

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN RECLAMATION¹

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Abstract: The Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team attempts to build the capacity of rural mining communities impoverished by environmental degradation by placing OSM/VISTA volunteers in watershed groups and local government agencies throughout Appalachia. These volunteers assist with fundraising, education, outreach, and volunteer opportunities that help build the capacity of the organizations they serve. Since January 2009 OSM/VISTAs have generated \$1,143,396 in in-kind support, \$781,373 in new grant income, 25,619 volunteer hours, and created over 593 new partnerships for the watershed organizations they serve. Three OSM/VISTA volunteers from watershed organizations in Appalachia will examine opportunities for community engagement in reclamation through three types of abandoned mine land initiatives: acid mine drainage treatment systems, reforestation on abandoned mine land, and demonstrating OSM/VISTA abilities to assist watershed groups in all stages of development. These initiatives are exemplified through an innovative partnership between the Office of Surface Mining, concerned with environmental reclamation and safety; AmeriCorps*VISTA, concerned with poverty; and local community groups.

Additional Keyword(s): Community Engagement, Developing Partnerships, Volunteers, Natural Resources, Coal Mining, Planning, Implementation, Mine Land Reclamation, Reforestation and Reforestation, Reclamation Projects, Education

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