the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition. Through this work, its staff identifies potential projects and opportunities, develops ideas into fundable project concepts, and helps secure partnerships and financial support for implementation.







# INTRODUCTION

The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition formed in 2017 in direct response to an unprecedented level of public and private interest in mine land reclamation and redevelopment. Appalachian communities are plagued by thousands of coal-impacted sites that pose threats to public health and impede local economic growth. Over the past five and a half years, the Coalition has worked in partnership with frontline organizations and communities throughout Appalachia to establish new models of land restoration and reuse that expand economic opportunities for the region. These partnerships have resulted in more than \$40 million dollars in funding for innovative projects throughout Appalachian communities.

The Coalition's previous work is summarized in the following reports:

- [Many Voices, Many Solutions](#) (2018)
- [A New Horizon: Innovative Reclamation for a Just Transition](#) (2019)
- [Restoration and Renewal: The New Appalachian Economy](#) (2020)

## WHO IS THE RECLAIMING APPALACHIA COALITION?

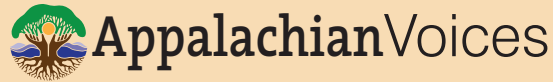
The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition is made up of leading organizations in the Just Transition movement: Appalachian Voices, Coalfield Development, Rural Action, and Downstream Strategies. We partner with coal-impacted communities and engage state and regional development agencies to identify mine reclamation projects with the potential to deliver positive economic and social impacts. We envision a robust movement around innovative mine reclamation that supports the growth of a mature restoration economy in Central Appalachia. Our goals are to:

1. Fund innovative reclamation projects,
2. Increase capacity to support innovative mine reclamation, and
3. Support a regional community of practice that exemplifies Just Transition principles in land restoration and reuse.





*The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition is a regional collaboration that seeks to spur mine reclamation projects throughout Central Appalachia that are responsive to community needs and interests and that accelerate the growth of new, sustainable sectors. The Coalition consists of leading organizations in four states—Appalachian Voices in Virginia, Coalfield Development in West Virginia, and Rural Action in Ohio—and a regional technical expert, Downstream Strategies, based in West Virginia.*



## WHAT IS A JUST TRANSITION?

As the Appalachian region works to gradually evolve its economy into one that both guards the natural environment and bolsters the livelihoods of those who live here, the concept of a “Just Transition” is becoming manifest in communities throughout the mountains.

Although extractive industries have been the backbone of Appalachia for decades, current efforts to diversify its economy are turning the tide for future generations. As our national and global economies shift to a low-carbon platform, countless long-standing jobs and established companies are in jeopardy, creating tension between the concern for working people’s means to provide for their families and the concern for environmental stewardship in the marketplace.

Just Transition holds that the workers and communities who gave the most in the carbon-intensive economies of the past—those who

have the most at stake as we shift to a greener economy—should be among the first to benefit from the new clean energy framework of the 21st century. It is an elemental precept to understand that this will not occur without targeted, system-level intervention.

As we work to fulfill this immense mandate one project at a time, we help validate the hope that so many have placed in the Just Transition movement. When we fall short and mistake the cheerful message of hope for the actual outcome that is so desperately needed in our communities, we do a disservice to the hardworking individuals who shaped Appalachia as well as feed the voices of skepticism that cast doubt on our motives and methods. This report features projects that successfully enact the shift toward a flourishing sustainable economy on a local scale—ways we can make good on the promise of a Just Transition.



## WHAT IS INNOVATIVE RECLAMATION?

Each project is a partnership with local stakeholders and community members; we help conceptualize and bring to life ideas that represent a microcosm of the larger coal-to-sustainable economy transformation taking place across the region. For decades, many mine land reclamation and reuse projects were simply stopgap plans to nullify the dangers of AML features and erect cookie cutter commercial and industrial buildings deprived of any long-term, deliberate end use. These former AMLs may be reclaimed, but many are still abandoned—they were developed with little or no input or collaboration from the community, guiding principles, nor purposeful design.

In contrast, Innovative Mine Reclamation replaces the stale strategies of the past with site-specific, community-minded, and sustainable approaches for vibrant end uses that will yield economic and environmental benefits for years to come. This new mode of mine land reclamation and reuse adheres to a progressive set of best practices that meet criteria established by the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition.

Our projects follow the principles of Innovative Mine Reclamation:

- Go above and beyond the legal reclamation requirements for AML features and bond forfeiture properties to create sites that are primed for sustainable development, native ecosystem restoration, or both.
- Make projects appropriate to the specific place they are occurring.
- Be inclusive of multiple community stakeholders, especially in addition to traditional decision makers, in project development.
- Promote environmental sustainability, and do not cause additional harm.
- Make projects financially viable beyond the initial grant period.
- Introduce new, viable concepts to the Appalachian coalfields that could be successfully replicated on similar sites throughout the region.

## GET IN TOUCH

Getting an email or phone call that begins with “I read your reclamation report. I have an idea to share” makes our day. We welcome your perspective, feedback, project ideas, and questions.

**West Virginia:** Jacob Hannah, Coalfield Development  
[jhannah@coalfield-development.org](mailto:jhannah@coalfield-development.org)

**Ohio:** Michelle Shively MacIver, Rural Action  
[michelle@truepigments.com](mailto:michelle@truepigments.com)

**Virginia:** Adam Wells, Appalachian Voices  
[adam@appvoices.org](mailto:adam@appvoices.org)

**Regional:** Joey James, Downstream Strategies  
[jjames@downstreamstrategies.com](mailto:jjames@downstreamstrategies.com)





## OUR FOCUS IN 2021 AND 2022

The Coalition last released an annual report in late 2020. Amidst the challenges and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, Coalition partners were unsure how industries, workplaces, and ways of life would change in response to the challenges of the time. Additionally, the multi-industry nature of innovative mine reclamation and reuse left many Coalition-supported projects hanging in the balance. Notwithstanding, the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition entered 2021 resolved to continue its work advancing a Just Transition through its support of innovative mine reclamation and reuse projects.

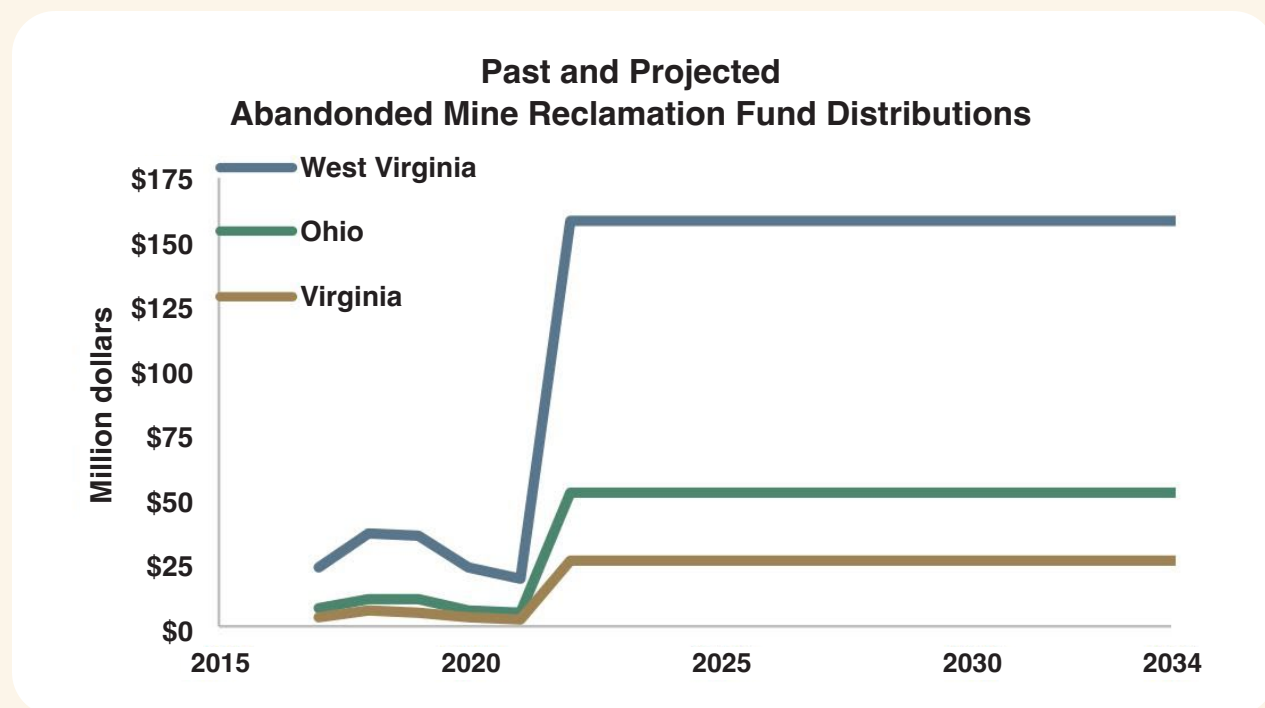
This unfettered resolve was met by opportunity to advance principles of a Just Transition at an unprecedented scale through several initiatives described below.

### Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

In early 2021, the Coalition became aware of two proposals making their way through Congress: one that would reauthorize the abandoned mine reclamation fund and one that would appropriate more than \$11 billion in additional funds to abandoned mine reclamation projects. Together, these proposals represented approximately \$385 million in potential

investment for Virginia, \$778 million for Ohio, and \$2.4 billion for West Virginia. Determined to see these proposals advance, the Coalition released a mini-report exploring the potential economic impacts of this federal action and hosted webinars with thought leaders on abandoned mine reclamation. Our analysis found that congressional approval of these proposals would result in approximately 1,910 jobs that will continue for 13–15 years, while in Ohio and Virginia it will result in approximately 730 and 330 jobs, respectively. The economic output in these three states associated with this investment to reclaim abandoned mine lands totals almost \$7.5 billion over this time period. The discourse facilitated by the Coalition through this analysis and associated public forums supported the inclusion of both proposals in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed H.R. 3684 into law, unleashing the floodgates of funding for abandoned mine reclamation and paving the way for a generation of innovative mine reclamation projects.

Full report here: [http://reclaimingappalachia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Moving\\_forward\\_warp\\_speed\\_AML\\_updated2.pdf](http://reclaimingappalachia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Moving_forward_warp_speed_AML_updated2.pdf)



*The Biden Administration's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides an unprecedented level of federal funding for abandoned mine reclamation.*

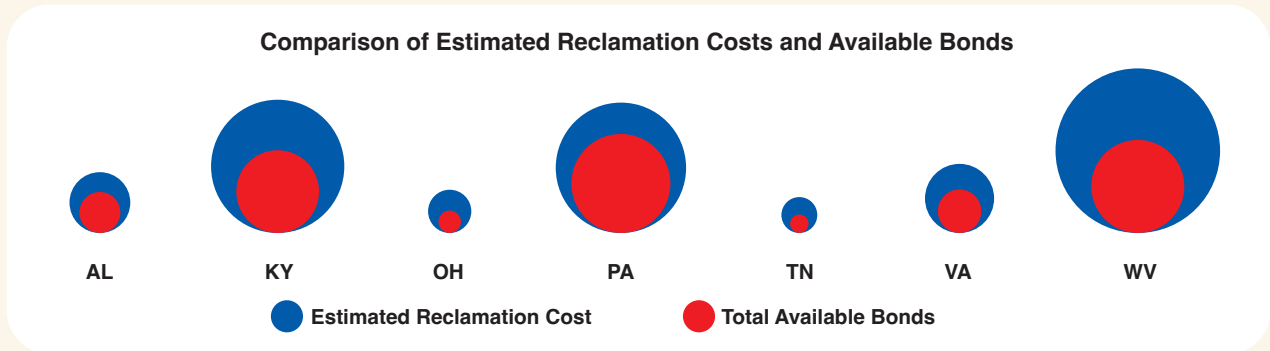


## Exploration of Coal Industry Bankruptcies and Post-SMCRA Reclamation

When financial or other circumstances prevent a coal company from having the resources to fully reclaim a mine, those bonds are used by the regulatory agency to complete reclamation, a process known as bond forfeiture. As more coal companies declare bankruptcy, fewer companies remain to take over mines, so the number of companies forfeiting their reclamation bonds and abandoning their cleanup responsibilities will only increase. Current reclamation bond structures may not cover eventual outstanding reclamation needs. The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) was intended to prevent more unreclaimed abandoned mines, but now we may be facing a new wave of modern unreclaimed abandoned mines. Recognizing this has the potential to negatively impact our region and seriously influence the future of innovative mine reclamation, the Coalition

partnered on an analysis to estimate the cost to clean up post-SMCRA mine sites and to compare that with available funding sources for the cleanup, based on publicly available data, for seven Eastern coal mining states: Alabama, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Using state and federal reclamation data and an average dollar-per-acre cost for mine reclamation for several mine types, the report determined that 426,000 acres of mined land have been partially reclaimed and 207,000 acres are unreclaimed, for a total of 633,000 acres in need of some degree of reclamation. The total outstanding cost of this reclamation ranges from \$7.5 to \$9.8 billion dollars. The total available bonds amount to approximately \$3.8 billion dollars.

