

AMD&ART news

AMD&ART RECEIVES 2005 WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

On May 26, 2005, AMD&ART won the 2005 Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award for Green Design. The award, sponsored by Dominion and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, was presented to AMD&ART for our “demonstrated commitment to environmental excellence, leadership, and accomplishment in reclaiming 35 acres of abandoned mine land in Vintondale, Pennsylvania, also known as Vintondale’s AMD&ART Park.”



Photo from AMD&ART Collection

CELEBRATION WEEKEND MARKS ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMD&ART

VINTONDALE’S AMD&ART HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

On July 8, 2005 nearly fifty people attended Vintondale’s AMD&ART History Symposium. Historic photographs of the Vinton Colliery site and recent photographs taken of the AMD&ART Park by Holly Lees surrounded the attendees, creating a visual transformation of the land. The keynote speaker, Dr. Brent Glass, Director of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institute, set the tone for the event by exploring Vintondale’s rich history. Speakers represented the multiple disciplines of AMD&ART. History: Denise Dusza Weber, author of Delano’s Domain. Science and Environment: John Dawes, Administrator, Western Pennsylvania Watershed Protection Program and Charles Lee, Ph.D, CPSS President and CEO, Recycled Soil Manufacturing Technology, LLC. Community Development: Robert Martin, Executive Director, West Virginia Citizens Conservation Corps and Sue Thering, Ph.D, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Art: Sam Bower, Founding Executive Director, greenmuseum.org. The speakers from each discipline praised AMD&ART’s accomplishment, as a model project in respect to their own field and as a project that successfully used a multidisciplinary approach in Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) remediation. Check out the AMD&ART website to see some of their comments at www.amdandart.org.



Left to Right, Top row: John Dawes, Denise Weber, Dr. T. Allan Comp, Jeanne Gleason. Bottom row: Dr. Charles Lee, Robert Martin, Dr. Brent Glass, and Sam Bower. Photo by Holly Lees.

VINTONDALE'S AMD&ART HOMETOWN PARADE

As Bill Martin from the Nanty Glo Journal noted, “the festivities started off with a grand parade.” The many on lookers who lined Main Street in Vintondale enjoyed watching ethnic groups such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Slovak Heritage Association of the Laurel Highlands, and a Welsh group, paying tribute to the ethnic diversity of Vintondale. Local groups that participated in the parade included the coal miner’s daughters with a decorated float, local sports athletes, the well-known Red Hats Society from Ebsenburg, the Stars and Stripes, and much more. Followed by four different community fire companies and four police units, the Vintondale V.F.W. Color Guard led the procession.



The Stars and Stripes marching through Vintondale during the parade. Photo by Holly Lees.



The Coal Miner’s Daughters Float. Photo by Holly Lees.

OPENING CEREMONY, PRESENTATION OF ENDOWMENT

The Community Celebration Day on July 9, 2005 hosted an official ceremony where AMD&ART, the non-profit organization, handed over the AMD&ART Park to the community of Vintondale. Community member Dee Columbus sang God Bless America, and many national and community leaders spoke on the successes of the Vintondale AMD&ART Park. During the celebration Dr. T. Allan Comp, the Founder and Volunteer Director of AMD&ART, and Jeanne Gleason, the president of the AMD&ART Board of Directors, each received the Vintondale Borough Community Enrichment and Preservation Award. Cindy Wigger, the AMD&ART Americorps VISTA Watershed Development Coordinator was honored with the key to Vintondale. The ceremony commenced with the presentation of a \$30,000 check to the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies for the AMD&ART Endowment Fund, established to help the community of Vintondale maintain the AMD treatment system and wetlands within the AMD&ART Park. Following the ceremony an ethnic lunch, site tours, and a soccer clinic, entertained the Vintondale community.



Vintondale’s acceptance of the Endowment Fund. From left to right: Robin Strachan and Mike Kane from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, Anthony Columbus from Vintondale Borough Council, and Jeanne Gleason President of the Board of Directors of AMD&ART. Photo by Holly Lees.

TREATMENT SYSTEM AND LITMUS GARDEN

Six treatment cells and 13 species of trees planted in groups create the beginning of good science and good art in the AMD&ART Park. Thanks to diligent effort and good weather, the 314 trees of the Litmus Garden are in their proper place and doing well. We look forward to future fall seasons where these small groves will reflect the increasing health of the treated AMD in their foliage color. Equally important, the treatment system is functioning well- AMD entering the system at a pH of 2.8 and exiting at a 6.1.



Photo by AMD&ART staff.

HISTORY WETLANDS

When standing upon the Great Map, visitors look out upon the foundations of old Vinton Colliery buildings, the focal point for AMD&ART's History Wetlands. When the passively treated water exits the AMD&ART treatment system, it then flows through approximately 7 acres of wetlands before returning to Blacklick Creek. Over 10,000 native wetland plants have secured their roots in the wetlands, providing a habitat for many insect and bird species, including the wood duck. In 2001 AMD&ART received the Five Star Restoration Site Award from the Wetlands Habitat Council and US Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania Partnership for Highway Quality recognized AMD&ART with the 2002 Wetlands Award.



Vinton Colliery Coke Oven Foundations. Photo by Holly Lees.

THE GREAT MAP PROJECT

The Great Map Project, one of three interpretive art installations, is now complete. The mosaic map was inspired by the original 1923 Sanborn Insurance Map of the Vinton Colliery. Standing upon the map, visitors can locate and compare the present landscape and buildings to those of the mining times. The map was erected on an 18-by-22-foot concrete platform located across from the former entrance to Mine #6 portal, and along side the Ghost Town Rail Trail. Surrounding the map are 131 granite tiles, 54 of which are laser-etched with community images, newspaper headlines and text. The word “hope” has been translated into 26 of the languages that were once spoken here. Visitors as well as local residents now have the opportunity to recognize, admire, and reflect upon Vintondale’s rich community history.



Two Vintondale residents remembering their past. Photo by Holly Lees.

A PORTAL INTO THE PAST

Adjacent to the History Wetlands and across from the Great Map, the Miner’s Memorial reminds all of its viewers of those individuals whose bodies, hearts, and souls so diligently worked this once-prolific mine. Inspired by a 1938 film taken at the height of Vintondale mining operations, the life-sized, hand-etched image of nine Vintondale miners in the middle of a shift-change is located at the old Mine no. 6 entrance. Large black stone slabs framed in heavy timber reconstruct a place once teeming with mining activity. When first opened in November 2004, nearly 100 people visited the site for an unveiling, including three men that once mined in no.6. There was an unmistakable sense of pride in the atmosphere as all miners were honored.



Photo by Holly Lees.

RECREATION AREA

Vintondale's AMD&ART Park now has a new multi-purpose recreation field. The 4-acre recreational area is capable of hosting soccer, baseball, football, and many other outdoor games. With financial and in-kind contributions from our funders and partners, this recreation park has given back to the community a place to gather and host sporting events for people of all ages. In conjunction with our new access road, the community's dreams of a horseshoe pit, a volleyball court, and baseball field with lighting, can now become an actuality in the future.



Soccer clinic during AMD&ART's celebration weekend.
Photo by Holly Lees

NEW ACCESS ROAD

Road to Commerce Built in Vintondale

Vintondale's AMD&ART Park has developed over the last ten years as a place for Acid Mine Drainage remediation, historical conservation, artistic expression and wholesome recreation. Now, a new two-lane access road with parking and shaded picnic area will create even more opportunities for Vintondale. Funding for development of the recreation area hinged on an access road for the park, however we could not begin building the road with out funding support: a classic Catch 22. Today, thanks to cash raised by AMD&ART and a huge in-kind donation by Rosebud Mining, AMD&ART Park will now be able to pursue grant funding that had been unavailable. For the many people involved in the construction of this road, it felt like a grand slam victory to see the road completed.



Photo by Holly Lees

CLEAN SLATE PROJECT

To celebrate the return of clean water back into the Blacklick Creek, AMD&ART held a national student design competition, where nearly 30 submissions came from across the nation. After a national jury selected one design to be built, construction began. Two large slabs of Pennsylvania Slate have become “a literal and physical clean slate on which visitors can gather and reflect on the processes they witness in the park,” as the designers envisioned. One piece of slate is situated in a limestone channel allowing the clean water returning to Blacklick Creek to flow over it. The other piece serves as a viewing platform and the beginning of a path of 10 slate steps, which lead visitors through a Carboniferous Garden down to the edge of the creek. The Garden will be planted with a variety of native ferns and grasses that were present in the formations of coal seams. As soon as we can find the funding, we hope the vegetation will encourage reflection on the processes of evolution and change in the landscape, while bringing attention to the serious problem of AMD.



Clean Slate Art Installation. Photo by Holly Lees.