



Dedicated to Mine Land Reclamation, Conservation, & Economic Development in the Wyoming Valley

January 23, 2026

Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3
1600 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19103-2029

RE: FY26 USEPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant Application
Wanamie Reclamation
Newport Township, Luzerne County, PA

The following represents Earth Conservancy's (EC) Applicant Information Sheet, required as part of its application to the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for a Brownfields Cleanup grant. EC is seeking \$802,445 to support reclamation of two mine-scarred sites, totaling ±9 acres, located in the Wanamie section of Newport Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.

1. Applicant Identification

Earth Conservancy
101 South Main Street, Ashley, PA 18706
P: 570.823.3445 / F: 570.823.8270

2. Website URL: www.earthconservancy.org

3. Funding Requested

- a. **Grant Type:** Multiple Site Cleanup
- b. **Federal Funds Requested:** \$802,445

4. Location

- a. **City:** Newport Township
- b. **County:** Luzerne County
- c. **State:** Pennsylvania

5. Property Information

- The center of the Wanamie East site is located at 41.17334, -76.03278
 - The center of the Wanamie West is located at 41.17169, -76.04939
- A map depicting the location of the two sites is included as Attachment A.

6. Contacts

- a. **Project Director:** Terence J. Ostrowski, PE; 570.823.3445;
t.ostrowski@earthconservancy.org; 101 South Main Street, Ashley, PA 18706
- b. **Chief Executive:** Terence J. Ostrowski, PE; 570.823.3445;
t.ostrowski@earthconservancy.org; 101 South Main Street, Ashley, PA 18706

7. **Population:** EC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, serving a county population of 314,647. The Wanamie Reclamation project is in Newport Township, population 3,930.

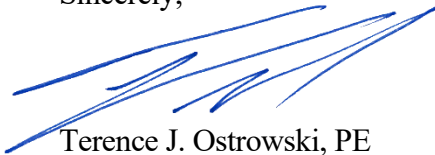
8. **Other Factors Checklist:**

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	p. 1
Applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	
The proposed brownfield site is impacted by mine-scarred land.	p. 1
Secured firm leveraging commitment ties directly to the project and will facilitate completion of the remediation/reuse; secured resource is identified in the Narrative and substantiated in the attached documentation.	p. 3,9
The proposed site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the proposed site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	
The proposed site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	
The reuse of the proposed cleanup site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	
The reuse of the proposed cleanup site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	p. 3
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	p. 3
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	

9. **Releasing Copies of Application:** Not applicable

We appreciate your time and consideration in reviewing this Brownfields Cleanup application. We look forward to continuing our mission of revitalizing the lower Wyoming Valley of northeastern Pennsylvania through our reclamation work in partnership with USEPA.

Sincerely,



Terence J. Ostrowski, PE
 President and CEO





Narrative/Ranking Criteria



SECTION 1 | PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION & PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Target Area & Brownfields

1.a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges & Description of Target Area: Along the Susquehanna River in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, is a collection of towns and villages surrounding the small city of Nanticoke. Known locally as the Lower South Valley, the area sits atop the largest known anthracite coal deposit in the Americas. Anthracite's clean, hot, efficient burn made it crucial during the Industrial Revolution, powering factories, heating homes, and propelling transit systems. As a result, the area flourished as a center of national coal production. More than 20 collieries operated within a 2.5-mile radius of Nanticoke¹, with over 100 million tons of coal extracted regionally each year.² After World War II, however, the anthracite market declined. This, coupled with the deadly Knox Mine Disaster of 1959, which flooded the underground labyrinth of tunnels and shafts, abruptly ended large-scale mining. Collieries shuttered, bankruptcies were announced, and, by the 1990s, over 173,000 jobs were lost.³

The Lower South Valley's mining heritage is a source of pride, having fueled America's Industrial Revolution and supporting generations of families. Nevertheless, the environmental and economic landscape left at the end of the coal era was grim. When the mines closed, operations were abandoned entirely, leaving a patchwork of towns abutting thousand-acre stretches of coal waste and gaping strip pits. Waterways suffered, too, with channels destroyed, lost underground, or stained orange by acid mine drainage. Newport Township – adjacent to Nanticoke and the location of the targeted brownfield cleanup – faced some of the harshest impacts. Bankrupt coal companies owed hundreds of thousands of dollars in back taxes. The damaged lands attracted proposals for landfills. In 2016, Glen Lyon, Newport Township's center, was ranked as Pennsylvania's most distressed community.³ In 2020, the situation worsened: the township's largest employer – the State Correctional Institute at Retreat – closed. **Since 1950, the population has declined 58%, from 9,347 to 3,930 residents.**⁴

Newport Township urgently needs revitalization and reinvestment. **The Wanamie Reclamation project targets two mine-scarred parcels totaling nine acres.** Earth Conservancy (EC) is seeking a Brownfields Cleanup grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to address the environmental and economic challenges their current condition effects, making the parcels safe for redevelopment.

1.b. Description of the Proposed Brownfield Site: The Wanamie Reclamation project involves two mine-scarred parcels that bookend the primary residential area of Wanamie, Newport Township – Wanamie East (±2 acres) and Wanamie West (±7 acres). Historically, they were part of the Wanamie Colliery, operated by the Glen Alden Coal Company and later the Blue Coal Corporation, and were subject to extensive deep and strip mining. Environmental investigations conducted over multiple decades have consistently identified both sites as former strip mine lands. The properties exhibit highly irregular topography with steep peaks and valleys. Some slopes exceed 80 degrees. The spoil material itself consists of a coarse, rubbly mixture of coal, rock, and shale with minimal organic matter, resulting in poor moisture retention, sparse vegetation, and ongoing erosion.⁵ Both sites are owned by EC.

