

# == Abandoned Mine Land Program Fact Sheet ==

# EPCAMR

## **Background of Abandoned Mine Land Problems in PA:**

Coal mining began in Pennsylvania in the mid-1700's supporting the Colonial iron industry. It helped to fuel the Industrial Revolution in the US and Andrew Carnegie's steel mills in the 1800's. Today, it supplies 60 percent of the fuel for Pennsylvania's electric power generation. Pennsylvania is the fourth largest coal producer in the US, following Wyoming, West Virginia and Kentucky.

Two kinds of coal are mined in Pennsylvania - anthracite (hard coal) in the Northeast and bituminous (soft coal) in the Central and West. In 1995, 8.7 million tons of anthracite and 60.8 million tons of bituminous were mined in 878 mining operations employing 10,165 people. This was about 6.7 percent of US production. Economically, mining contributes about 1% of Pennsylvania's gross state economic product through \$1.5 billion of direct coal sales, a payroll of \$350 million, a support service industry payroll of \$200 million, and business tax revenues of \$1.5 million.

The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) was enacted in 1977, administered by U.S. Office of Surface Mining, Department of Interior. The Act established federal control over coal mining, coal-mine reclamation and environmental standards. Prior to SMCRA, there were wide variations between standards imposed by various states, but this law seemed to have come too late for Pennsylvania.

"Pre-Act" Coal mines, abandoned before 1977, have left a legacy of environmental degradation. Over 5,000 miles of Pennsylvania's 83,000 miles of streams are polluted by abandoned mine drainage (AMD). AMD is identified in the State Management Plan as the largest source of non-point source pollution in Pennsylvania. There are over 200,000 acres of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) statewide including 252 miles of unreclaimed and dangerous highwalls, over 1,200 open portals and vertical shafts, 38 underground mine fires, and thousands of acres of culm piles and subsidence prone land.

## **Organization and Goals of the EPCAMR:**

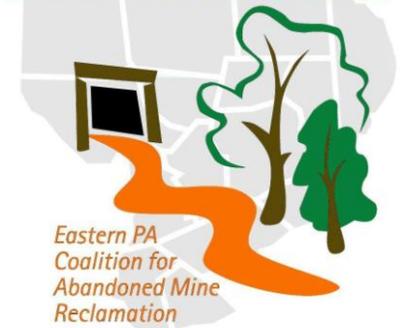
### **RECLAIM ABANDONED MINE LANDS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS TODAY, FOR A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT TOMORROW!**

The public, non-profit organization, known as the Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR) was organized in 1996 to promote and facilitate the reclamation and remediation of the land and water adversely affected by past mining practices in the Eastern Pennsylvania. The area served by the EPCAMR includes the entire Anthracite Region (Carbon, Columbia, Dauphin, Lackawanna, Lebanon, Luzerne, Montour, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties) and the Northeastern most reaches of the Bituminous Coal Fields (Bradford, Lycoming, Sullivan and Tioga). County Conservation Districts and the mining industry in Eastern PA primarily sponsor EPCAMR and appoint individuals representing both the public and private mining related organizations and environmental interest groups such as, watershed associations, regional non-profits, co-generation facilities, universities and other like-minded groups. The Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (WPCAMR) has operated a similar program since 1988 in the Western Bituminous Coal Fields of Pennsylvania.

EPCAMR's intent is to address those abandoned mine land (AML) problems on a watershed basis to improve the quality and aquatic habitat in waters of the Commonwealth. In addition, EPCAMR encourages the reclamation and redevelopment of land affected by past mining practices. This includes reducing hazards to health and safety, eliminating soil erosion, and returning land affected by past mining practices to productive use, thereby improving the economy of the region. EPCAMR and WPCAMR are integral component of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (PA DEP) Comprehensive Plan for Abandoned Mine Reclamation developed in 2000.

## **Funding:**

The EPCAMR is mostly funded by a non-competitive grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Water Act Section 319: Non-Point Source Pollution Program in coordination with the PA DEP Bureau of Watershed Management. The EPCAMR Board of Directors also maintains a pot of money for organizational support and special environmental projects collected by dues from supporting organizations and other fundraisers. The EPCAMR Board may also receive grants for AMD/AML related projects or sponsor grants on behalf of community groups, watershed groups conservation districts and local municipalities.

