

Partnering with Non-Governmental Partners

Cleaning up Abandoned Mines using a Watershed Perspective

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Partnerships allow for a more holistic and comprehensive approach to cleaning up abandoned mine lands (AMLs) within a watershed. Often, sites impacting a watershed are spread across jurisdictional boundaries (multiple federal land owners and/or state and/or private land). Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), colleges and universities are important partners for watershed groups. They have expertise and capacity that can augment federal agencies capabilities.

Building upon relationships and prior work

It is recommended that project managers spend some time understanding the watershed that they are working in. Reach out to other federal and state agencies to learn about any watershed groups that already exist as well as any NGOs, colleges and universities who are/ have been working in the watershed.

Building upon relationships and working groups that are already in existence can be much more effective than starting a new working group. In addition, there may be resources that could be built upon, like historic data collection, and studies.

Developing a partnership with NGOs, Colleges and Universities

Some partners have experience working with the federal government, while others do not. It is important to have discussions of needs, expectations as well as limitations early. Find out about formalities, such as agreements early, to avoid delays or potential impacts to the relationship building process.

Spend time learning about the interests and goals partners have for the watershed. Discuss creative ways to work together that would benefit both sides of the partnership. For example, a college or university partner may want to identify opportunities for students to have an experiential learning experience. There may be opportunities to have an internship associated with the watershed group that could provide support to the federal agency and the overall partnership.

Be creative. NGOs, colleges and universities can lead to creative problem solving. For example, NGOs may be able to find funding, and get permission to work on private land within a watershed that a federal agency cannot. For an example of how federal agencies and NGOs used creativity to cleanup a watershed, see: <https://doildt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=db060c6f3ed34f5f890ab20de163dobe>.

Celebrate success

Remember to celebrate success, and highlight the benefits of working with NGOs, colleges and universities. You do not have to wait until a watershed project is completed, celebrating interim milestones can support the maintenance of relationships and be motivating for the overall working group.