In 1983, a comprehensive property analysis was conducted by Resource Technologies Corporation (RTC) on the 16,500 acres held by Blue Coal. The areas encompassing the Wanamie East and West parcels were described as strip mined and "rough." This characterization was later confirmed in Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) completed for each site in 2025 by Verdantas, LLC, which

¹ Metzger, B. (2008, April). Pennsylvania's Northern Anthracite Coal Field, ca. 1939 [map]. *Trains Magazine*.

² Adams, S.P. (2010). The U.S. Coal Industry in the Nineteenth Century. In R. Whaples (Ed.), *EH.Net Encyclopedia*.

³ Economic Innovation Group. (2016). Economic Indicators for Pennsylvania [map]. *Distressed Communities Index*.

⁴ US Census Bureau. 2023: *American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Data Profile* (Census Tract 2156).

⁵ Bush, R.D. (1981). *Soil Survey of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania*. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service in Cooperation with The PA State University College of Agriculture and the PA Department of Environmental Resources State Conservation Commission.



identified potential impacts to soils, groundwater, and surface water associated with historical coal mining. These findings are further corroborated by the US Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement's (OSMRE) Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Inventory System, which classifies both parcels as containing mining refuse (culm) and spoil piles (AML sites PA-1653 and PA-2155).

Mining operations also disrupted local hydrology, profoundly altering natural surface and groundwater pathways. The properties lie within the Newport Creek watershed, a 14-square-mile subwatershed of the Susquehanna River Basin that ultimately drains into the Chesapeake Bay. Presently, precipitation infiltrates rapidly through the loose spoil materials into subterranean mine pools, resurfacing downstream as acid mine drainage (AMD). AMD makes water not only nonpotable; it coats streambeds with a thick, sludge-like layer of orange iron oxide, destroying habitat and poisoning aquatic life. The South Branch of Newport Creek flows approximately 260 yards away from both project sites.

The areas' degraded condition has made them a hotspot for undesirable activities, with off-roading, target shooting, and illegal dumping placing stress on the already damaged ecosystem.⁶ These impacts occur in immediate proximity to the community: Between the two Wanamie properties lie the 20-acre Newport Township Recreation Area, approximately 100 homes, the township building, and a mountain bike trail. Wanamie East sits less than 200 feet away from the nearest home. Wanamie West is within 100 feet of active recreational space. Two additional neighborhoods are located within a half-mile radius, underscoring the direct and daily exposure of residents to site conditions.

Revitalization of the Target Area

1.c. Reuse Strategy & Alignment with Revitalization Plans: Since acquiring the Blue Coal lands in 1994, EC has spearheaded multiple land use planning initiatives, all grounded in practical land-use planning, market feasibility, and environmental risk reduction. Municipalities, residents, and agency partners have all been involved. These revitalization plans continue to drive EC's mission and guide its work. Key planning documents drawn on for the Wanamie reclamation project include:

- **Land Use Plan (1996):** This foundational study evaluated all 16,500 acres of the Blue Coal lands, identifying reclamation priorities and the most responsible course for development. The area containing the Wanamie sites was identified as appropriate for housing after reclamation.
- **Newport Township Master Plan (2019):** As EC's reclamation work progressed, it conducted a high-level evaluation of opportunities and constraints across Newport Township. The report recommended conservation and recreation for the larger ±335-acre Wanamie tract, consistent with the mountain biking trail EC had already built in the area. However, the two project parcels lie along the tract's edge, adjacent to an established neighborhood. Their location and mine-scarred condition make them well-suited for reclamation and residential reuse.
- **Housing Needs Assessment – Earth Conservancy (2023):** Supported by a USEPA Technical Assistance award, this study concretized the area's need for housing, finding a current shortage of 7,452 units, anticipated to grow to 9,862 units by 2032. The data prompted EC to prioritize residential use when evaluating reclamation of its remaining properties.

The Wanamie reclamation project also directly supports USEPA's Powering the Great American Comeback initiative by advancing **Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American.**⁷ It restores **Land** by remediating two mine-scarred brownfield sites, removing hazards and preparing the parcels for residential use; protects **Water** quality through reduced nonpoint source pollution and

⁶ Vacant Properties Network. (2015). *Charting the Multiple Meanings of Blight*. Blacksburg, VA: Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech.

⁷ USEPA. (2025, February 4). *EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin Announces EPA's "Powering the Great American Comeback" Initiative* [news release]. <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-administrator-lee-zeldin-announces-epas-powering-great-american-comeback>



improved site stabilization within the Newport Creek watershed; and reduces **Air** impacts through the control of dust and particulate matter commonly generated by abandoned mine lands.

Based on these plans, community input, and EC’s technical experience, the reuse strategy for Wanamie is to reclaim both parcels and prepare them for residential development. This work is part of EC’s broader multi-site remediation approach, tying into its FY25-funded Center Street brownfield cleanup located 0.6 miles away. Clustering projects not only accelerates environmental recovery, but also creates more functional redevelopment areas than isolated projects can provide. Concentrating development on previously disturbed mine lands also helps deter sprawl, preserving the township’s natural landscapes.

1.d. Outcomes & Benefits of Reuse Strategy: EC’s approach focuses on three measurable outcomes: land safety, economic reuse, and the community’s quality of life. The Wanamie project supports all three. Physical impairments will be addressed immediately through stabilization using best management practices (BMPs). On-site material will be reused and portions of existing topography preserved when feasible to reduce imported fill and costs. Revegetation with locally appropriate seed mixes will accelerate recovery and reduce erosion, sedimentation, and AMD. **Permanent stormwater controls will improve local resilience to significant rainfall events by managing runoff volumes and protecting downstream infrastructure and water quality.**

The project also supports long-term economic recovery. Since 2015, over 7.3 million square feet of development has occurred on EC-reclaimed land, generating 10,000 jobs and over \$1 billion in private investment.⁸ **The Wanamie parcels provide an infill opportunity to meet growing housing demand, offering the potential for modern, energy-efficient housing construction.** Reflecting multiple planning initiatives and community input, the reuse strategy is realistic and ready to implement, particularly given the sites’ proximity to utilities, roads, and other residences. EC’s Franklin Bank project in nearby Hanover Township demonstrates the success of this approach. Once a 14-acre mine spoil pile bordering a neighborhood, the site was reclaimed with a USEPA Brownfields Cleanup award. Now 40 townhomes have been constructed on the site, with more planned. The Wanamie cleanup has the same potential to strengthen property values, expand the local tax base, and enhance residents’ quality of life.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources

1.e. Resources Needed for Site Characterization: No additional site characterization is required.

1.f. Resources Needed for Site Remediation: The requested Brownfields Cleanup grant will cover the bulk of remediation. **As documented in the leveraged support letter (Attachment A), EC will provide \$43,570 for project-related personnel and travel and will cover all additional project costs.**

1.g. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: Site reuse (i.e., housing development) would largely be financed through private investment. Several programs are available to support residential construction, particularly for low- to moderate-income housing. These include:

Agency ⁹	Program/Description	Status
USDA	Direct loans for construction of eligible housing in federally-determined rural areas.	unsecured
USHUD	Municipal grants for residential development, and loans for new multifamily housing.	unsecured
USDT	Tax credits for real estate projects in low-income census tracts.	unsecured
PADCED	State-administered assistance for low-income residential development (PA HOME Program).	unsecured
PHFA	Tax credit program for construction of affordable rental units.	unsecured

1.h. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The Wanamie sites are adjacent to an established residential

⁸ O’Boyle, B. (2023, October). Tradeport Ceremony Marks \$1B of Investment, Honors Yudichak. *Times Leader*, p. 1A.

⁹ The following are the agencies abbreviated, in descending order: US Department of Agriculture; US Department of Housing & Urban Development; US Department of the Treasury; PA Department of Community & Economic Development; PA Housing Finance Authority. The availability of these programs are subject to annual appropriations and Notices of Funding Availability.



neighborhood and municipal infrastructure. West Wanamie needs no extensions. East Wanamie requires a roadway extension and utility tie-ins, estimated at \$220,000. This cost should be financeable for private investors; however, EC may fund the infrastructure work to advance development.

SECTION 2 | COMMUNITY NEED & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need

2.a. The Community's Need for Funding: Communities across the Lower South Valley face numerous challenges, including persistent economic hardship and minimal public resources. Luzerne County carries approximately \$130 million in debt. Until 2015, the City of Nanticoke was considered a Distressed Municipality. The small surrounding towns, including Newport Township, also have limited funds. In short, none can address the massive environmental issues or cleanup costs of the legacy mine sites. That is why EC was founded: to promote and partner in environmental, economic, and community revitalization in the region. For over 30 years, EC has worked to mend the scars of abandoned mine lands. **However, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, EC can only proceed as funding allows. Grants are imperative to carry out our work.** USEPA's investment in prior reclamation and restoration projects has been instrumental in our ability to leverage other funds and to make the progress we have.

2.b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The Wanamie sites are located in Census Tract 2156, a 17.2-square-mile area whose landscape – home to 3,930 residents¹⁰ – remains visibly scarred by past mining: mountainous piles of cast-off rock, gaping strip pits, and iron-stained ponds and streams. Spoil materials are unstable, prone to subsidence and fire, inviting injury and impairing environmental health. Within an approximately one-mile stretch encompassing both Wanamie sites and extending about a quarter mile wide, PADEP's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) has recorded nine AML complaints, reflecting persistent hazards near where residents live and recreate.¹¹

In addition to these environmental burdens, abandoned mine lands serve as a continuing form of blight, depressing property values and deterring investment. The average home value in Tract 2156 is 63.6% lower than Luzerne County's average, with 83.8% of homes built before 1970. Issues of substandard housing (e.g., lead, mold, rodents, carbon monoxide) are compounded by other markers of decline – overgrown vegetation, dumping, and illegal activities. Such stressors correlate with negative health outcomes¹², disproportionately affecting sensitive populations nearby, such as the elderly (18.9%), individuals with disabilities (14.8%), women of childbearing age (39.3%), and children (18.9%). Cleanup will directly reduce potential exposures related to legacy mining impacts, improving environmental conditions where vulnerable residents are less able to avoid or relocate from such concerns.

2.c. Greater than Normal Incidence of Disease & Adverse Health Conditions: Whether attributable to working in the mines, an aging population, environmental conditions, or long-standing quality of life challenges, health indicators for those in Newport Township are wanting:

- **Cancer Rates:** Based on municipal health data, Newport Township shows elevated incidence of kidney cancer and non-Hodgkin lymphoma compared to Luzerne County.¹³ Kidney cancer incidence in Newport Township is approximately 267 cases per 100,000, nearly double the county rate (135 per 100,000).
- **Mortality:** Heart disease accounts for 27.7% of deaths in Newport Township, exceeding both

¹⁰ US Census Bureau. 2023. *American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Data Profile* (Tract 2156, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania). <https://data.census.gov/>. ACS statistics going forward will reflect data from these three entities, unless otherwise noted.

¹¹ PADEP. *AML Inquiries and Complaints* [map]. eMapPA. <http://www.depgis.state.pa.us/emappa/>. Retrieved October 7, 2024.

¹² South, E.C., et al. (2015). Neighborhood Blight, Stress, & Health. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105, pp. 909-913.

¹³ Data in this and next bullet from PA Department of Health's *Standard Output Tables* for cancer (2018-2022) and mortality (2019-2023), respectively.



Luzerne County (21.3%) and Pennsylvania (22.0%) averages. Mortality from cardiovascular disease and lung cancer is also higher in the township than at the county level, indicating a disproportionate burden of chronic disease.

- **Food Insecurity:** Tract 2156 is designated as a low food-access area, where 16.9% of residents lack a vehicle and the nearest full-service grocery store is located more than four miles away.¹⁴
- **Health Ranking:** Luzerne County ranks 57th out of 67 counties statewide for health outcomes, with higher rates of smoking, excessive drinking, obesity, physical inactivity, and poor mental health days. These factors contribute to a 17.5% higher rate of premature death when compared to the Pennsylvania average.¹⁵ Compounding these issues, cirrhosis and drug overdose death rates remain alarmingly high, at 59.4% and 46.5% above the state average, respectively.¹⁶
- **AMD Health Risks:** While the direct human health impacts of AMD are not fully understood, both USEPA and USDA recognize it as a potential health hazard.¹⁷ AMD-contaminated water rarely meets federal standards for drinking water or aquatic life protection, limiting its use and contributing to ongoing environmental stressors.¹⁸

2.d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations: The coal industry’s collapse devastated the Lower South Valley. Beyond the mine-scarred lands and damaged waterways, jobs with family-sustaining wages never reappeared. Many fled the area for better opportunities. These historic losses continue to shape conditions in Newport Township:

- **Income & Poverty:** The median household income for Tract 2156 is \$48,859, 43.6% lower than the state median. On average, 20.1% of residents live below the poverty line (Luzerne County = 15.4%). Poverty disproportionately affects people of color (44.0% poverty rate), single mothers (35.2%), and children (33.2%) in the area. Due to high community need, the Greater Nanticoke Area School District provides free lunch to all students.¹⁹ In the past 12 months, 23.5% of households have used SNAP benefits (PA = 14.0%).
- **Incarceration:** Among residents from low-income households, the incarceration rate in Tract 2156 is 3.4, nearly double the national median of 1.8.²⁰
- **Education:** Only 18.2% of residents 25 or older hold a college degree, below county (25.0%) and state (34.5%) averages. Regional manufacturers report concern about “attracting a qualified workforce,” with 40% of companies polled citing it as a chief challenge (vs. 28% nationally).²¹
- **Employment & Wages:** Luzerne County’s unemployment rate is 4.8%, above the state average of 4.0%.²² Weekly wages are \$468 below the national average, putting Luzerne County in the bottom 16% for earnings of large U.S. counties.²³ The local metro area has the second-highest jobless rate in Pennsylvania.²⁴ In 2020, Newport Township’s largest employer – the State Correctional Institute at Retreat – closed, with 400 jobs lost.

These challenges, set against the backdrop of abandoned mine lands, clearly demonstrate Newport

¹⁴ USDA. (2019). *Food Access Research Atlas*. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>

¹⁵ University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. (2023). *County Health Outcomes: Luzerne County*. www.countyhealthrankings.org

¹⁶ PA Department of Health. *Pennsylvania Substance Use, SU-02: Cirrhosis Death Rate (2019-2023) and SU-03: Drug Overdose Death Rate (2021-2023)*.

¹⁷ See <https://www.epa.gov/nps/abandoned-mine-drainage> & www.fs.usda.gov/detail/whitemountain/landmanagement/projects/

¹⁸ Cravotta, C.A. (2008). Dissolved Metal & Associated Constituents in Abandoned Coal-Mine Discharges, PA. *Applied Geochemistry*, 23, pp. 166-202.

¹⁹ Pennsylvania Department of Education. *Yearly reports: % Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, 2024-2025*.

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/schools/food-and-nutrition>

²⁰ Opportunity Insights. *Children’s Outcomes in Adulthood* [map], www.opportunityatlas.org (accessed December 16, 2025)

²¹ Esoda, E. (2015). Survey Benchmarks Northeastern PA Manufacturer Challenges against National Peer Group. NEPA Industrial Resource Ctr.

²² PA Department of Labor & Industry. (September 2025). Quarterly Census of Occupational Wages: Luzerne County Profile.

²³ US Department of Labor [USDOL]. (2025, September 9). News Release: County Employment and Wages – First Quarter 2025.

²⁴ USDOL. (2025, October 1). News Release: Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment – August 2025.



Township’s need for targeted support and reinvestment. Reclaiming the Wanamie sites will restore the physical landscape and open the door for redevelopment, particularly important given the local housing shortage. Currently, Newport Township’s rental vacancy rate is only 4.2%, with 70% of renters paying 30% or more of their income toward housing. Recovering these parcels for future development can help address these challenges, becoming a piece in EC’s overarching plan to improve livability now and promote long-term community stability.

Community Engagement

2.e-f. Project Involvement & Project Roles: EC values collaboration and the input of the community in its work. EC was formed by a coalition of education, business, neighborhood, and elected leaders, who believed local stakeholders should control the fate of local lands. It was for this reason EC involved the community in its original land use planning, and why we continue to engage a variety of local, state, and federal partners. USEPA, in particular, has been central to EC’s success, understanding our mission, providing funding and expertise, and celebrating project achievements with us.

The Wanamie reclamation will continue this tradition of collaboration. As detailed below, eight entities have committed to support the project with technical, environmental, and/or outreach efforts, as needed or in future phases. EC has worked with all of them before.

Partner	Point of Contact	Mission & Project Role
Newport Township	Joseph C. Hillan, Manager joe.hillan@newporttownship.org	Will provide formal municipal input and assistance on cleanup project and serve as community liaison.
PADEP BAMR	Thomas J. Matinas, Section Chief tmatinas@pa.gov	State agency for AML issues with local regional office. Will provide input/assistance as needed for reclamation activities.
Luzerne Conservation Dist.	John Levitsky, Watershed Specialist john@luzernecd.org	Will provide permitting guidance and technical expertise shaping watershed, stormwater, and vegetation plans.
Lower South Valley Council of Govts.	Sam Guesto, President lsvcog@gmail.com	Seven municipalities, EC, and local sanitary authority that work collectively on regional issues, including land use.
EPCAMR	Robert Hughes, Executive Director rhughes@epcamr.org	Regional nonprofit working on AML issues in northeastern PA, providing technical assistance, outreach, & coordination.
NorthPoint Development	Brent Miles, Chief Marketing Officer bmiles@northpointkc.com	National developer with significant local investment in reuse of EC reclaimed properties.
HDC MidAtlantic	Dana Hanchin, President & CEO dhanchin@hdcweb.org	Regional organization with expertise in developing affordable housing, including in the City of Nanticoke.
Newport Township Community Org.	Palmira Miller palmiram@newporttownship.com	Local organization serving as community liaison for outreach and volunteer coordination (e.g., cleanups).

2.g. Incorporating Community Input: EC’s approach to community engagement dates back to a process established through a 2005 USEPA-funded project. It includes: 1.) establishing and maintaining a repository of project information and reports; 2.) releasing an analysis of cleanup alternatives for public review and comment; 3.) sharing project information through multiple platforms; 4.) holding public meetings to gather community feedback; and 5.) recording public comments and, where feasible, incorporating them into the project’s scope of work. This structured approach ensures transparency, regulatory compliance, and consistent project delivery. In addition to these protocols, EC maintains direct engagement with stakeholders through regular communication and municipal/agency meetings to discuss plans. Our outreach is further supported by quarterly board meetings, open to the public, and by an open-door policy at EC’s office, where residents often call with questions or simply stop by.

For the Wanamie project, this process is already underway. As documented in the Threshold Criteria, EC notified the public of its intent to apply for a Brownfields Cleanup grant via website, social media, and newspaper notices. Drafts of the ABCAs and the grant application, detailing cleanup goals and reuse priorities, were made available online and at our office for review and comment, including at an



advertised meeting on January 5, 2026. If a Cleanup grant is awarded, EC will continue providing updates through press releases, newsletters, website updates, and social media posts, and at least one additional community meeting. EC will also engage directly with residents near the project sites by mail, providing clear information on the reclamation plan and project timeline. To ensure accessibility, materials will be presented in plain language and made available through multiple formats (e.g., email, virtual meetings, non-digital formats), as needed. While English is the predominant language in the area, translation services will be made available for residents with limited English proficiency to ensure all community members can meaningfully participate in the process.

SECTION 3 | TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, & MEASURING PROGRESS

3.a. Proposed Cleanup Plan: As summarized in the draft ABCAs, site conditions include mine spoil deposits, unstable slopes, erosion, and uncontrolled stormwater runoff contributing to sediment loading and AMD within the Newport Creek watershed. These conditions present ongoing risks to surface water quality, ecological resources, and public safety. Reclamation of the two Wanamie brownfields addresses these environmental risks, while recovering the land for much-needed residential development. Three remediation alternatives were evaluated: no action, reclamation only, and removal of spoil material and restoration to native grade. Reclamation only (Alternative #2) was selected as the most appropriate and cost-effective cleanup option that fully meets environmental, safety, and community objectives.

EC will procure engineering services through a competitive, publicly advertised request for proposals (RFP) to complete final design plans, specifications, and permitting; followed by competitive procurement of construction services. Reclamation activities will convert the unstable mine lands into safe, buildable property through a sequenced plan of site preparation, slope reduction, stabilization, stormwater improvements, and revegetation, as summarized below and detailed further in Section 3.b-e.

- **Site Preparation:** Construction of site access, clearing of vegetation and debris, installation of erosion and sediment controls, establishment of boundaries and grading controls, and stockpiling of reusable on-site topsoil.
- **Grading & Stabilization:** Mass earthwork to reduce steep slopes and establish stable contours across the properties, together with stormwater controls (e.g., riprap-lined swales, conveyance pipes, outlet structures) to restore hydrologic function and reduce uncontrolled runoff.
- **Revegetation:** Placement of topsoil to reduce water infiltration into the mine spoils and provide a healthy base for vegetation, followed by seeding with meadow grasses and planting of 250 trees to stabilize soils, reduce erosion, restore habitat, and enhance site appearance.

Cleanup activities will comply with applicable federal and state regulations (e.g., environmental, labor) and permitting requirements (e.g., NPDES), with EC overseeing engineering and construction to ensure adherence. Sitework will follow BMPs for mine-scarred lands (e.g., recommended slope ratios, minimizing infiltration, revegetation). Required mitigation efforts (e.g., wetlands, wildlife avoidance) will be followed. BMPs also will be employed to protect nearby populations (e.g., work limited to daytime hours, dust control measures). The long-term safety and environmental improvements and the redevelopment potential of the site outweigh the temporary disturbances of construction. Schedule and budget controls will keep work on time and on budget to successfully complete the project within the 48-month period of performance. EC will remain responsible for the sites while under its ownership.

3.b-e. Description of Tasks/Activities & Outputs: Cleanup of both Wanamie sites will be conducted concurrently and will involve the same activities, differing only in quantities. Activities are grouped into three tasks: cooperative agreement oversight, community outreach, and cleanup. To avoid redundancy, tasks are described jointly; budget allocations are itemized separately for each site in Section 3.f.



Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight		Lead: G. Shaw	Funded by: EC
Activities:	Cooperative agreement management, including establishing an information repository; preparation of final ABCAs, progress reviews, reporting (USEPA, ACRES, MBE/WBE), and overall compliance activities and institutional controls. Also includes participation in brownfields/AML conferences		
Schedule:	ongoing, for duration of project (months 1-48)		
Outputs:	(1) information repository; (2) ABCAs; documentation of progress to USEPA via (16) quarterly reports, (1) final report, ACRES updates, and compliance reports; travel to (2) brownfields/AML conferences		
Task 2: Community Outreach		Lead: E. Hughes	Funded by: EC
Activities:	Preparation and implementation of community involvement plan, including public notices, project correspondence, coordination with partners, webpage maintenance, and at least one public meeting		
Schedule:	ongoing, for duration of project (months 1-48)		
Outputs:	(1) community involvement plan; (1) advertisement of ABCAs availability; (1) mailing to residents nearby project site; (1) community meeting/event; creation of/updates to (1) project webpage		
Task 3: Cleanup Activities		Leads: T. Ostrowski, J. Tarnowski	Funded by: USEPA, EC
Activities:	Cleanup will be completed by contracted, licensed professionals. Design: preparation of construction plans, permitting, contractor procurement, construction supervision. Construction: bonding, mobilization, site layout, installation of E&S controls, earthwork and grading, topsoil placement, hydroseeding, tree plantings		
Schedule:	engineering/permitting, months 1-18; construction, months 18-48		
Outputs:	preparation of (1) RFP for engineering services; procurement of (1) engineering firm; preparation of (1) RFP package for cleanup activities; procurement of (1) cleanup contractor; acquisition of permits; stabilization of ±9 acres of mine-scarred land; revegetation of ±9 acres; 250 trees planted		

The outcome of the Wanamie reclamation is continued remediation of mine-scarred lands in the region, advancing EC’s mission and bringing lasting improvements to the land, economy, and community. To complete the Wanamie project, EC will underwrite \$43,570 for project-related personnel and travel. EC does not request any indirect or general administrative cost support and will cover any additional costs. **This secured leveraging commitment directly supports the project.**

3.f. Cost Estimates: Based on a professional estimate, prior project costs, and average hourly rates, the Wanamie reclamation will cost \$846,015. EC believes this amount is reasonable, realistic, and consistent with federal cost principles. **EC seeks \$802,445 from the Brownfields Cleanup Program for the project, with 100% of funds committed to environmental cleanup, as detailed below:**

Budget Categories		Cooperative Agreement-Funded Project Tasks			Total
		T1 Agreement Oversight	T2 Community Outreach	T3 Cleanup Activities	
Contractual	East			16,000.00	\$80,000.00
	West			64,000.00	
Construction	East			161,253.00	\$722,445.00
	West			561,192.00	
Total Direct Costs				\$802,445.00	\$802,445.00
Indirect Costs				0.00	0.00
Total Budget				\$802,445.00	\$802,445.00

- **Task 1 | Cooperative Agreement Oversight (both sites, funded by EC)**
 - **Cooperative Agreement Management/Documentation** (80 hrs x \$98/hr = \$7,840)
 - **Conference Travel** (\$7,450): Attendance at two (2) brownfields/AML conferences (2 x 30 hrs x \$68/hr = \$4,080) + registration (2 x \$125 = \$250) + M&IE (2 x 4 days x \$90/day = \$720) + lodging (2 x 3 nights x \$200/day = \$1,200) + travel (2 x \$600 = \$1,200)
- **Task 2 | Community Outreach (both sites, funded by EC):** Personnel to develop Community Information Plan, facilitate public meeting(s), create/update information repository and webpage, publish media releases, and interact with stakeholders and the public (30 hrs x \$68/hr = \$2,040)
- **Task 3 | Cleanup Activities (\$802,445 funded by USEPA)**
 - **Project Facilitation/Management** (both sites) (280 hrs x \$101/hr = \$28,280 funded by EC)



- **Engineering:** survey, engineering, permits, procurement, & supervision
 - ♦ **Wanamie East:** (lump sum = \$16,000); **Wanamie West:** (lump sum = \$64,000)
- **Construction:**

Item	Cost/Unit	Quantity East	Cost East	Quantity West	Cost West
Mobilization/Demobilization	\$720/EA	3.2	\$2,304	12.8	\$9,216
Performance/Payment Bonds	lump sum	1	\$5,880	1	\$23,520
Construction Layout	\$2,360/DA	1.2	\$2,832	4.8	\$11,328
Project Supervision	\$315/DA	16	\$5,040	64	\$20,160
Clear & Grub	\$5,775/AC	1	\$5,775	6	\$34,650
Rock Construction Entrance	\$2,625/EA	1	\$2,625	1	\$2,625
12" Silt Soxx	\$11/LF	120	\$1,320	500	\$5,500
32" Silt Soxx	\$19/LF	390	\$7,410	750	\$14,250
Remove Garbage (Tires, Etc.)	\$152/TN	30	\$4,560	40	\$6,080
Mass Earthwork (Cut/Fill)	\$5.80/CY	9,740	\$56,492	34,848	\$202,118
Grass Lined Swale	\$15/SY	220	\$3,300	650	\$9,750
Rip Rap Lined Swale	\$27/SY	340	\$9,180	800	\$21,600
15" HDPE Pipe	\$39/LF	50	\$1,950	---	---
24" HDPE Pipe	\$51/LF	---	---	75	\$3,825
Basin Outlet Structure	lump sum	1	\$5,250	1	\$5,250
R-5 Rip Rap	\$23/SY	150	\$3,450	350	\$8,050
Import & Place Topsoil	\$30/SY	1,100	\$33,000	4,900	\$147,000
Seed & Mulch	\$2,415/AC	1	\$2,415	6	\$14,490
Riparian Tree Planting	\$121/EA	40	\$4,840	80	\$9,680
Tree Planting	\$121/EA	30	\$3,630	100	\$12,100
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS			\$161,253		\$561,192

3.g. Plan to Measure & Evaluate Environmental Progress & Results: EC will monitor the project to ensure timely progress and compliance with consultant plans, regulatory guidelines, and the Cooperative Agreement. Outputs described in 3.b-e. will be tracked against approved schedules and work plans, and regularly verified through field inspections, digital and drone photography, and written documentation. Long-term success will be evaluated using indicators such as sustained vegetative cover, absence of erosion, functional hydrology, and site readiness for redevelopment. Specific items (e.g., cleanup actions, expenditures) will be submitted to USEPA through quarterly reports and ACRES updates. EC will also share project results publicly through its website, newsletter, and social media feeds.

