

RECOMPOSING MINED LANDS: LANDSCAPE AS ARENA FOR EDUCATION¹

by

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Abstract: This project is an hypothetical design using landscape architectural principles and processes for land use in the near distant future. The site is the Powell River Project 1,700 acres of surface-mined coal country in southwestern Virginia. In this design I challenge the boundaries of normative reclamation and make a case for using landscape architectural planning and design in reclamation decisions. The power of design in that it integrates the technical with the cultural and enables wider consideration for post-mining uses. My theses is that landscape can be the best teacher and influence of people's attitudes about their environment history and cultural conditions. To make informed decisions, a populace must understand these issues. In the design the Powell River Project landscape is a system composed of interrelated parts actively mined areas, reclaimed areas (pre- and post- 1997), the nascent Education Center within the Project, the Powell River watershed, and nearby towns. This whole extends well beyond the Project's bounds out into the Appalachian region of Virginia's southwestern counties. The project design recomposes the parts in a way that considers both near-term uses and long-term economic growth potential. Phase 1 is a clearly defined and strengthened Education center and expansion of the Center's regional presence. Phase 2 is the development of the Norton-Wise-Powell River Project Triangle" into a focus of regional cultural, economic and environmental affairs.

Additional Key Words: reclamation, planning, economic growth, strip-mining

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