

On March 6, the state Department of Environmental Protection held a pre-bid conference at the site of the Albert Highwall Enhancement Project. Dave Broschart and Gregg Smith of the DEPs' Philippi Office led the meeting. In attendance were Jana Pyle and Kelly Clark representing Friends of Blackwater through the North Fork Watershed Project and about two dozen representatives from potential contractors.

The pre-bid conference served as a chance for prospective contractors to see the project site, hear an outline of the project, and ask for clarifications of any item within the plans and specifications. This \$232,000 project is being funded by monies that Friends of Blackwater secured from the Office of Surface Mining, WV DEP and the 319 grant program—for the repair of an acid mine drainage treatment system located on the Albert Highwall in Douglas.

This non-functioning system contributes to the acid mine drainage problems that plague Long Run and the North Fork of the Blackwater River. Most aquatic life, including native trout, caddisflies, damselflies, crayfish, clams, and mussels cannot survive the high levels of acid.

The scope of work for this project includes installation of new pipe at the bottom of the water treatment system and the creation of an improved spillway and channels. Also included is the creation of a new 19' fabricform channel with gabion baskets that are filled with steel slag.

The pond, which will be lined with steel slag, will also include the installation of a SMART drainage system which will automatically flush the pond once a day.

The project bids were opened on April 10 with the low bidder being BreakAway Inc. of Sutton. It will take a few weeks for the bids to be reviewed and a contract awarded, upon contract award the contractor will have 365 days to complete the remediation project. If all goes well, construction could begin in late spring or summer.

The goal of this project is to restore the Albert Highwall pond which flows into Long Run and it is anticipated that this project will result in a site specific reduction in the amount of acid mine run off into Long Run.