SECTION 4 | PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY & PAST PERFORMANCE

Programmatic Capability

4.a-b. Organizational Structure & Description of Key Staff: EC’s organizational structure has supported over 30 years of successful reclamation and restoration work. The all-volunteer Board of Directors provides strategic leadership, financial oversight, and performance evaluation. Daily operations are handled by a dedicated core staff, well-equipped to carry out the project’s technical, financial, and administrative elements, ensuring regulatory compliance and timely expenditure of funds:

- **Project Director | Terence Ostrowski, PE, President/CEO:** Ostrowski, with over three decades of engineering experience, joined EC as President/CEO in 2019. He leads EC’s strategic direction and manages all organizational operations. He will provide executive oversight for the Wanamie project, ensuring technical quality, regulatory compliance, and alignment with project goals.
- **Project Manager | Jason Tarnowski, PLS, Project & Operations Manager:** With 27 years of expertise in surveying and engineering, much of it within the coal industry, Mr. Tarnowski is integral to project execution. He will collaborate closely with the engineering and construction



teams to finalize design plans, oversee site work, and ensure timely progress reporting.

- **Grant Manager | Geoffrey Shaw, CPA, Executive Administrator:** Mr. Shaw, a CPA with over 38 years of experience, has led EC’s financial and grant activities since 2014. He will oversee project financial management, such as budget tracking, internal controls, reimbursement requests, and compliance with grant terms and conditions, including ACRES reporting.
- **Public Relations | Elizabeth W. Hughes, EdD, Director of Communications:** Dr. Hughes has been with EC since 2015, bringing a strong background in nonprofits, community engagement, and marketing. She will ensure transparent stakeholder communication throughout the project and represent EC at brownfields-related conferences and trainings.

4.c. Acquiring Additional Resources: EC will competitively procure a qualified engineering firm and licensed construction contractor for the Wanamie cleanup in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal procurement standards (e.g., 2 CFR §200). Procurement will be conducted through publicly advertised RFPs to ensure full and open competition, including participation by small local and diverse businesses. EC will monitor contractor performance through contract terms, progress meetings, and field inspections to ensure adherence to project specifications, schedules, and regulations.

Past Performance & Accomplishments

4.d. Currently or Has Ever Received an EPA Brownfield Grant: EC has received 27 USEPA awards since 1994. All work has followed approved plans and has produced measurable environmental improvements and successful site reuse. The following table details our three most recent cleanup projects, with funds spent as of December 1, 2025. All ACRES reporting is current.

Year	Grant No.	Project	Award	Outlay	Status
2025	4B-953A0163	Center Street Reclamation	\$1,660,360	\$289 ²⁵	In Progress
2023	4B-95319901	Nanticoke Creek Watershed Restoration, I & II	\$1,956,427	\$1,496,015	In Progress
2020	BF-96378001	Espy Run Stream Restoration, Segment F	\$500,000	\$500,000	Closed

4.d.1. Accomplishments: To date, EC has reclaimed 2,090 acres of mine-scarred land, built three AMD treatment systems, and conserved over 9,300 acres for recreation and greenspace. Together, these projects have helped generate major private redevelopment on former mine lands, supporting thousands of permanent jobs and demonstrating strong returns in prior USEPA investments in our work. EC has earned nine PA Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence, a USEPA Mid-Atlantic Award for Environmental Excellence (2009), and was featured as a USEPA *Brownfield Success Story* in 2015. EC regularly shares its expertise at industry events, including the WV Brownfields Conference (2016), the PA Brownfields Conference (2018, 2024), and poster presentations at the National Brownfields Training Conference, winning the award for Best Overall Poster in Chicago in 2025. EC has hosted three press events with USEPA announcing grant awards, underscoring our successes in the brownfields community.

4.d.2. Compliance with Grant Requirements: EC has a reputation for conscientious project management and fiscal responsibility. We have received and successfully administered 37 grants from nine federal agencies, with project costs exceeding \$21.8 million. In all cases, EC has performed grant activities in compliance with work plans, terms and conditions, and audit requirements, including 2 CFR §200 and 40 CFR §33. EC has two open USEPA Brownfields Cleanup grants, the first closing on September 30, 2027; the second closing on September 30, 2029. Both projects are expected to be completed within performance periods. All ACRES reporting is current, with no unresolved audit findings or compliance issues.

²⁵ EC completed competitive procurement of an engineer in November 2025. Initial engineering design work is underway.

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. **Type of Entity:** Earth Conservancy (EC) is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to mine land reclamation, environmental conservation, and economic development in the lower Wyoming Valley of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, and is eligible to receive US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Brownfields Cleanup Grant funding. Documentation of EC's IRS determination letter is included as Attachment A.
- b. **501(c)(4) Status:** EC is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Previously Awarded Cleanup Grants: EC affirms that the Wanamie East and Wanamie West sites have not received funding from a previously awarded Brownfields Cleanup Grant.

3. Expenditure of Existing Multipurpose Grant Funds: EC affirms it does not have an open USEPA Brownfields Multipurpose Grant.

4. Site Ownership: EC holds fee-simple ownership of the property containing both the Wanamie East and Wanamie West sites (parcel #46K6 00A110000). EC will retain ownership through the full cleanup period, as required by USEPA.

