

STONE CREEK

Lee County, Virginia

This project seeks to establish a reuse example for abandoned coal loading facilities scattered throughout Appalachia.



KEY CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES AT-A-GLANCE

Lack of reuse examples for hundreds of abandoned coal tippie sites in Appalachian coalfields: Stakeholders have outlined a strategic plan for cleanup and reuse of the property; this will serve as an example for other tippie sites across the region.

TIPPLE SITES ACROSS THE REGION

The Stone Creek Tippie site is one of approximately 70 abandoned tippie sites in Southwest Virginia. At tippie sites, coal is loaded for transportation to processing facilities. Abandoned sites can pose safety hazards from degraded physical structures and possible contamination. Because actual extraction does not occur at tippie sites themselves, they are not eligible for reclamation funding through the Abandoned Mine Land fund, a program set up under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA). Abandoned tippie sites are typically well suited for redevelopment because they are relatively small (Stone Creek Tippie site is 1.5 acres), flat, and located near transportation corridors and existing infrastructure.

DEVELOPING AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM THROUGH CLEANUP AND REUSE

In cooperation with the Lee County School System, the Stone Creek Tippie site will be redeveloped into an outdoor classroom where students will learn about public health and environmental issues related to mine-scarred lands.

Local stakeholders focused on securing funding for all phases of cleanup and redevelopment. These efforts have been rewarded as funding for each phase of the project (e.g., assessment, property transfer, cleanup, and redevelopment) has been procured either through in-kind services or grant funding. Local stakeholders also developed a strategic reuse plan including the following steps: conducting the property assessment; facilitating property transfer; establishing education agreements; and designing, developing, and implementing a cleanup and reuse plan. The MSL Initiative partners helped the community outline these steps and will provide technical support throughout the process. To date, an EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment has been initiated and stakeholders have made progress on the property transfer.

Community Overview Pennington Gap, VA

Population	1,800
Area	2 sq. mi.
Unemployment Rate	3%

*Demographic information is approximated

COMMUNITY-BASED VISIONING AND PLANNING PROCESS

To ensure broad support for their revitalization efforts, local project leaders and the MSL Initiative partners invited community members and stakeholders from other successful mine-scarred lands redevelopment projects within the region to help establish a cleanup and reuse vision. Community meetings and open houses were held to share information on reuse options and funding sources with the broader community.

MOVING FORWARD

As local stakeholders, with the technical support provided by the MSL Initiative, complete each phase of the cleanup and redevelopment process, they are building their expertise. The success achieved at the Stone Creek Tipple site will act as an example of tipple site reuse that can be applied to tipple sites in Appalachia, as well as small mine-scarred land properties across the country.



Deteriorating stream bank

MSL INITIATIVE PROJECT CONTACT

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RESOURCES

The following resources have supported mine-scarred lands revitalization efforts:

- *VA Department of Transportation*: Committed to performing over 300 feet of stream bank restoration as part of its wetlands program. Stream bank erosion at the Stone Creek Tipple Site releases mining-related sediment into the surrounding creek adversely impacting the watershed's ecology.
- *Appalachian Regional Commission*: Provided technical contractor support for cleanup and reuse planning.
- *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation 5 Star Grant (\$10,000)*: Provided grant for the construction of the Outdoor Classroom and for a portion of the stream bank restoration.
- *U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining*: Supporting an internship sponsored by the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable to develop a Brownfields Grant Application. If awarded, the grant would be used to assist in reuse of all tipple sites within four watersheds in the Stone Creek region.
- *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*: Interviewed local stakeholders, identifying potential reuse options and federal assistance.
- *EPA Region 3 Targeted Brownfields Assessment (\$25,000)*: Committed to conduct a targeted brownfields assessment on the property.

Critical Stakeholders

Daniel Boone Soil and Water
Conservation District
Lee County
Virginia Department of Mines
Minerals and Energy
Virginia Department of
Environmental Quality
Virginia Department of Transportation
Appalachian Regional Commission
U.S. Department of the Interior,
Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of the Interior,
Office of Surface Mining
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency