



# Kaska Silt Dam Site

**SAN AMD Meeting**

*April 14, 2020*

# Agenda

---

INTRODUCTIONS

---

OVERVIEW

---

OBJECTIVES

---

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

---

NEXT STEPS

---

FUNDING

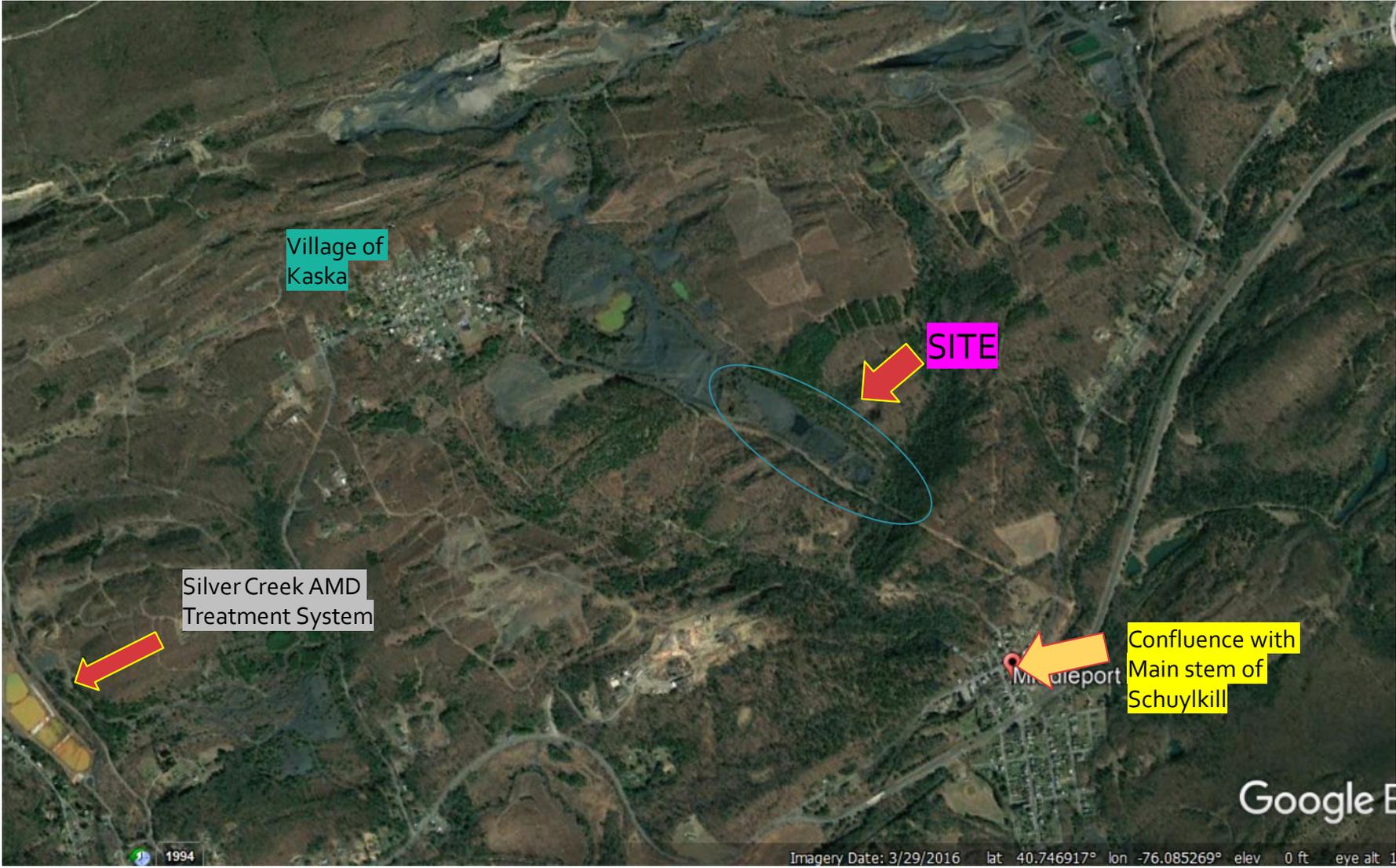
---

OPEN DISCUSSION

# Overview: Setting



Overview:  
*Project Area*



# Overview: *Project Area*



## Overview: *Project Area*

Drone Tour of site

Regulatory and stakeholder context

- Receiving waters: Cold Water Fishery/Wild Trout Waters
- ~2,000,000 downstream users
- Prioritization in 2019 Upper Schuylkill TMDL WIP
- Progress elsewhere in Upper Schuylkill highlights importance of this site.

## Overview: *History*



*Sch. Cnty Hist. Soc. (undated)*

- Over 150 years of Impact
- Earliest references to Kaska-William Colliery - 1858
- Various iterations: Alliance Colliery, Lehigh Coal & Navigation
- Site of numerous notable disasters, explosions, inundations, etc.

# Overview: History

## Kaska-William Creek (No. 71)

Mine water from the Kaska-William Colliery is the source of this stream, which remains yellow to its mouth in the Schuylkill River but carries no culm.

## PA Water Supply Commission- 1916

### 46 SCHUYLKILL RIVER, PA., STREAM POLLUTION

#### 54. Lehigh Coal & Navigation Co. (Alliance colliery):

Location: At Kaska, 1½ miles north of Middleport.  
Drainage: Into Schuylkill River.

The breaker water is pumped up on a bank on the hillside which contains 300,000 tons of silt. The drainage water goes into the creek and some silt goes with it. A bank in the valley contains 300,000 tons. It is 12 feet thick. Some of it is being loaded for boiler fuel. There has been much wash from this bank.

The culm accumulation has been practically worked out. There are approximately 100,000 tons of material scattered over the rock.

#### 55. Culm (owner not known):

Location: One-half mile north of Middleport.  
Drainage: Into Schuylkill River.

This bank is evidently from an old breaker. It is in stream bottom and has been there for years. It contains 75,000 tons. The creek coming into Middleport from the north is filled with this silt and culm.

## US Congress, 1929

**Middleport black mess**

Middleport is a black mess today. Silt is a rampant ailment at Kaska.

The burst of the black dam broke during the night of Thursday's and Friday's rain, but the constant water gushing into the hollow toward the Schuylkill River continues to wash down streams of debris, turning the river black.

The once-green mountainside has been transformed into a black mess.

Residents were out with shovels scooping away the coal waste from gardens, walks and streets. Fire hoses were being used to flush away accumulations of black debris.

Some property damage was caused by the silt. It was in places the overhead doors of a garage were broken through by the force of water and silt, filling the inside and destroying property, including robbing in a metal cabinet.

Citizens of the little borough were concerned about a second silt dam above the one which ruptured. There was talk of law suits, but some doubt about who could be sued for the damage.

Citizens seem to believe that the silt dams were part of an old Carrara operation, but the land is owned by an estate represented by a Mr. Burns of the Pottsville area.

Anger seemed to be simmering in the community over the fact that the silt continues to wash down from Middleport from the Kaska dam, about a mile up along the mountain, while an attempt is being made to divert it.

There were reports of state officials being in the area to survey the situation. Citizens were told information would be filed with Harrisburg, but they wondered when this would be or what remedial steps would be taken.

Mayor Jake Albrecht noted that there were complaints about the silt dam in the past, as residents feared the break was not capable of holding back the huge lake of slushy coal waste. However, apparently nothing was done about the matter.

Marks on buildings in Middleport indicate that the flood waters rose as high as five feet above street level. Residents were engaged in removing water-soaked furniture and other items to be disposed of.

Silt dams elsewhere were sources of concern. At Maple Hill, Reading authorities personnel reportedly were maintaining watch over the big dam on the hilltop just west of the village. A rupture of this dam would pose a serious threat to citizens in the nearby hollow as villages at Pottsville Hill, Sunbit, Higgins and Hunter Run.

The silt dam at Colliery also

Flood photos pages 12&13

Republican & Herald, June 24, 1972

## Overview: *Existing Conditions*

---

Currently in private ownership- 3 parties

---

***Potential consolidation by cooperating land owner (with reasonable assurances)***

---

Ongoing impacts – uncontrolled discharge of coal fines to trib of Schuylkill

---

Approximately 100,000 tons of material discharged to date (based on site condition, terrain)

---

Regular visible impact in mainstem Schuylkill

---

Significant volume of abandoned mine discharge

---

Human health and ecological risks

---

Opportunity posed by adjacent remining, cooperative landowner access and resources

# Objectives

Reduction of ongoing pollutant discharge into Schuylkill River (Sediment and AMD)

Stabilization of over 50 acres of abandoned minelands

Reduction of human health and ecological risk

Restoration of upland, wetland and aquatic habitats and associated recreational use.

# Key Stakeholders

SHA\*

SCCD\*

DEP\*

EPA

The Water  
Center at  
Penn\*

SAN\*

Trout  
Unlimited

Middleport  
Borough

Blythe  
Township

New Phila  
Borough

Kuperavage  
Enterprises\*

Michael Baker  
International\*

# Next Steps



Develop an Implementation Plan



Conduct a Detailed Site Assessment



Design the Solution(s)



Implement the Project(s)



Monitor the Progress

## Next Steps: *Immediate Actions*

- ❑ Hold Project Team Strategy Workshop
- ❑ Develop Implementation Plan Outline
- ❑ Address concerns of potential cooperating landowner



## Next Steps: *Potential Phases*

1. **Physical Access, Interim action to divert water from site**
2. **Removal of material, stabilization and regrading**
  - **Significant opportunities to capitalize on resources of cooperating landowner**
  - **Final grading should anticipate larger AMD treatment and habitat restoration goals**
3. **AMD treatment, habitat restoration**
  - **Site becomes a perfect spot to do treatment and restore habitat**
  - **Approach should be integrated so project is not left half-finished**

# Funding



## Ideas for Funding

- Planning
- Site Assessment
- Design
- Implementation

SRRF

In-Kind

Section  
319

OSMRE  
- WCAP

Growing  
Greener

Act 13

EPA  
Brownfields

# Open Discussion