5. Basic Site Information

Wanamie East

- a. **Site Name:** Wanamie East
- b. **Site Address:** off of Brown Row, Newport Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (zip = 18634); center of site is approximately at 41.17334, -76.03278
- c. **Current Owner:** Earth Conservancy

Wanamie West

- a. **Site Name:** Wanamie West
- b. **Site Address:** off of West Kirmar Avenue, Newport Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (zip = 18634); center of site is approximately at 41.17169, -76.04939
- c. **Current Owner:** Earth Conservancy

6. Status & History of Contamination at the Sites

a. **Hazardous Substance Contamination:** The Wanamie East and Wanamie West sites are located on mine-scarred land, resulting from historic anthracite coal mining. Mine-scarred lands contain waste rock material, consisting of sulfide minerals, primarily pyrite. When this material is exposed to air and water, acid mine drainage (AMD) forms. Although mining waste is exempt from RCRA Subtitle C regulations under the Bevill Amendment, AMD is considered a hazardous substance under CERCLA due to the release of sulfuric acid and metals, which can contaminate soil, groundwater, and surface water. No non-mining-related hazardous materials are known or suspected to be present on the sites.

b. **Operational History/Current Uses:** Wanamie East (± 2 acres) and Wanamie West (± 7 acres) were previously used by the Glen Alden Coal Company and subsequently the Blue Coal Corporation for anthracite mining during their operations. Evidence of this activity

remains, as both sites feature a highly irregular topography of mining waste rock with extreme peaks and valleys. At Blue Coal's bankruptcy in 1976, the land was abandoned and has remained in this condition.

c. Environmental Concerns: As mine-scarred land, the Wanamie East and Wanamie West sites pose three major environmental threats to the surrounding area:

- **Degraded Land:** First, because of mining activity, the land is degraded, most notably by the spoil piles, which are unstable and dangerous. They are also prone to erosion, which directly contributes to the second environmental concern: sedimentation.
- **Sedimentation:** Sediment – identified by USEPA as one of the “Three Big Pollutants” of water¹ – is a chief concern at legacy mine sites where vast areas of disturbed earth remain exposed. As sediment erodes from mine-scarred lands, it travels towards waterways, clouding water, clogging channels, and altering natural alignments. The South Branch of Newport Creek flows approximately 264 yards away from both sites.
- **AMD:** When iron pyrite, a primary component in local mining waste, encounters water and oxygen, ferrous iron and sulfuric acid are produced, aka AMD. This chemical reaction will occur “until the sulfides are leached out – a process that can last hundreds, even thousands, of years.”² AMD makes its way into nearby waterways and infiltrates subsurface flow, rendering the water not only impotable, but also inhospitable to many plants and wildlife, thereby impacting local ecosystems.

d. How Site Became Contaminated & Extent: Damage at both the Wanamie East and Wanamie West sites is directly attributable to pre-regulatory mining by prior owners/operators. Mining activity produced a highly-irregular terrain composed of coarse, rubbly mine refuse with little organic matter. These conditions promote erosion and long-term acid generation. Illegal behaviors like dumping, vandalism, and trespassing by ATVs are common. Evidence of drinking and firearms shooting are also present.

7. Brownfields Site Definition: Both cleanup sites meet the CERCLA §101(39)(D) definition of a brownfield in that they are identified as mine-scarred lands, i.e., “lands, associated waters, and surrounding watersheds where extraction, beneficiation, or processing of ores and minerals (including coal) has occurred.” EC affirms that the sites:

- Are not listed or proposed for listing on the National Priorities List.
- Are not subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued to or entered into by parties under CERCLA.
- Are not subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the U.S. government.

8. Environmental Assessment Required for Cleanup Proposals: In 2025, Verdantas, LLC, completed a Phase I ESA for the Wanamie East site, in accordance with the ASTM E1527-21 standard for All Appropriate Inquiries (AAI). The assessment included a comprehensive review of public documents, photographs, and maps; regulatory correspondence; a detailed environmental database search; interviews with local officials; and an on-site reconnaissance.

¹ From the EPA's “Three Big Pollutants,” <http://water.epa.gov/learn/resources/bigpollutants.cfm>

² Da Rosa, C.D., Lyon, J.S., & Hocker, P.M. (1997). *Golden Dreams, Poisoned Streams*. Washington, DC: Mineral Policy Ctr.



01/07/2026

Mr. Terence J. Ostrowski, P.E.
Earth Conservancy
101 South Main Street
Ashley, PA 18706

**RE: US EPA Brownfields Cleanup Proposal | State Letter of Acknowledgement
Wanamie Reclamation Project
Newport Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania**

Dear Mr. Ostrowski:

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) acknowledges that Earth Conservancy plans to conduct the cleanup of two mine-scarred sites, totaling ± 9 acres, in the Wanamie Section of Newport Township, Luzerne County, and is applying for an FY26 US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) Brownfields Cleanup Grant in the amount of \$802,445.

Earth Conservancy has developed an application requesting site-specific federal Brownfields Cleanup funding for the Wanamie Reclamation Project located on mine-scarred lands in Newport Township, Luzerne County.

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection affirms that the Wanamie Reclamation Project:

- i. Is not eligible to be enrolled in the PADEP voluntary response program due to the project being a mine-reclamation project which does not qualify under PADEP Land Recycling Program.
- ii. Based upon the environmental site assessments performed to date and information provided by the applicant, the PA DEP VCP oversight program concurs that the site has had a sufficient level of site characterization for the remediation work to begin.

PA DEP is pleased to support Earth Conservancy's efforts to redevelop brownfield properties in the community. The proposed cleanup activities are consistent with the objectives of Pennsylvania's Land Recycling Program to address environmental impairments and return underutilized properties to productive use, improving our environment, safeguarding our residents, and helping to boost Pennsylvania's economy.

If you have any questions, please contact John Gross by email at johngross@pa.gov or by telephone at 717-783-7502.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Maddigan".

Michael Maddigan
Land Recycling Program Manager
Bureau Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields