AMD INVENTORY IN CHEAT RIVER WATERSHED

A Holistic Approach to Assessing Acid Mine Drainage in the Lower Cheat River Watershed

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Abstract: The Cheat River Subbasin attracted much attention in the mid-nineties. According to American Rivers, Inc., Cheat River ranked seventh in a list of top ten endangered and threatened rivers and streams in the United States: endangered, with reference to the impact of dams; threatened, with reference to the impact of acid mine drainage (AMD). This national recognition increased public awareness of the condition of Cheat River and prompted the need for a thorough inventory and evaluation of AMD sources and their consequent impacts. State, Federal and Local entities shared concerns for the quality of the river. The River of Promise (ROP), a shared commitment cooperative agreement, was drafted to encourage a cooperative effort of concerned parties toward assessing and addressing AMD in the Lower Cheat River Watershed. Emphasis was placed on Cheat River by the Governor's Stream Restoration Program, which was fully staffed in April 1996 and subsequently tasked with the assessment. A procedure was developed to meet the needs of the watershed approach. This procedure was incorporated into a holistic approach protocol which consolidated multi-user concerns and benefits into one mechanism to inventory and evaluate AMD sources and their impacts throughout the Lower Cheat River Watershed. The holistic approach protocol benefits; procedure; and application to the Lower Cheat River Watershed, including initial results are presented.

Key Words: Holistic approach, watershed approach, protocol, procedure, inventory, AMD sources, Cheat River