Full report here: [https://appvoices.org/resources/RepairingTheDamage\\_ReclamationAtModernMines.pdf](https://appvoices.org/resources/RepairingTheDamage_ReclamationAtModernMines.pdf)



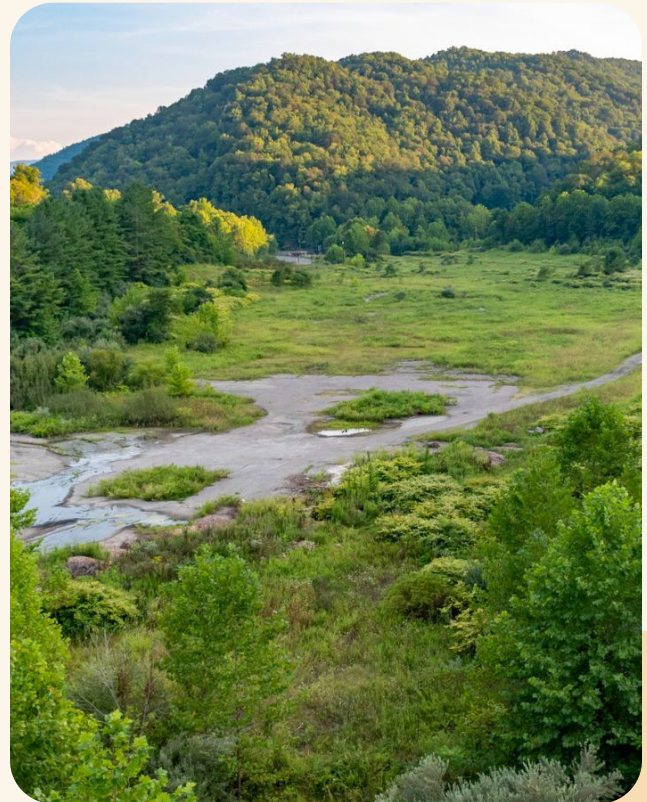
*Reclamation costs far outweigh funds available through bonds posted on mining permits in every Appalachian coal mining state.*





## Recommendations for Equitable Implementation of AMLER Program

The Reclaiming Appalachian Coalition has worked with frontline communities and organizations on dozens of Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) proposals since 2017. The majority of the innovative mine reclamation projects that Coalition members have worked on have received funding through AMLER. Since the Program's inception, the Coalition has noticed certain discrepancies that can lead to inefficiencies in the way the program is managed by state and tribal AML programs and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE). In late 2021 and early 2022, the Coalition and its partners engaged in conversations with representatives from organizations throughout Appalachia that have experience with the AMLER Program. Utilizing this information and information gathered from its lived experience, the Coalition developed ten recommendations to improve the AMLER Program. The recommendations, which are detailed in a mini-report titled Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program Recommendations for More Equitable Implementation, were used as a platform to engage congressional representatives and non-elected agency leads.



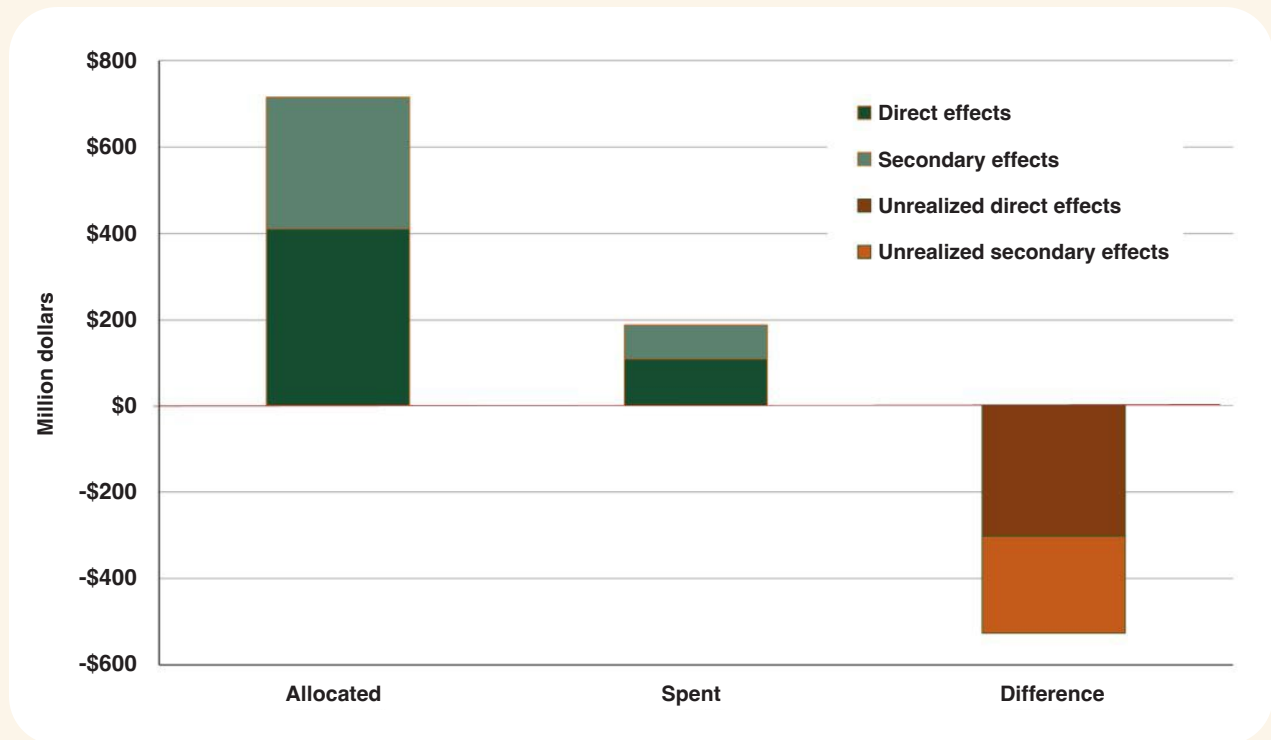


## Economic Impact Assessment of AMLER Program

To understand the impact of its work to-date and better advocate for potential changes, the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition completed an evaluation and economic impact assessment of the AMLER program in Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. Its report, *Got Five On It: Economic Impacts and Observations of the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program Five Years In*, digs in on what has happened with the \$410 million allocated to these states since the AMLER program's inception. While the entire \$410 million in AMLER grants allocated to these states represents a local economic impact of approximately \$715 million and approximately

4,142 full- and part-time annual jobs, the Coalition found the full potential impact of the AMLER funds allocated to these four states has not been realized, largely due to capacity gaps in grantee organizations and delays at state and federal agencies. Only \$109 million has been spent through the end of 2021. This spending is estimated to have generated \$187 million in local economic benefits and 1,096 jobs. The unrealized difference between the potential and actual benefits is significant.

Full report here: <https://www.downstreamstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GotFiveOnIt-FI-NAL-6-7-2022.pdf>



The full potential impact of the AMLER funds allocated to Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia has not been realized; only \$109 million has been spent through the end of 2021. This spending is estimated to have generated \$187 million in local economic benefits (See the middle bar) and 1,096 jobs. The unrealized difference between the potential and actual benefits is shown as the right-most bar.

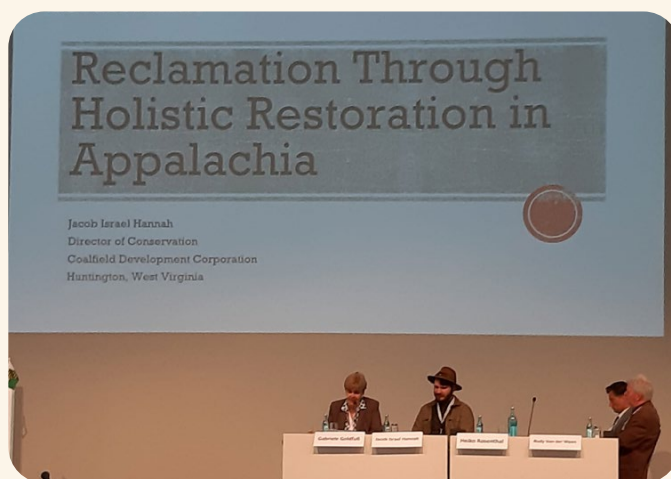
## Growing an International Presence

As thought leaders on innovative mine reclamation and reuse in the United States, members of the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition are spending an increasing amount of time collaborating with international partners working on similar Just Transition projects.

In May 2022, Jacob Hannah of Coalfield Development was invited to speak at the World Canals Conference in Leipzig, Germany. The World Canals Conference is an international platform for topics related to inland waterways. Every year, the conference brings together hundreds of experts, scientists, policy-makers, public administration representatives, associations, companies from all over the world to discuss the protection, development and sustainable

management of inland waterways. Jacob gave a presentation on reskilling coal communities to remediate coal liabilities in Appalachia.

In September 2022, Joey James of Downstream Strategies was invited to give a presentation on economic transition planning on former coal mines to Coal India Limited, the world's largest coal company. Joey put on a workshop with Indian and South African counterparts in Kolkata as part of the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Global Just Transition Initiative. The Global Just Transition Network builds transnational, peer-to-peer relationships between fossil fuel dependent communities and facilitates dialogue on just economic transition with fossil fuel industry representatives.



*Jacob Hannah presenting on a panel in Leipzig, Germany.*



*Vinay Ranjan, Director of Eastern Coalfields Limited, a Coal India Limited subsidiary, addresses representatives of Coal India and other subsidiaries at the September Just Transition Workshop in Kolkata, West Bengal.*



## FUNDED PROJECTS

Despite a very busy 2021 and 2022, the Coalition has maintained its dedication to helping advance game-changing land reuse projects in our region. To date, projects totaling 45.2 million in investment have been funded with technical assistance from the Reclaiming Appalachian Coalition. Roughly 20% of this funding comes from private sources, like businesses or non-profit organizations involved in the project. The rest of the funding for these projects come from public sources that include the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Grants, Appalachian Regional Commission POWER Grants, and, of course, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement's Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization program.

**Table 1: Funded Projects 2018-2021**

State	Year	Applicant	Project	Federal Funds	State and Local Funds	Private Investment
KY	2018	Kentucky River Area Development District	South Fork Elk View Campground	\$1,345,000	-	-
OH	2019	Ohio Department of Natural Resources	Moonville Trails	\$1,150,600	\$790,500	\$130,000
OH	2019	Rural Action and Ohio University	Truetown Paint Pigments	\$3,489,408	\$3,647,211	\$335,000
OH	2018	Ohio Department of Natural Resources	D.O. Hall Business Park Expansion	\$954,593	-	-
OH	2019	Ohio Department of Natural Resources	Wellston Recreation Complex	\$391,000	-	-
VA	2018	Scott County	Devils Fork	\$88,000	\$172,000	-
VA	2018	Russell County	Dante Revitalization	\$269,000	\$265,000	-
VA	2018	Wise County Industrial Development Auth.	SWVA Solar Springboard	\$500,000	-	\$4,100,000
VA	2019	People Inc.	Trammel	\$1,143,575	\$1,000,000	-
VA	2019	The Nature Conservancy	Clinch River Campgrounds	\$2,460,000	-	-
WV	2018	Friends of Cheat	RE-CREATE	\$3,014,000	\$536,000	-
WV	2018	Refresh Appalachia	A Food-Safe Processing Facility	\$4,000,000	-	\$1,358,000
WV	2019	Coalfield Development Corporation	Black Diamond Re-Use Center	\$500,000	-	\$100,000
KY	2020	Backroads of Appalachia	Amenities to Increase Motorsports Tourism	\$544,537	-	-
OH	2021	ODNR	Tecumseh Theater	\$4,055,000	-	\$1,000,000
AL	2021	Cawaco RC&D Council	North Fork Hurricane Creek	\$3,491,363	\$43,134	-
OH	2021	Vinton County CVB	Vinton County Tourism Enhancement	\$2,825,000	\$1,053,424	-
VA	2021	Russell County	Dante Revitalization	-	\$50,000	-
VA	2021	Appalachian Voices	Carbon Removal Project	-	-	\$400,000
<b>Totals:</b>				<b>\$30,221,076</b>	<b>\$7,557,269</b>	<b>\$7,423,000</b>

**Table 2: Construction Impact 2018-2020**

State	Project	Final-demand Output	Final-demand Earnings	Final-demand Employment	Final-demand Value-added
KY	South Fork Elk View Campground	\$9,239,643	\$3,116,426	67.34	\$5,041,451
OH	Moonville Trails	\$2,822,002	\$976,716	21.83	\$1,546,682
OH	Truettown Paint Pigments	\$8,535,566	\$2,795,345	60.45	\$4,714,540
OH	D.O. Hall Business Park Expansion	\$2,920,444	\$685,842	14.14	\$1,359,595
OH	Wellston Recreation Complex	\$826,657	\$256,493	9.09	\$480,332
VA	Devils Fork	\$615,789	\$167,826	3.53	\$318,974
VA	Dante Revitalization	\$1,173,309	\$357,951	7.79	\$629,623
VA	SWVA Solar Springboard	\$8,054,196	\$1,673,651	29.70	\$4,534,019
VA	Trammel	\$2,696,320	\$782,248	17.42	\$1,374,616
VA	Clinch River Campgrounds	\$5,317,691	\$1,373,209	31.30	\$2,773,934
WV	RE-CREATE	\$7,407,911	\$990,947	46.32	\$4,066,084
WV	A Food-Safe Processing Facility	\$12,019,497	\$3,706,718	83.25	\$6,310,845
WV	Black Diamond Re-Use Center	\$1,119,193	\$323,166	7.11	\$590,409
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$62,748,217</b>	<b>\$17,206,537</b>	<b>399.27</b>	<b>\$33,741,105</b>









# OHIO





# OHIO: INTRODUCTION

What a difference a year makes! In 2022, Ohio pivoted their abandoned mine land economic revitalization program to a competitive grant cycle, a change that we knew would impact how communities develop the types of projects we've been working on.

In addition to changing the format of AMLER grants, our state also saw an ongoing stream of different funding that is able to be put to work in coalfield communities. Funding programs such as the Appalachian Communities grant program, the Appalachian Regional Commission's POWER program, and the Clean Ohio programs all helped support our region's overall restoration. It has been wonderful to watch small communities partner together to make an impact far larger than their footprint.

We continue to see the projects that RAC assists be competitive and successful. The story of Hotel McArthur being awarded a mini-grant by our working group, and then partnering with us through an application process that culminated in a AMLER award of close to \$3 million dollars, is exactly what we hope to accomplish. We congratulate all the AMLER recipients from this past year!

On a personal note, this will be my last year with RAC before transitioning into a different position. The work I've been able to be part of has been some of the most fulfilling of my career. I believe that my peers continuing this work are the thought leaders who will be changing our region, and our world, for the better for years to come. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for Appalachian Ohio, and for coal-impacted communities as a whole. Even though our resourcefulness was born out of need and unjust circumstances, it remains one of our most important assets. I am proud to be living, working, organizing, planning, and dreaming in this place.

The future we build together will be brighter than any coal-fired furnace that has graced these beautiful hills.



Marissa Lautzenheiser  
*Director of Northern Programs*  
**Rural Action**





Photo: Buckeye Trail Association

## BUCKEYE TRAIL BLACK DIAMOND TRAIL NETWORK

**Project applicant:** Shawnee Trail Town Network

**Project location:** Perry County, Ohio

**AMLER funding requested:** \$2,358,600

**Leveraged/matched resources:** \$145,960

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Buckeye Trail was designated Ohio's State Trail in 1967, and is the longest contiguous loop trail in the state. The 1,450 mile long trail bisects forests and meadows, travels along the Ohio River and Lake Erie, and crosses both major cities and rural areas. Along the Appalachian sections of the route, visitors can see remnants from the not-so-distant past including many features left from abandoned pre-law coal mines.

The Buckeye Trail Black Diamond Trail Network AMLER project will move more than 20 miles of designated trail off-road and into the scenic Burr Oak State Park. It will also provide a concrete connection between the Village of Shawnee and Burr Oak State Park, increasing the tourism and recreation opportunities for entrepreneurs and business owners in the Village. The project includes the construction of nine pedestrian bridges that will allow visitors to safely cross streams and creeks on public land. It will also include construction of a loop trail that takes visitors around the adjacent Tecumseh Lake.

During this project there will be three abandoned mine land features remediated that are adjacent to the newly constructed trail. These features will remove public safety hazards in areas that are open to recreation, and include gab pile reclamation and mine void closures.

### PARTNERSHIPS

The Buckeye Trail has been a collaborative project from the beginning. This project is a cumulation of long-standing partnerships between the Buckeye Trail, the Village of Shawnee, the Little Cities of Black Diamonds Council, Ohio's Winding Road, as well as private businesses. There is significant collaboration and communication in order to maintain a seamless "experience economy" for both residents and visitors to the region.





## AML NEXUS

Perry County had close to 200 million tons of coal mined and sold prior to the passage of 1977's Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA). It is one of the top five counties in Ohio for pre-law coal production. This history left the county pockmarked with mining features that endanger resident's health and safety, and make growing regional tourism efforts difficult to safely expand.

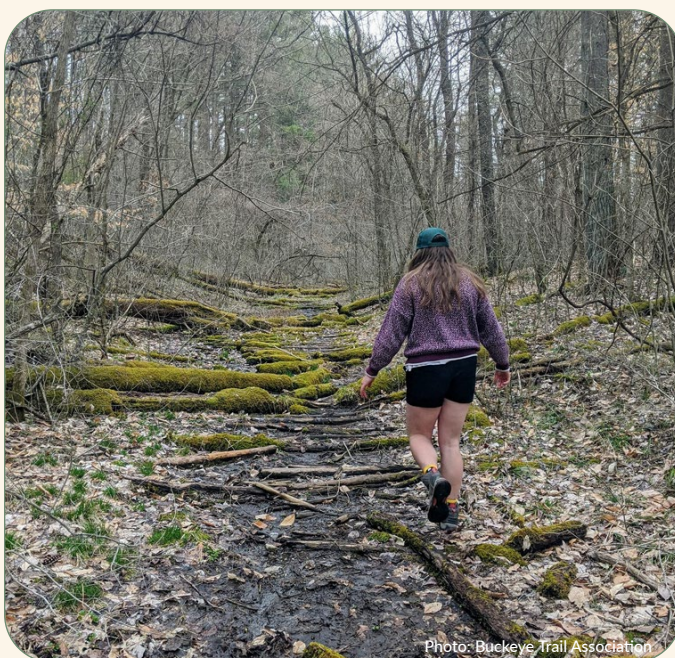
Reclamation activities that will take place as part of this project will be focused on remediating three priority one public health and safety hazards that are all accessible by visitors. There are two open mine portals and one vertical mine opening that will be closed off. All three hazards are documented in the eAMLIS system.

## FUNDING SOURCES

In addition to federal Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization funds totalling \$2,358,600, this project leverages an additional \$145,960 in local funds. These funds are committed from partners such as the Ora E. Anderson Conservation Fund, the National Forest Foundation, the Appalachian Regional Commission POWER grant program, REI, and the Clean Ohio Greenspace Program.

## PROJECT IMPACT

Outdoor recreation is among our nation's largest economic sectors. The Ohio Travel Association (OTA) believes that, "Ohio is endowed with incredible natural resources throughout the state, providing the resources and settings for outdoor recreation. As outdoor recreationists spend money in our communities, there is increased awareness of the importance of parks and a healthy environment." This project will help grow the regional tourism efforts that are rooted in responsible outdoor recreation. By connecting the Village of Shawnee with Burr Oak State Park, opportunities for business owners and entrepreneurs are expanded.



Local trail user survey data and state/national background research was used to a) establish baseline visitation and expenditures and b) project visitation and expenditures as a result of this AMLER project. The pre-project baseline total annual visitation includes an estimated 1,340 trail users with an expenditure estimated to be \$33,146. The projected total annual visitation as a result of this project includes an estimated 8,713 trail users with expenditure estimated to be \$776,310.

By safeguarding the mine openings and providing a continuous, connected and accessible section of the statewide Buckeye Trail that is linked most directly to the Wayne National Forest and the historic Village of Shawnee, as well as many other cultural and natural assets in between, tourist activity and economic development are expected to rise significantly.





Photo: Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitors Bureau

## NEW PHILADELPHIA – ROSWELL RECREATIONAL TRAIL

**Project applicant:** City of New Philadelphia

**Project location:** New Philadelphia, Ohio

**AMLER funding requested:** \$2,637,800.00

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The New Philadelphia-Roswell Trail project includes the paving of four miles of recreational trail between two small communities, establishment of three trailheads, one trail crossing of a state highway, and the reclamation of adjacent abandoned mining features along the route.

New Philadelphia is the county seat of Tuscarawas County, located in east-central Appalachian Ohio. The community has been a hub of manufacturing and industry for more than two centuries, and also has abundant natural resources that helped fuel economic growth. An adjacent village, Roswell, has historically been connected to New Philadelphia via passenger and cargo rail lines. These rail lines served as vital links carrying coal and miners between the two communities. Prior to 1977, more than 143 million tons of coal was mined in Tuscarawas County. As economies shifted from resource extraction to manufacturing to a diverse mix of industry, tourism, retail, and health services, impacts from the historical prevalence of mining continue to impact these communities.

The City of New Philadelphia owns the right-of-way of the abandoned Pennsylvania Railroad Company's Beaver Dam Branch between the City and the Village of Roswell. The four-mile long path transects at least four large pre-law mining complexes, with community roads still bearing the names "Egypt", "Red Onion", and "New England", representing the mines they sit atop. The opportunity to build a trail connecting the two towns has been discussed for decades, and interest has only grown in recent years.

Adjacent to the railroad bed are steep fore-slopes built up for coal rail transportation and coal mine spoil and gob between miles 1.5 and 4. For the project to be successful, remediation of those features is required to ensure the safety of the public using the trail.

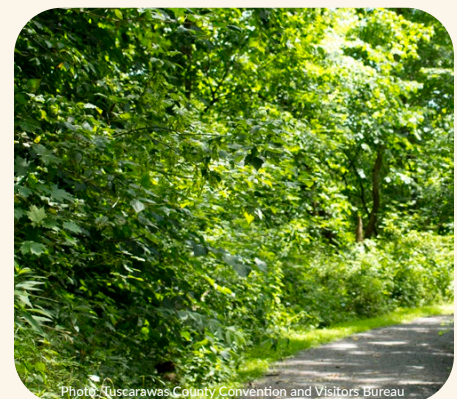
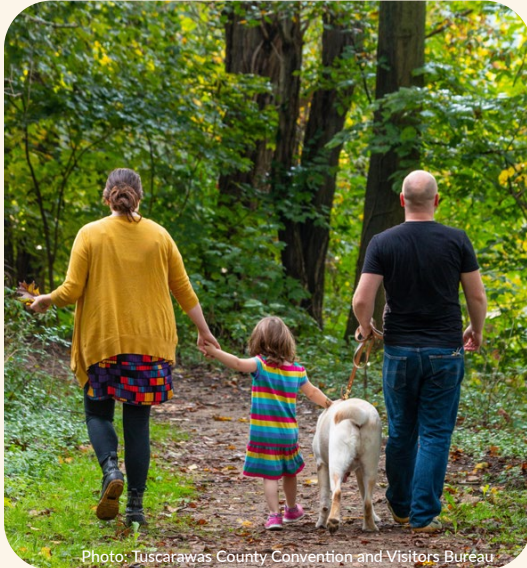


Photo: Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitors Bureau





The completion of the New Philadelphia to Roswell Trail would only add to growing recreational tourism offerings of the area. One of the largest mountain bike complexes in the state, which also sits atop an abandoned mine, is located less than six miles away. The Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, a 87-mile recreation trail ending at Lake Erie, currently terminates just north of New Philadelphia. The New Philadelphia to Roswell Trail would improve quality of life for all county residents while also boosting economic opportunities in both communities.

### **PARTNERSHIPS**

This project requires the close cooperation of two municipalities, the City of New Philadelphia and the Village of Roswell.

### **AML NEXUS**

There are a total of 2.5 miles of highwalls, left over from historic surface mining, that will border the trail. Steps will

have to be taken to ensure the construction of the trail does not bring the public too close to these dangerous features. On the southern side of the trail there are other related mining features that will need to be assessed for public safety. The right-of-way traverses three marked AML issues that are documented in the eAMLIS system.

### **FUNDING SOURCES**

The City of New Philadelphia is committed to maintaining the trail once it is constructed. There is no planned leveraged funding for the project, but other relevant grant opportunities will continue to be pursued.

### **PROJECT IMPACT**

Several existing businesses have written about their support for the project. There is at least one restaurant adjacent to a trailhead area that could expand their business based on an increase in usage and visitors to the trail. The Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitor's Bureau estimates that the completed Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Plan, which includes this project, would generate \$5.3 million from out-of-county visitors and draw more than 181,000 visitors per year. Having this link between downtown New Philadelphia and Roswell Community Park will bring more people to the downtown area that will contribute to the economy. The economic benefits of the New Philadelphia to Roswell Trail project do not end with increased commerce and the support of employment opportunities, but this trail could potentially increase property values and reduce health care costs from the community's improved health.







## VINTON COUNTY TOURISM ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

**Project applicant:** Vinton County Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Project location:** McArthur, Ohio

**AMLER funding requested:** \$2,825,000

**Leveraged/matched resources:** \$1,053,424

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Vinton County Tourism Enhancement Project is a well-supported, long-term partnership between the Vinton County Convention and Visitors Bureau (VCCVB), Vinton County Park District (VCPD), and the people of Vinton County to make strategic investments in tourism infrastructure that draw visitors into downtown McArthur and maximize the impact of tourism in the county.

The project initially focuses on strategic improvements at two iconic properties in the greater-McArthur area, designed to improve the aesthetic of the town and provide visitors an opportunity to stay a while and spend money in the local economy. AMLER investment in these properties leverages a long history of work and past investment by project partners.

#### 1) Historic Hotel McArthur

Built in 1839, Hotel McArthur is the oldest surviving structure in Vinton County still in use. The L-shaped building has been home to many small businesses including saloons, restaurants, barbers, newspapers, and hotel operators. There were even tunnels underneath the building connecting it to houses across the street and used for hiding runaway slaves as part of the Underground Railroad. Having fallen into serious disrepair in recent years, the VCCVB purchased the building for \$275,000 in April 2022 with the grand plan of undertaking a historically accurate (1840-1920) renovation of the structure to return it to its former glory as a hotel and new visitor center for the county. \$100,000 was recently allocated in the state capital budget for development of an engineering and architectural plan for the site. The VCCVB and its partners request an additional \$2.5 million from the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program to bring its vision to a reality.

With support from AMLER, the team anticipates beginning work on the renovation in January 2023. Tasks undertaken between January and March 2023 will include finalizing the engineering and architectural plan and developing a Request for Proposals package to solicit a construction team for the renovation. The project team will put the project out to bid in March with a goal of awarding the contract sometime in April. Performance period for the contract is anticipated to run May 2023 to May 2024, which gives the team room for schedule adjustments if needed. If construction on the hotel is completed by summer 2024, the VCVB could have it operational by Fall.

## 2) The McArthur Brick Company Historic Preserve

The McArthur Brick Company Historic Preserve is a 158-acre property just south of McArthur on State Route 93. Once one of Vinton County's largest employers, the McArthur Brick Company surface mined clay at the historic property to make the bricks that built McArthur and the surrounding area. Clay was found underneath coal seams, and the coal was used to fire the kilns. The Historic Preserve was purchased in March 2022 by the Vinton County Park District through the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund for \$550,000 with a vision of protecting sensitive wetlands, wildlife, rock outcroppings, and remnants of historic structures, and utilizing the property to promote tourism in the McArthur-area. The McArthur Brick Company Historic Preserve will be freely open to the public during daylight hours for hiking and other activities and the Park District will offer low- or no-cost permits for nighttime activities, including camping at designated areas within the preserve. The VCCVB and its partners request \$200,000 from AMLER to assist with the erosion problems related to pre-SMCRA mining activities that took place on the site. Additionally, this money from AMLER would be used to add interpretive signs to the site explaining past mining activities that took place there.

Remediation activities at the Historic Preserve will happen concurrently with the activities at the hotel. Tasks undertaken between January and March 2023 will include working with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and private consultants to identify priority remediation activities for the site and developing a Request for Proposals package to solicit a consulting team for the remediation project. The project team will put the project out to bid in March with a goal of awarding the contract sometime in April. It is anticipated that the contract awardee will be primarily responsible for any permitting required; however, the VCCVB and its partners will assist with the process. This will likely take place between May and June 2023. Remediation activities will begin in June and be completed by August.



## PARTNERSHIPS

The Vinton County Tourism Enhancement Project is supported by a variety of local and regional partners that have worked together to make this project a reality. In addition to the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition, this includes the Vinton County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Moonville Rail Trail Association, and the Vinton County Parks District.

## AML NEXUS

The history of McArthur and that of Vinton County are inextricably intertwined with coal mining and the community still relies on the industry in many ways. According to the Appalachian Regional Commission, Vinton County has a historically high dependence on the coal industry and the industry has had a high impact on the local economy.

While the Ohio Department of Natural Resources has made great strides in recent years to address issues



## VINTON COUNTY TOURISM ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (CONTINUED)

posed by the abandoned mine lands surrounding McArthur, mining features are still being discovered that need to be mitigated. Some such features were recently discovered on the McArthur Brick Company Historic Preserve. Between 1905 and the 1960's the former brick plant operated on steam produced by water pumped into a cistern from a pond at the front of the property, fired by coal. Extensive surface mining took place toward the rear of the property. There, clay was mined to make bricks and coal was mined to fuel the kilns. ODNR has discovered at least one large mining pit, a high wall, and evidence of acid mine drainage in a small stream on the property. Rusted out 55-gallon drums, tires, and other trash have also been dumped into the mining pit over the years.

Reclamation activities that will take place as part of this project will be focused on removing dumped debris from the mining pit and addressing erosion issues around other mining features so the property can be utilized for recreation.

### FUNDING SOURCES

In addition to funds from the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program, this project utilizes money from the State of Ohio Capital Budget, a Clean Ohio Grant, and the Brownfield Remediation Program. The Vinton County Convention and Visitors Bureau has also invested \$275,000 of its own money.

### PROJECT IMPACT

This project is intentionally designed to increase tourists and promote tourism-related expenditures in McArthur. While the most-direct end users of the project are visitors to the hotel or brickyard properties, the primary beneficiaries are the residents of Vinton County. A recent economic impact study of the project by Downstream Strategies found that the proposed project would support more than 35 jobs and provide more





than \$2 million in worker income during the construction phase.

Further, the development would generate an estimated \$1.5 million on an annual basis once the hotel is operating. The ongoing annual activity at the hotel and brick plant would generate more than 11 direct/onsite jobs with a statewide impact of 16 jobs and \$630,000 in total labor income per year of operation. The following are additional projected outcomes:

- Visitor days — The project is anticipated to generate approximately 4,000 new visitor days per year for Vinton County.
- New businesses — The project provides both direct and indirect opportunity for new business creation in McArthur. Direct opportunities will be the creation of the hotel and bar/restaurant businesses at the historic Hotel McArthur. This is expected to have a tangible impact on the atmosphere of downtown McArthur and encourage other businesses to open in available space. The project team anticipates the creation of at least 3 businesses (2 direct and 1 indirect) during the AMLER performance period.
- New revenues — We expect this project will increase revenues to current McArthur businesses and will poll them to find out if they know a percentage of total business related to the Vinton County Tourism Enhancement Project.





# VIRGINIA





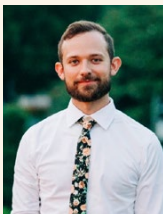
# VIRGINIA: INTRODUCTION

Since our last report, a lot has changed in Southwest Virginia and for coal-impacted communities nationwide. In Virginia, the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy has changed its name to the Virginia Department of Energy, or Virginia Energy for short. The name change reflects the agency's ever-growing management of clean energy deployment. The agency also added the Innovative Reclamation Program to assist economic development projects on previously mined land.

As state policymakers and the new governor's administration continue to think about Virginia's future energy portfolio, they have shined a light on the coalfields and its role going forward. Much of the conversation has centered on cleaning up coal waste piles and siting energy infrastructure in the region. However, these conversations are happening without community engagement. The same industrial forces that created the landscape of abandoned mined features are wielding their incredible power to continue monopolizing resources and land for their own economic priorities. Impacted communities struggle to compete with coal companies and well-organized LLCs for AMLER funds, forcing community-led efforts to diversify funding to sustain a bottom-up approach.

Luckily, Congress and the Biden Administration have invested heavily in energy communities, including \$11.3 billion in AML funding over 15 years, with Virginia receiving nearly \$23 million annually. Virginia will also see an increase in its AMLER funding allocation from \$10 million to nearly \$12 million. Additionally, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act have new programs and funding opportunities to support the economic transition happening in energy communities. Guided by President Biden's Justice40 Initiative (40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution), the Department of Energy is scoring most proposals based on how well projects engage communities and workers and how well benefits flow to communities.

A Just Transition for Southwest Virginia has never been more possible. Residents across the coalfields are organizing and active in their pursuit of building sustainable and resilient communities. The array of projects featured provides a glimpse into these efforts. More than ever, state policymakers, agency leaders, locally-elected officials, and economic development practitioners must invest in community capacity-building and engagement to ensure locally-led solutions can tackle immediate issues while strengthening our ability to transition in ways that make us stronger than before.



Robert Kell  
*New Economy Program Manager*  
**Appalachian Voices**





## DANTE STEAM BUILDING RESTORATION PROJECT

Project applicant: Russell County  
 Project location: Dante, Virginia  
 AML Pilot request: \$849,714  
 Leveraged/matched resources: \$324,039

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Dante Steam Building Restoration Project is a shovel-ready initiative seeking to renovate the Steam Building, formerly Russell County’s first power plant, into a state-of-the-art workforce development training facility. The building was originally used to heat the homes of former coal executives residing in Dante and has been vacant since the mid-1960s. The project will convert the Steam Building into the Bernie Williams Workforce Center operated by the Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board. It will be a Virginia Career Works One Stop center providing a model outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which coordinates services and training to meet emerging industry needs. The Center’s footprint will

serve parts of Wise, Dickenson, and Russell Counties, designated as economically distressed by the Appalachian Regional Commission.



The Center is an investment in the region’s ability to pivot to emerging industries in an increasingly remote and digitized work environment. Locally accessible workforce training resources are especially needed for Dante, and the surrounding communities, as the economy of the coalfields is rapidly changing due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the ongoing decline in coal mining. COVID-19 accelerated the need for reskilling current residents and



exposed the opportunity for Southwest Virginia to attract remote workers. As outlined in the regional 2022 CEDS, attracting these workers will be critical to the region's new economic development strategy and building high-tech, hybrid offices and co-working spaces will be central to local infrastructure redevelopment. The Center will be able to respond to ongoing employment challenges created by the pandemic by tailoring industry needs with specific workforce resources and offering critically needed manufacturing simulation courses, adult education, childcare training, tourism courses, professional development, testing, soft skill development, virtual job shadowing, and many other services that will address the region's workforce needs. The geographic proximity of Dante to neighboring coalfield communities and counties makes this an ideal location for such a facility.

Renovating the Steam Building contributes to the final design and revitalization undertaking in the Dante Master Plan. The Dante Community Association (DCA) envisioned a thriving downtown where visitors come to work, explore, and stay. The new central lawn, anchored by the Steam Building on one end and the Depot on the other, provides a social gathering space with a playground and picnic shelter. The Steam Building's strategic reuse as a workforce center and remote workspace will attract visitors to the community and inspire new business development in the Depot to cater to visitors. These visitors will experience Dante's rich social, cultural, economic, and environmental heritage offered by the Coal Mining and Railroad Museum and the Dante Coal Miners Memorial. They will also be drawn to Dante because of the new recreational amenities.

The finalization of Dante's Master Plan will enhance the quality of life for Dante's residents. Residents seeking similar workforce resources must travel 30 minutes to an hour. Additionally, a renovated building removes a blighted eyesore and creates the feeling of living in a safe community. Restoring the vacant and crumbling property will allow Dante to move forward and encourage increased home ownership and reinvestment in the surrounding neighborhoods. Investing in rehabilitation instead of demolition connects with a deep sense of community pride in the coal industry and the community's past vitality to live on in the Steam Building's reuse. Although Dante has been underserved and blighted, the people who live and work in the community are resilient. The actualization of Dante's Master Plan rebuilds a strong town by prioritizing the vision and needs of the residents who live there.

## PARTNERSHIPS

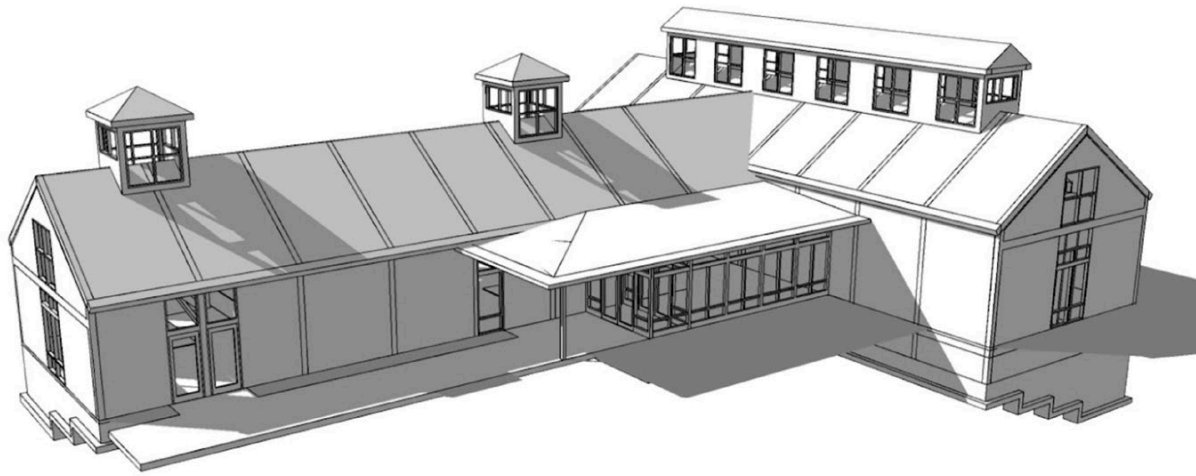
The development and implementation of the Dante Master Plan has been in deep partnership with The Nature Conservancy, CF Highlands, and many other regional groups.

## FUNDING SOURCES

The Dante Steam Building Restoration Project falls within the broader framework of the Dante Master Plan developed by the Dante Community Association (DCA) and the Community Design Assistance Center at Virginia Tech to revitalize downtown Dante. If secured, funds and additional support will bolster the investments the DCA has successfully leveraged and implemented, including nearly two million dollars of funding for redevelopment projects in the community.







## THREE RIVERS DESTINATION CENTER

**Project applicant: Russell County / Heart of Appalachia**  
**Project location: St. Paul, Virginia**

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Three Rivers Destination Center will serve as the central hub of Southwest Virginia's rapidly growing outdoor recreation and tourism economy while tying together mainstreet business, entrepreneurship and ecological education initiatives. Benefitting from years of preliminary planning and design work, the Center will fulfill several valuable roles as the Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority's (HOA's) headquarters, a visitor center for the newly opened Clinch River State Park and regional amenities, and as an ecology discovery center. This multipurpose facility is supported by a robust and regional planning team with over \$2.4M in funds already awarded and another \$3M pending.

The Three Rivers Destination Center project will showcase several key outdoor recreation-focused amenities in one central location of St. Paul, Virginia, for visitors and community members to significantly grow the outdoor recreation and tourism economy in Southwest Virginia. St. Paul is focusing on its overall town growth as an ecological campus. The Center is located in the middle of Virginia's Coalfield Region with access to the Clinch River State Park, the nearby Jefferson National Forest, Breaks Interstate Park, and several additional recreation opportunities.

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Based on IMPLAN modeling conducted by economists at Downstream Strategies in 2021, the construction of the Destination Center will result in a total economic impact of nearly \$5.5 million for the state of Virginia. This impact will support more than 31 jobs as the activity associated with this project ripples across the commonwealth. The initial construction of the facility will generate nearly 16 jobs directly, over \$1.1 million in labor income and total value added of nearly \$1.4 million.

### REGIONAL APPROACH

The Destination Center serves the localities of Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, Wise Counties and the City of Norton by increasing visitation and tourism in Southwest Virginia, including the Clinch River Valley Initiative and additional regional efforts. The Center will be an information hub to plan trips for visitors, learn about outdoor recreation opportunities and natural history, connect to regional amenities, learn about the natural assets, support outfitters, and book reservations. These core elements are all strongly needed to support outdoor entrepreneurs and mainstreet businesses, create new job opportunities, and help support and expand small businesses.



## FUNDING SOURCES

The dedicated team has been planning for the Three Rivers Destination Center for the previous three years, and funding has been acquired for redevelopment planning, site design, and project construction. Funding sources include:

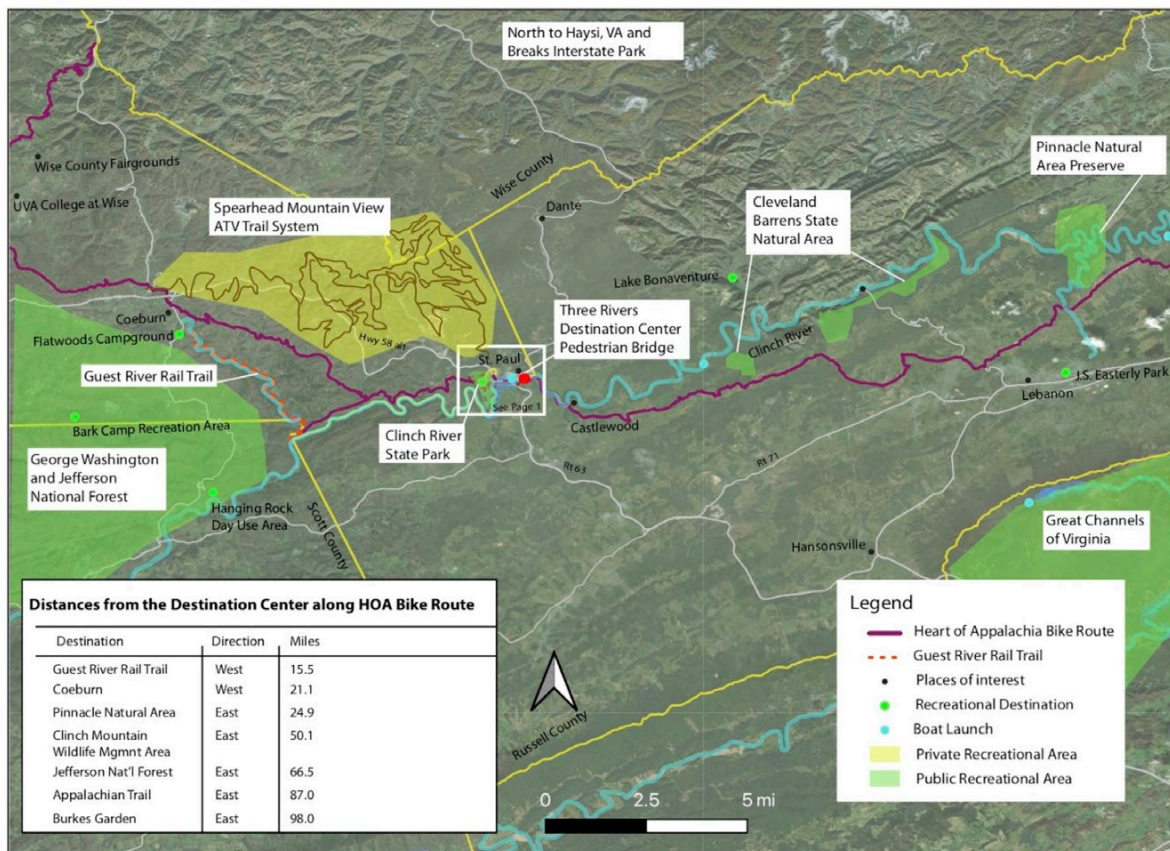
Source	Amount	Status
Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission	\$483,220	Secured
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	\$209,590	Secured
Appalachian Regional Commission POWER grant	\$1,500,000	Secured
Virginia Brownfields Restoration and Economic Redevelopment Fund	\$50,000	Secured
Just Transition Fund	\$31,950	Secured
Cumberland Plateau Regional Opportunity Program (CProp)	\$100,000	Secured
Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA)	\$50,000	Secured
Economic Development Administration Request (EAA)	\$3,000,000	Requested

**Project Total: \$5,424,760**

## COAL IMPACT

Regional leaders are working now to plan for the significant economic impact as the nearby Dominion Virginia City Hybrid Energy Plant will close in the coming decades.<sup>1</sup> The Three Rivers Destination Center is a core part of the local transition strategy by local leaders. The service area of the Destination Center includes all of Virginia’s coal producing counties. Between 2015 and 2020, approximately 1,078 jobs were lost from mining and related industries in the project area, signifying a -25% decline. The long-term industry projection for mining in Southwest Virginia does not show signs of improving: The region is expected to suffer an additional -21.1% mining employment decline through 2028.

<sup>1</sup> <https://energynews.us/2020/12/16/report-dominion-energy-must-start-planning-now-for-coal-plant-transition/>





**THREE RIVERS DESTINATION CENTER (CONTINUED)****LEADERSHIP**

The Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority (HOA) will manage and staff the Destination Center. HOA represents the counties of Lee, Wise, Dickenson, Buchanan, Scott, Russell, Tazewell, and the city of Norton. Several regional and state partners are highly supportive of this project and are garnering additional match funding. A planning committee meets on an ongoing basis to support the development of the Destination Center, which includes the following members:

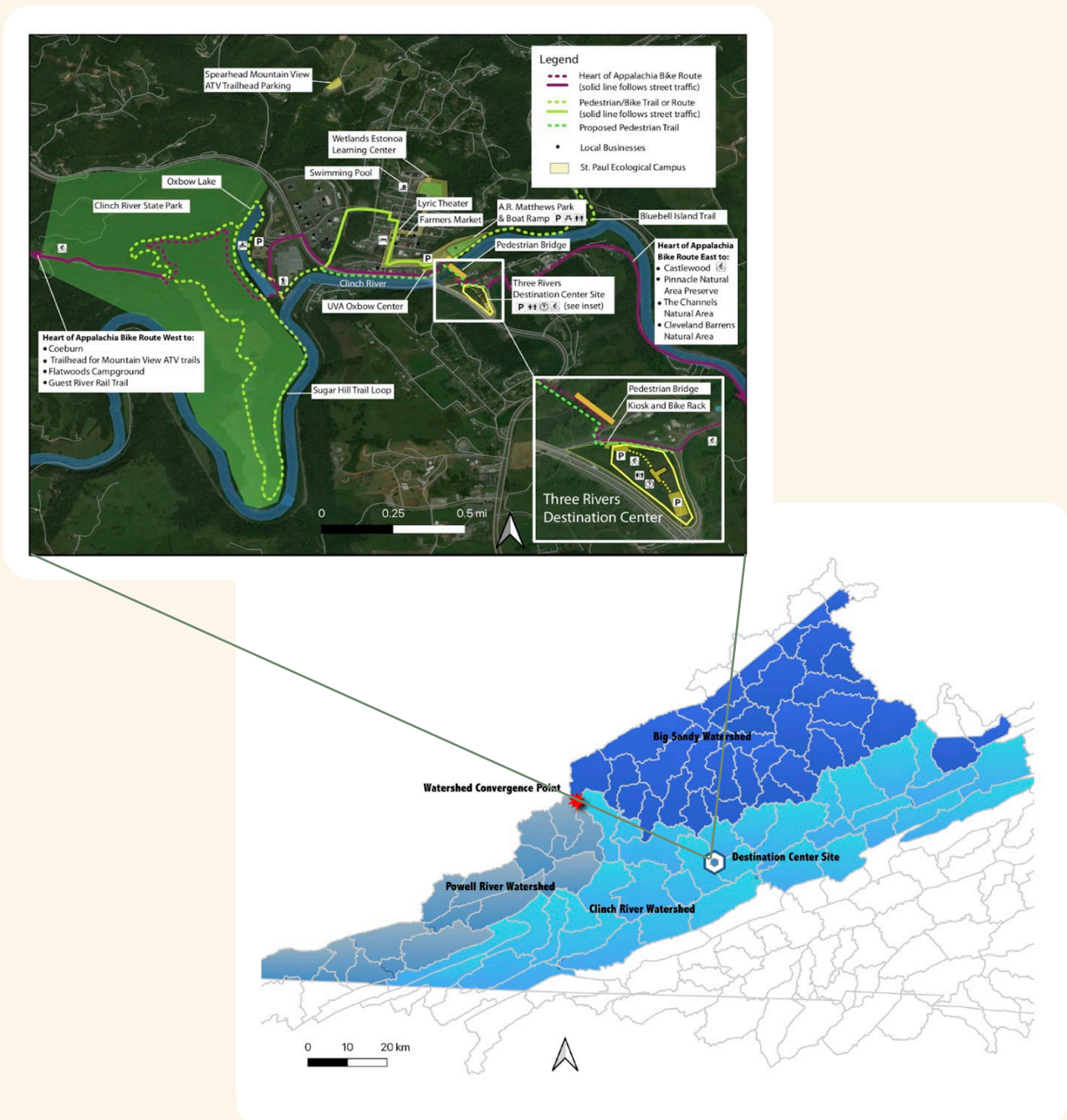
- Austin Bradley, Superintendent of Breaks Interstate Park, Chair of HOA Board
- Pam Cox, Tourism Director, Scott County, Virginia, HOA Tourism Authority Board member
- Lonzo Lester, County Administrator, Russell County, Virginia
- Kathy Stewart, Main Street Manager, St. Paul, Virginia, representing St. Paul
- Lou Wallace, Board of Supervisor member, Russell County, Virginia and St. Paul Tomorrow
- David Woodard, Executive Director, Heart of Appalachia (HOA) Tourism Authority
- Committee Team Members- providing additional feedback and ideas for the project
- HOA staff: Pam Vance, Joe Morton, and Kim Short
- Current project facilitators include Christine Gyovai, Reed Muehlman, and Emily Carlson of Dialogue + Design Associates and Joe Morici of Cardno Engineering/ Stantec
- Additional stakeholders as needed (such as grant-writers or technical experts).





### SITE LOCATION AND CONTROL

The two acres of land for the Destination Center has been granted to Russell County by the Virginia Department of Transportation, and is located at approximate coordinates 36.90161058455537, -82.30653503905258 in Castlewood/ St. Paul, Virginia on maps. [A few maps may be found at this link](#) that illustrate the Three Rivers Destination Center’s location and its regional connections. They also illustrate the location of the approved pedestrian bridge which will connect the Center with downtown St. Paul, which there is additional pending funding which has been applied for. [A plat is available at this link](#); Dialogue + Design Associates is refining the building design with the planning committee for an approximately 6,000 square foot building (see the thumbnail below), related outdoor learning opportunities, access and landscaping. [An early site plan](#) was developed by the Community Design Assistance Center at Virginia Tech, which is included below for reference, as well as a conceptual rendering of the Center, and a map of regional connections.





## CARBON REMOVAL ON REFORESTED MINE LANDS: ONE NATURE-BASED SOLUTION FOR TWO DEEP CHALLENGES

By Diana Dombrowski

Imagine a landscape that, 10 years ago, was a moonscape mountaintop removal coal mine and is now carefully managed as a large-scale working forest growing trees to capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and combat climate change. That forest is steadily and measurably turning greenhouse gasses into a restored landscape, improving both the health of that ecosystem and global environmental conditions at the same time. Appalachian Voices is exploring making this vision a reality in the years to come through a reforestation project that engages with the emerging carbon offset market.

### MEETING THE NEED: RECLAMATION

The need for mine reclamation across Appalachia is clear, with 600,000 acres of active mines across Appalachia partially or totally unreclaimed, and 700,000 acres of pre-1977 abandoned mine land (AML) still in need of reclamation across the eastern states. Last year's RAC report went into great detail on this topic. Appalachian Voices estimates the cost of completing reclamation of active eastern mines at least \$7.5 billion to \$9.9 billion.

A mine cleanup crisis looms, and available funding for mine cleanup could decline as more coal companies go through bankruptcy. In this, Central Appalachian mining communities face a problem larger than currently allocated funds can address. Appalachian Voices explored both of these needs in a recent report.

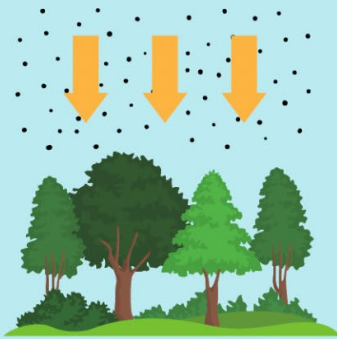
To receive a mining permit, coal companies must post a bond that acts as collateral to assure reclamation will be completed. With the boom and bust cycles of the coal economy, market conditions can shift, sometimes quickly. With it, a once-profitable mining operation may turn into a losing proposition from a business perspective, opening up the risk of the mine operations – and the required reclamation – stalling out. If the coal company walks away from its reclamation responsibilities, cleanup is supposed to fall to the state or a third-party bonding surety, which funds cleanup from the coal company's forfeited bond or from a state bonding pool that multiple companies have contributed to.



An aerial view of mountaintop mining on Kayford Mountain in West Virginia taken in 2014. Photo by Lynn Willis. Flyover courtesy of SouthWings



## CARBON REMOVAL: FOREST



- Removes existing CO2 from atmosphere
- Nature-based solution
- Ready to deploy
- Improves air and water quality
- Supports biodiversity
- Can be used for recreation

## CARBON CAPTURE: POWER PLANT



- Removes CO2 from a point source
- Enables prolonged use of fossil fuels

Looking to the future, if many companies forfeit their mine permits within the same time period, even state pool bonds will be unable to cover the total necessary costs. Read more in an August 2022 article in The Appalachian Voice.

### MEETING THE NEED: CARBON REMOVAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE

While Appalachia faces this regional problem, voluntary carbon markets are expanding across the United States as a method of addressing climate change. Carbon markets link investors with projects that document the successful removal of carbon dioxide, a potent greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere. In 2020 alone, these markets surged to a value of \$277 billion worldwide.

*“As the reforested land sequesters carbon dioxide in plants, soils and sediments, it also improves surrounding air and water quality, supports biodiversity and can be a draw for recreation.”*

All potential pathways currently proposed by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to keep climate warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, the target of the international Paris Agreement, require the implementation of carbon dioxide removal. Removal can occur in different forms, including nature-based solutions like growing a forest or managing a grassland, or direct air capture technologies. Importantly, carbon removal – which addresses legacy carbon already in the atmosphere – is distinctly different from carbon capture and sequestration, which enables the prolonged use of fossil fuels by attempting to capture carbon emissions at the smokestack.

Reforestation of mine lands in Appalachia qualifies as a nature-based solution, one that is ready to deploy immediately, and is linked with many potential benefits for ecosystems and communities. As the reforested land sequesters carbon dioxide in plants, soils and sediments, it also improves surrounding air and water quality, supports biodiversity and can be a draw for recreation. Nature-based methods of carbon removal are in contrast to direct air capture technologies, which require chemical engineering and are largely still in prototype phases.



## BRINGING OPPORTUNITIES TOGETHER

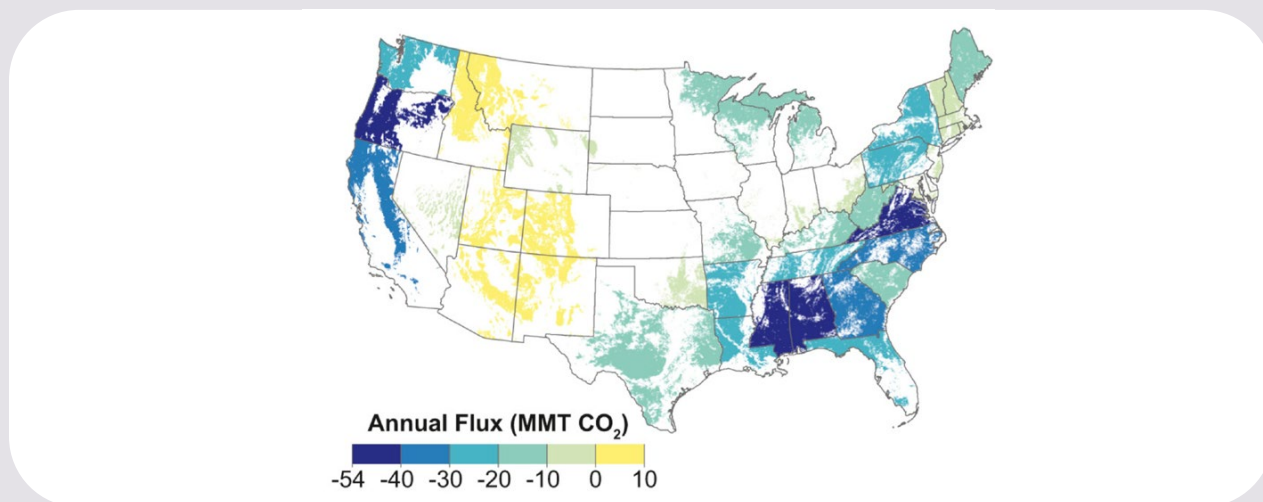
Carbon markets are rapidly expanding. This, combined with hundreds of millions of federal dollars made available by the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, make now the moment for action. Appalachian Voices recently received a grant from Carbon180, a non-profit organization advocating for carbon removal solutions, to help us explore how we do our part. Appalachian Voices joins a small cohort of other environmental justice organizations in this work.

We are currently in the research and development phases of a pilot project to learn whether this approach is appropriate, viable and scalable. We envision a pilot project that will involve a parcel of several hundred acres of abandoned mine land (rather than land from a modern mine). Healthy forests in Central Appalachian states are able to uptake some of the highest amounts of carbon dioxide in the country, as the map below from the Forest Service demonstrates.

Beyond carbon sequestration, Appalachian Voices is exploring this project to understand the scale of benefits such a project can bring to ecosystems and local economies. In our assessment, we project that the potential benefits of this project may include:

- Air and water quality improvements
- Decreased soil erosion
- Increased resilience of surrounding communities to extreme weather events (floods, droughts)
- Restoring ecological and wildlife communities
- Supporting biodiversity
- Local job opportunities in forest maintenance

To qualify a reforestation project for a carbon market, Appalachian Voices would work with a third party to measure and verify both carbon sequestration levels and related multi-benefits. The project would be designed using specific guidelines and protocols for measurement and verification. After successful documentation and inspection, the reforestation project could qualify for carbon credits.



*Estimated greenhouse gas emissions and removals on forest land by U.S. State in 2018. Negative estimates indicate net C uptake (i.e., a net removal of C from the atmosphere). Does not include stored carbon in harvested wood products. Adapted from Domke et al. 2020b.*



Reforestation projects for carbon removal are not yet common in the United States because baseline project conditions are difficult to prove, but mine land in Central Appalachia is uniquely well-situated to meet calculation standards for nature-based carbon sequestration. Among these foundational tenets is the principle of additionality, namely that forest management would not take place without intervening support from the carbon market. Additionality is easily demonstrated on mine land, as unreclaimed mine sites usually revert only to shrub and grassland, and require direct intervention to reforest. These and other requirements for a successful project can be found on mine land.

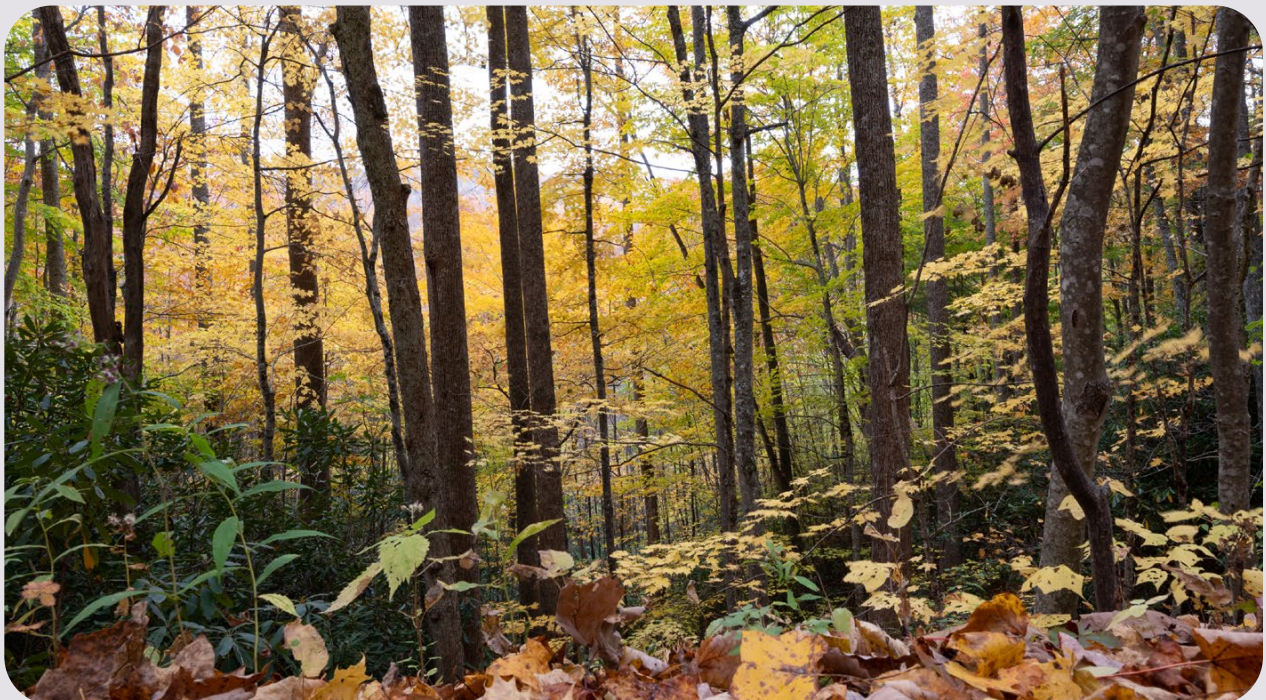
We recognize that such an undertaking is not without challenges, however. These can include a marketplace with ambiguous requirements, recent high-profile news coverage of fraud, and complex verification procedures to demonstrate scientific proof of concept. Carbon markets are growing quickly and do not yet operate under federal oversight. In light of this, Appalachian Voices would need to take great care in seeking a reputable partner for measurement and verification.

Any project that Appalachian Voices pursues would be implemented with the highest standards of community engagement and ensuring that communities receive direct benefits. Our funding partner, Carbon180, is well-respected in this industry and has been very helpful in guiding us through the exploratory process. Their guidance has been especially helpful in light of recent high-profile press surrounding fraud in large forest-based projects in the Southeast that took advantage of the complexity of the additionality principle described earlier. Inspection, measurement and verification can also be time-consuming and complex processes once a project is underway.

### WHERE WE ARE TODAY

We are seeking feedback to refine the process of this project. Support from local partners and communities is critical in our evaluation of a framework tailored to Appalachian ecology and economic needs. We invite your thoughts, comments and feedback at [carbonremoval@appvoices.org](mailto:carbonremoval@appvoices.org).

*About the author: Diana Dombrowski is Appalachian Voices' Carbon Removal Fellow for 2022-2023. Her family roots go back seven generations in North-Central Appalachia. She is currently a graduate student in the Energy & Resources Group at the University of California, Berkeley.*





# WEST VIRGINIA





# WEST VIRGINIA: INTRODUCTION

Since the creation of the AMLER program, West Virginia has readily adopted and integrated AML reclamation and development into legacy communities and sites throughout the state. This year was no exception! Tourism continues to grow as a leading focus for AMLER projects, as well as infrastructure improvements and development. Additionally, there is a historic “once in a generation” window of major federal and state funding opportunities geared towards energy transition with a lens towards coal communities and equitable transitions. For the projects highlighted in this report, Coalfield Development (Coalfield) is leaning into these focuses for our projects while also keeping a region-wide and national-level perspective on these opportunities.

In order to establish capacity across the state to be able to compete for this large funding opportunities, Coalfield coordinated the creation of the “Appalachian Climate Technology” (ACT) Now coalition, led by Coalfield Development, that received nearly \$63 million from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) matched by \$29 million in private funding totaling \$92 million to strengthen local economies, support energy industries and expand job opportunities through 8 projects in 21 counties across Southern West Virginia. The ACT Now coalition will create an estimated 5,000 new direct and 15,000 indirect jobs, create 125 new businesses, and leverage \$250+ million in private sector investment over time. The ACT Now Coalition includes several of the state’s most innovative community-based organizations, the support of the state’s two largest cities (Charleston and Huntington) and its two largest universities (West Virginia University and Marshall). Two focuses around abandoned mine lands brownfields are specifically designed to concentrate efforts and resources to addressing these subjects in in the state.

Abandoned Mines to Sustainable Lands – West Virginia University and the Nature Conservancy will lead the “Abandoned Minelands to Sustainable Lands” program to boost the under-achieving pace of abandoned mine reclamation in WV and Appalachia with new approaches to sustainable reuse of these lands, with an initial goal of 50,000 acres put into reuse including at up to five (5) exciting pilot sites. A new workforce will transform abandoned mines for productive reuses in solar/wind/geothermal generation, energy storage (including small-scale pumped hydroelectric storage, compressed air energy storage in deep subsurface mines, and thermal electric storage), agro-forestry for carbon capture and for biomass/bioenergy production, healthy food production, rare earth element development, co-located manufacturing, and eco-tourism and outdoor recreation.

Huntington Brownfields Innovation Zone (H-BIZ) – H-BIZ is 100 acres of vacant manufacturing brownfields in the heart of downtown Huntington is ready for a new high-tech center for advanced manufacturing, R&D-focused businesses, and other high-wage jobs. Huntington will prepare the site and upgrade its infrastructure to welcome a potential onshore of a new solar PV manufacturing plant; upgrade three historic buildings for tech reuse, and build a new, 50,000-100,000 square feet HBIZ Technology Center to welcome ACT Now technology investments, creating 100+ jobs.

Clearly, this is an exciting time for West Virginia to be able to leverage these resources – the challenge for future years will be to sustain regional capacity to execute on the scopes of work.



Jacob Hannah  
*Conservation Coordinator*  
**Coalfield Development**





BUILD BACK BETTER REGIONAL CHALLENGE  
**\$88.8 MILLION**



TOTAL INCLUDES \$26 MILLION IN MATCH FROM NON-FEDERAL SOURCES.

## **APPALACHIAN CLIMATE TECHNOLOGIES COALITION (ACT NOW): BUILD BACK BETTER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE (BBBRCC)**

**Project applicant:** Coalfield Development  
**Project location:** West Virginia (21 counties)  
**EDA Funding requested:** \$62.8 million  
**Leveraged/matched resources:** \$26 million

### **ABOUT THIS PROJECT**

The Appalachian Climate Technology coalition (ACT Now), led by Coalfield Development, will receive approximately \$62.8 million to spur job growth in 21 economically distressed and coal-impacted counties in southern West Virginia by creating a hub of clean energy and green economy jobs. After decades of decline in the coal economy and its related environmental impacts, the region currently suffers from persistent poverty and disinvestment. With Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding, the coalition will address this legacy by supporting the transition from coal to solar power; implementing sustainable reuse projects on abandoned mine sites; rejuvenating brownfield sites with new facilities equipped to train a diversified, skilled workforce and provide advanced manufacturing capacity; and developing entrepreneurial programs to support employment in environmental sustainability. The ACT Now coalition combines deep community engagement, a focus on equity and justice, and strong employer commitments from more than 200 private sector partners, including 4 of the 5 largest solar companies in the region. The coalition's goal is to model multiple strategies for a just transition from the legacy energy industry to a modern, clean regional economy.





Of the many components for this initiative, West Virginia University is leading the “Former Mine Lands to Sustainable Lands” program that is designed to accelerate the pace of former mine reclamation and put those sites to new use with solar, wind or geothermal generation, energy storage, agro-forestry, healthy food production, eco-tourism and outdoor recreation. RAC will be contracted to work closely with WVU and Coalfield Development to help guide this initiative into sustainable fruition.







## BLACK DIAMOND WAREHOUSE BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION

**Project applicant:** Coalfield Development

**Project location:** Huntington, WV

**Brownfields funding requested:** \$500,000

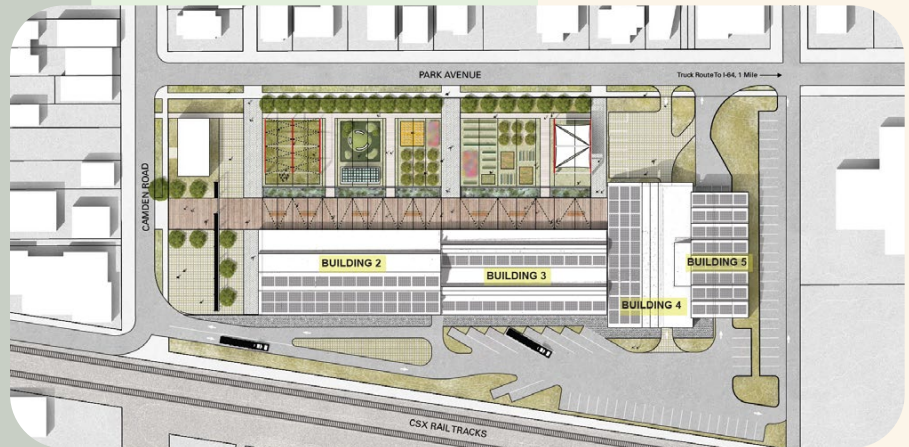
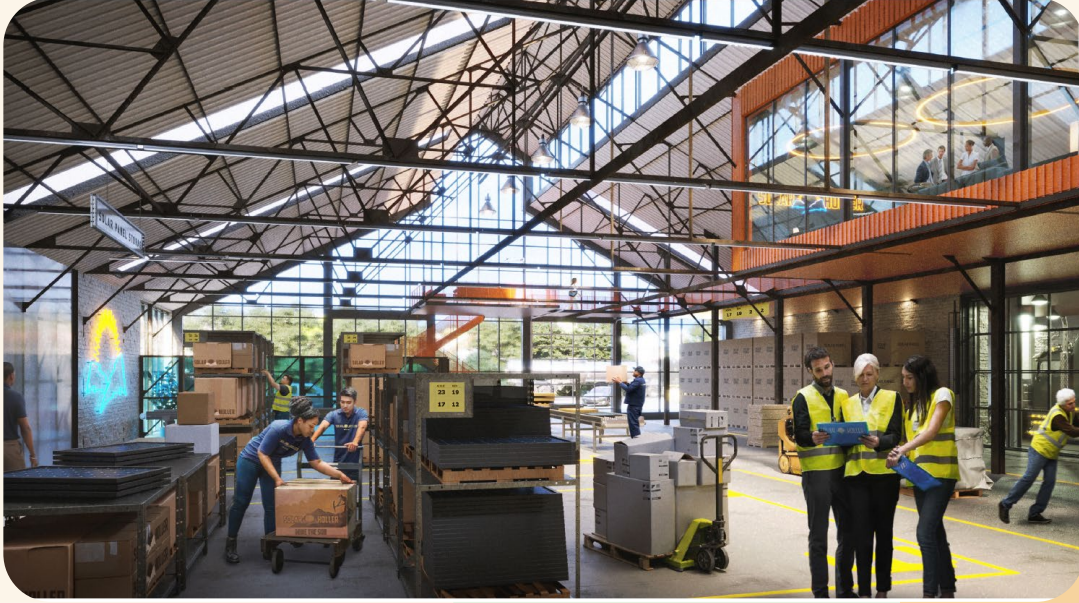
**Leveraged/matched resources:** \$6,375,000 (EDA BBBRCC)

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Coalfield acquired the Black Diamond property in 2019. After community outreach and a grant application to the US Environmental Protection Agency, Coalfield received funding through the EPA Brownfields Program for \$500,000 to abate and remediate the contaminated soils and water on the 5-acre property. This grant helped Coalfield pay for a Licensed Remediation Specialist to plan and carry out the environmental clean-up onsite, all with the approval of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection.

Along with groundwater and soil sampling, over 500 tons of contaminated soil was abated on the property for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB). A Land Use Covenant will protect the remedial activities for the site while also allowing for commercial/industrial uses. Which is the next step for the property as Coalfield Development's Build Back Better funding opportunity will provide over \$6 million into renovating the building into a hub for sustainable development for solar and innovative upcycling as a part of the ReUse Corridor.









## SKYVIEW LODGING AND WELLNESS CENTER AT "THE HIGHWALL"

**Project applicant:** Coalfield Development

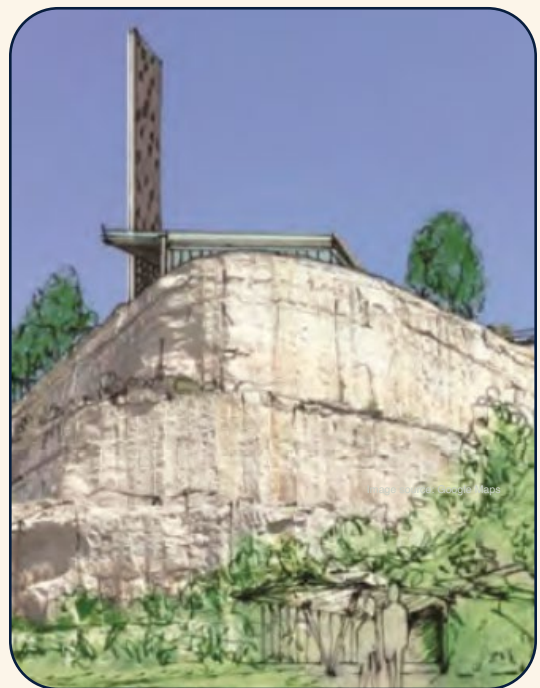
**Project location:** Delbarton, West Virginia

**AMLER funding requested:** \$2,000,000 (pending)

**Leveraged/matched resources:** \$6,158,000 (NMTC + Solar Grant)

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

SkyView Lodging and Wellness Center at "The Highwall" provides two opportunities for community development: 1) an escape to outdoor adventure for riding enthusiasts and their families looking for a unique Appalachian lodging experience, and 2) a place for substance abuse recovery programs to host recovery trainings, events, and retreats. The AML funds requested through this application will provide the needed match to unlock an already-secured \$6 Million in New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) investment loans to develop 8 - 12 lodging cabins, a Restoration Center and Retreat Pavilion. The site has also been identified for prime solar power generation and other amenities. These activities will result in the creation of 30 permanent job positions, 60 temporary construction jobs, and 120 on-the-job training positions — all of which will be quality jobs with benefits through Coalfield's award winning workforce development model. In addition, 35% of employment will target







persons in substance abuse recovery that are harder to employ, and the 120 on-the-job training positions will be filled by Low Income (LI) Persons. The ecological agri-mediation of the property will retain and restore the barren soil while simultaneously preserving and celebrating the iconic characteristics of the property's namesake, "The Highwall," for visitors and locals to take in the history and majestic view of this testament to the coal region and its people.

The Highwall project is located on a partially-reclaimed mine site that is being redeveloped by the Mingo County Redevelopment Authority for post-mine uses. Our project consists of three components that will employ at least 50 former coal miners or people in recovery from Substance Use Disorder (SUD) with supportive apprenticeship and life skills training programs led by the Project Sponsor, Coalfield Development. Jobs will be created through Coalfield Development's 33-6-3 model both through the buildout of the facility and then also through the on-going operations of the facility, meaning the project will continually create jobs for decades into the future. The five project components include: 8-12 timber frame cabins, a wellness center, trail access and agri-landscaping, local agriculture production, and a mountaintop solar installation (pending

state financing regulatory updates). Our team has full site control. Seven acres are already owned, and we have an option on the remaining 23 acres available at the site. The first cabin is already in operation and site improvements have already begun. Coalfield Development has more than 35 private foundations and public agencies supporting its innovative approach to community and economic development. This extensive funding network will be leveraged to bring this project to completion.

Currently, the ecological agri-mediation of the property through rotational livestock grazing and permaculture practices is retaining and restoring several acres of the moonscape soil preserving the property's namesake, "The Highwall," for visitors and locals to take in the history and majestic view of this testament to the coal region and its people. Additionally, the site also leveraged a private foundation grant to develop a ground-mounted solar





## SKYVIEW LODGING AND WELLNESS CENTER AT “THE HIGHWALL” (CONTINUED)

array to power the buildings, as well as being a component of an EDA Build Back Better Regional Communities Challenge grant that encompasses funds for additional reclamation.

### PARTNERSHIPS

The following partners meet regularly in the community to collaborate and engage with the region through town halls, architect charrettes, and virtual planning retreats:

Brandon Dennison, CEO Coalfield Development, Lead Project Developer. Terry Sammons, Mingo County lodging developer/Attorney Robert Ferry & Elizabeth Monoian, Founding Directors, The Land Art Generator (LAGI). Ray Daffner, consultant with 40+ year of economic development experience in rural communities. Max Knapp, Investment Manager with United Bank. Earl Gohl, previously appointed by President Obama as the 11th federal co-chair of the Appalachian Regional Commission. Chris Bailey, Business Operations Manager at the retail marketing tech start-up BounceX. Justin Goldbach, Program Director of The J.M.K. Innovation Prize and is the Founder and Managing Director of Social Strategy Associates LLC.

### AML NEXUS

The project is in proximity to numerous abated, unabated, and emergency AML features. In fact, the project area falls squarely within the Spice Branch Highwall (WV003295) AML Problem Area, which remains unabated. Rather than completely backfill or regrade the highwall, Coalfield Development aims to accentuate this feature as a monument to West Virginia’s past and an attraction for its future. The hope is that the Spice Branch Highwall will serve as a memorable feature for people visiting the property and a unique point of attraction for those considering booking a stay at the site. Apart from the highwall features, gradual hillside erosion and slippage has been evident on the property’s south-facing slope; what few plant species that are retaining the soil are largely invasive. This element will be addressed through a restoration effort utilizing Coalfield’s robust agro-forestry strategies to restore and retain the soil from gradual erosion on the south-facing hillside, and also enhance the soil depth and quality on the property.

### FUNDING SOURCES

The \$2 Million AML funds requested through this application will provide the needed match to unlock an already-secured \$6 Million in New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) investment loans. Currently, Coalfield Development and its partners have secured \$80,000 through the Honnold Foundation for a unique ground-mounted solar array on the site to power the buildings that are to be constructed. Additionally, Coalfield has leveraged a historic



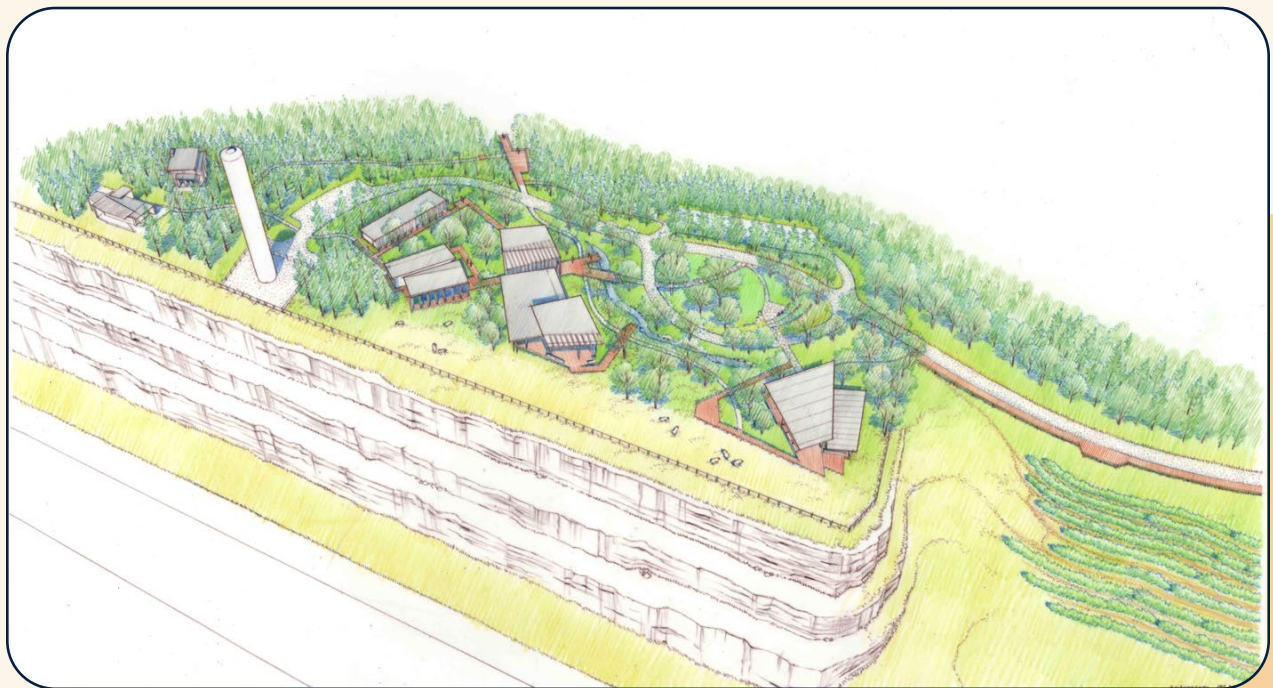


funding opportunity through the Build Back Better Regional Communities Challenge to help provide planning and construction for this and other AML sites in the region.

### PROJECT IMPACT

We project the following outcomes to be achieved through this development opportunity: 30 permanent new job positions created a year (through 33-6-3 model), 50 temporary construction jobs created through initial development, 100% quality jobs with benefits, 120 on-the-job trainees graduated (100% LI persons), At least 35% of jobs created will be for people in recovery served, 1,300 persons in recovery attending programs annually. \$20 million in follow-on private investment represented by: additional tourism/hospitality investment spurred by the project, new cultural assets developed such as coal-history museum, and new grocery and retail development nearby.

The 10 year return on the AML grant requested of \$2 million will be an increase in economic activity across the state of west Virginia estimated to be more than \$93 million in output over 10 years. This impact includes an estimate of an increase in economic output associated with visitor spending of \$57 million. This is the total increase estimated on the margined purchasing of out of state visitors to the cabins over the 10 years. This increase in economic activity is estimated to generate an annual average of 93 new jobs across the state to support the net new activity generated initially by the AML funds. An estimated additional \$52.6 million in gross state product (value added) would be generated by this activity including \$33.5 million in new labor income over the 10 years. Over the ten years specified nearly \$6.4 million in new state taxes will be generated from this activity.





# MINI-GRANTS







# MINI-GRANT PROGRAM: INTRODUCTION

Through years of engaging with various groups in Central Appalachia, we recognized that many communities both within and beyond our immediate working area conceived inventive and vibrant project ideas for reinvigorating AML areas; however, no matter how promising, without the proper capacity onboard, many of these plans are destined to remain undiscovered and unfulfilled. Our coalition was prompted to develop fresh avenues for groups of all kinds to access the resources and support needed to turn viable land reuse concepts into fundable projects.

To expand our community of practice into additional states, reaffirm our investment in current states, further our commitment to innovative mine reclamation projects, and build capacity in new partners, we first introduced the Innovative Mine Land Reclamation and Economic Development Project Mini-Grant program in 2020. This program offers start-up funds and technical and planning assistance for interested businesses, organizations, government agencies, and individuals in Alabama, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

We are encouraged by the diversity of the projects and the enthusiasm of the partners, which are surely representative of the greater Appalachian community pursuing a restoration economy. The projects selected for the mini-grant program include community-driven, place-appropriate forms of economic development that embrace the rapidly evolving economic and social conditions of our region. Inspired by the success of the program so far, we look forward to growing it in the future.

Two projects funded through the program in 2022 are:

- 1) An age and disability friendly motorsports venue and campground in Whitley City, Kentucky, and
- 2) The Marianna Miners Memorial Park in Marianna Pennsylvania.





## AGE AND DISABILITY FRIENDLY MOTORSPORTS VENUE AND CAMPGROUND

**Project applicant:** Backroads of Appalachia

**Project location:** Whitley City, Kentucky

**AMLER funding requested:** \$3,025,000

**Leveraged/matched resources:** \$1,019,949

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Backroads of Appalachia is a nonprofit bringing economic development to coal communities through tourism and motorsports. “Motorsports” includes driving different vehicles for pleasure, like motorcycles, ATVs, exotic cars, and electric vehicles. McCreary County, Kentucky is a motorsports paradise, but few people realize this. This project will help motorsports enthusiasts across America see this region as a destination by renovating and marketing an under-utilized 4H campground and event venue in McCreary County to lodge up to 575 people and host events for 2,000+ people per day in an age and disability- friendly atmosphere.

Over the past year, Backroads and local governments partnered to increase tourism in Eastern Kentucky with exciting results. But there’s a critical problem--lodging. Since Backroads began marketing the area and hosting events like the Airport Takeover, there are not enough places to stay. Furthermore, Backroads is partnering with the local Aging and Disability Resource Center to ensure it becomes one of the most accessible campgrounds in America. This means people of all ages and abilities will have a place to experience motorsports and the great outdoors together

AMLER Grant funds would be used to:

- Improve an existing campground & event venue, expand bathrooms and kitchen, add rental tents, and renovate bunkhouse
- Upgrade accessibility features and amenities, add adaptive playground equipment for kids with disabilities, and offroad wheelchair rentals so people of all abilities can hike, fish, and explore
- Install wayfinding signage along trails
- Develop and provide startup funds for a new Backroads Welcome Center & Motorsports Rental Facility with a dual purpose to serve as a Live/Work Addiction Recovery Center
- Coordinate motorsports events
- Implement national marketing campaign



Revenue generated from Welcome Center sales, events, and rental fees will sustain programs and staff hired with AMLER funds.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

Backroads partners closely with national motorsports organizations, including the American Motorcycle Association (AMA), Sports Car Club of America, NASA Rally Sport, and more. Backroads is also working closely with the leaders of the Kentucky Wildlands initiative to maximize marketing outreach and promote the region on a national scale. McCreary County and Backroads are both partners with the Kentucky Wildlands initiative, which recently received a \$1.2M ARC POWER grant to market Eastern Kentucky counties to increase tourism. This AMLER project will leverage and complement their marketing efforts to promote the resort and trail system specifically to motorsports-related target markets, such as motorcyclists (especially the growing dual sport motorcycle market), Electric Vehicle and exotic car owners. This campground will also appeal to those seeking handicap-accessible outdoor activities.



**AML NEXUS**

The project is located in a historic mining community. At one point in time McCreary County had 25 different coal camps with more than 3,700 documented employees. A trail system accessible from the project property leads to entrances for the Barren Fork coal mine. Today, bats can be seasonally viewed leaving nightly. While this trail and the entrances to the mine are tourist attractions, accessibility is difficult. This grant will fund the purchase of motorized off-road wheelchairs that can be rented by families wishing to take their disabled loved ones to hike trails with more difficult terrain to experience the beautiful natural rock arches, waterfalls, and swinging bridges they normally could not access.

**FUNDING SOURCES**

In addition to the requested AMLER grant, the project is matched or leveraged by grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission, USDA Rural Development Office, and Just Transition Fund.

**PROJECT IMPACT**

This AMLER project is key to implementing a regional marketing strategy that will bring economic development to McCreary and other coal communities throughout Eastern Kentucky. This project will help Backroads market nationally to bring more tourists to the entire area by serving as a gateway. We know that once people come to this campground once, they will fall in love with Eastern Kentucky and want to come back and stay longer periods of time to explore more that the region has to offer. By marketing on social media and exhibiting at motorsports tradeshows, Backroads will entice people to this one-of-a-kind campground. By improving the infrastructure, lodging capacity, and amenities at the campground, Backroads will be able to host larger special events to bring more first-time tourists to the area.

Within 3 years of grant implementation, Backroads anticipates this project will bring in 36,000 new visitors to McCreary County, which would produce an economic impact valued at \$16,518,000 and support 34 jobs.







## MARIANNA MINERS MEMORIAL PARK

**Project Applicant:** Marianna Borough

**Project location:** Marianna, Pennsylvania

**AMLER funding requested:** Amount pending

**Leveraged/matched resources:** Amount pending

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Marianna, Pennsylvania was once considered the model of excellence for a mining company town. Between 1906 and 1912, the Bethlehem Mines Corporation built approximately 282 mostly uniform yellow brick homes with modern amenities not found in many of Appalachia's company towns. This brought people from all over the world to Marianna. However, since the Marianna Mine's shuttering in the mid-1980's, Marianna has experienced the social and economic disadvantages felt by most former company towns in the region. The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition provided technical support for a project that will transform a 29-acre former mine yard in the center of Marianna into a multi-modal trailhead serving a planned water- and rail-trail that will intersect the site. This trailhead will also serve as a park memorializing a mining disaster that took place at the Marianna Mines in the early 1900s. Industrial tourism is a big business in the greater-Pittsburgh area and this project positions Marianna to have a piece of the pie.

The Coalition's technical assistance has helped get this project on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's radar and resulted in multiple site visits. Coalition Partners plan on collaborating with PA DEP on an AMLER proposal for the Miners Memorial Park in 2023.





**PARTNERSHIPS**

The project is spearheaded by the Marianna Borough Council with support from West Bethlehem Township, the Pennsylvania DEP, and several other local organizations.

**AML NEXUS**

The Miners Memorial Park property intersects multiple abandoned mine lands and post-SMCRA mining features.

**FUNDING SOURCES**

In addition to the requested AMLER grant, the project is matched or leveraged by previous investments by EPA Brownfields grants and the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation.

**PROJECT IMPACT**

There is no existing memorial to the 154 miners who perished in a 1908 mine explosion at Marianna. With the former mine yard repurposed as a memorial park with a multi-modal trailhead and historical exhibits, Marianna could become a new center of regional tourism in the Middle-Monongahela River Valley.







## THE PATH AHEAD

Thank you for taking the time to read our report! If you've been following our work or are a partner, we are grateful for the opportunity to work together. If you're just learning about our coalition and see an opportunity to collaborate, we encourage you to reach out! We love to hear from folks and have seen several projects come to fruition over the years from people reaching out after reading one of our reports.

We are working with great focus and enthusiasm to bring home the vast influx of federal dollars available for economic transition. And we are energized by the moment, and the community of practice of which we are a part, stepping up to this historic time. In this report we have discussed several examples of what that looks like on the ground in Appalachia- from Coalfield Development's historic Build Back Better project, to our work to develop Biological Carbon Removal reclamation models, and partnering with local governments to build resilience and address the impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing.

We can't do this work without collaboration, and we are thrilled to be moving into a new phase of how we work together within the Coalition. Earlier this year, we brought the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition in under the umbrella of the Central Appalachian Network, a 30-year old network of practitioners working

in the region around community driven economic development. All of RAC's member organizations are leaders in CAN, and there is strong synergy to be able to add value to both groups through this move. Importantly, CAN has a well developed and thoughtful structure for opening up participation and leadership to a broad group of practitioners. Within the RAC, we have been thinking for years on how to sustainably grow the coalition in a way that supports equity, access and impact. This move meets that need in a wonderful way, and we're already seeing the positive results.

As we look at the path in front of us, we will continue to drive innovation in funding sources and project types. Importantly, we are building on our early work around "innovative reclamation" and expanding those values to a more holistic approach to resilience and restoration in coal impacted communities. We know the result of this journey will be communities that we and our friends and neighbors can call home for generations to come.





## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

This work is only made possible through partnership and collaboration around Innovative Mine Reclamation. Our coalition maintains several points of entry to join the conversation, obtain resources, or partner on projects:

### STATE CONTACTS:

- Virginia: Adam Wells — [adam@appvoices.org](mailto:adam@appvoices.org)
- West Virginia: Jacob Hannah — [jhannah@coalfield-development.org](mailto:jhannah@coalfield-development.org)
- Ohio: Michelle Shively MacIver — [michelle@truepigments.com](mailto:michelle@truepigments.com)
- Region-wide: Joey James — [jjames@downstreamstrategies.com](mailto:jjames@downstreamstrategies.com)

The Reclaiming Appalachian Coalition moderates a listserv for the community of practice around innovative mine reclamation. This list is a forum to share project ideas and updates, funding announcements, learning opportunities, and other relevant information. It is moderated, and subscription is by-invitation-only to maintain list integrity, but we encourage anyone interested to email [Adam@appvoices.org](mailto:Adam@appvoices.org) to request to be added.

## POTENTIAL PROJECT PARTNERS

As a coalition we offer the following services free of charge to communities interested in collaborating with us to develop project proposals:

- Mapping and GIS assistance
- Identifying viable project locations and checking eligibility
- Economic impact modeling
- Facilitating introduction with state mining agencies
- Knowledge of other funding sources that can be leveraged
- Community engagement





**AppalachianVoices**

[appvoices.org](http://appvoices.org)



REBUILDING THE APPALACHIAN ECONOMY FROM THE GROUND UP.

[coalfield-development.org](http://coalfield-development.org)

**Downstream  
Strategies**



**Ideas that sustain.**

[downstreamstrategies.com](http://downstreamstrategies.com)



**Rural Action**

[ruralaction.org](http://ruralaction.org)