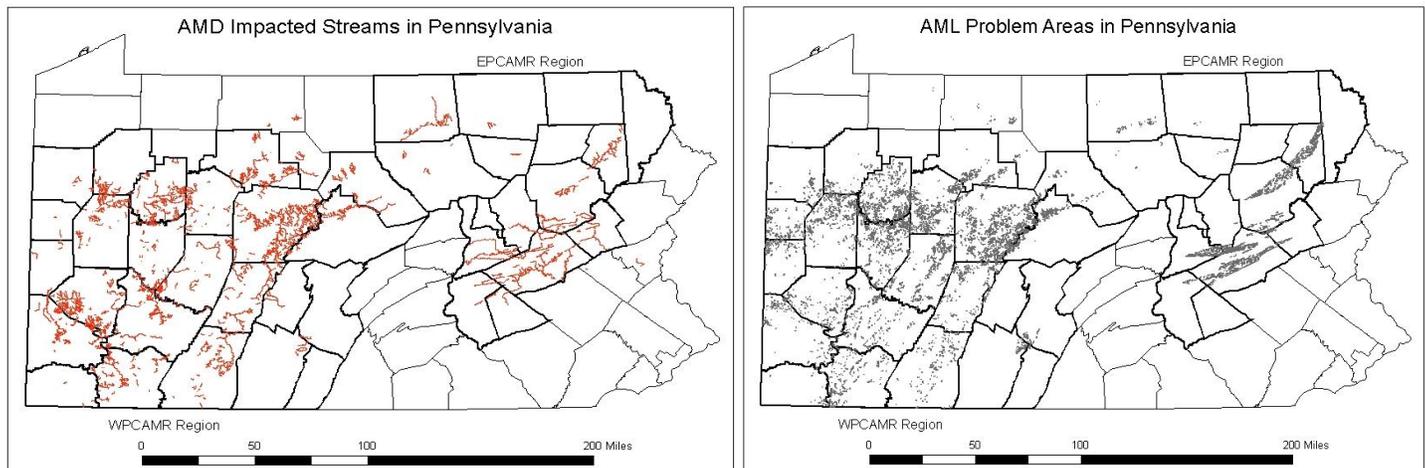


## Accomplishments:

It is often hard to come up with measurable environmental results from all of the reclamation and remediation efforts going on in PA since there is not uniform way of collecting data and reporting. However, EPCAMR and WPCAMR in cooperation with the PA DEP Bureau of Watershed Management and other partners that deal with AMD/AML issues have been tasked to come up with a method of data collection organized into a statewide clearinghouse of information under the Non-Point Source Liaison Workgroup Resource Extraction Committee. In the year 2002 alone, the Growing Greener program reports that 409 acres of AML were reclaimed and 88 AMD impacted streams were improved through passive treatment best management practices (BMP's) through local government, watershed groups, regional non-profits and universities that had received grants. Also in 2002, the coal mining industry was able to reclaim 1,444 acres of AML and 12 miles of streams through re-mining and reclamation requirements of SMCRA.

Since 1967, Pennsylvania and the federal government have invested \$635,477,480 to address abandoned mine problems in PA with over \$15 billion worth of reclamation yet to be completed. At the current rate of reclamation, it has been projected that 105 years would be required to get the job done. Since the passage of the federal SMCRA law reclamation efforts have:

- restored approximately 50 miles of stream channel
- eliminated 176 dangerous water impoundments or hazardous water bodies
- completed 181 replacement water supply projects
- restored 17,633 acres of formerly abandoned mine land
- eliminated in excess of 125 miles of dangerous highwalls
- sealed 921 portals and vertical openings
- extinguished mine fires on the surface of and beneath 815 acres of land
- reduced the subsidence risk to approximately 2,315 acres of land.
- constructed 5 active AMD treatment facilities that filter water and improve 65 miles of streams
- in 2002 alone, constructed several passive treatment systems to restore an estimated 127 miles of streams



For more information, please contact:

### Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR)

Robert Hughes, Executive Director  
101 South Main Street  
Ashley, PA 18706  
Phone: (570) 371-3523  
E-mail: [rhughes@epcamr.org](mailto:rhughes@epcamr.org)  
Website: [www.epcamr.org](http://www.epcamr.org) or  
[www.orangewaternetwork.org](http://www.orangewaternetwork.org)

Michael Hewitt, Program Manager  
101 South Main Street  
Ashley, PA 18706  
Phone: (570) 371-3522  
E-mail: [hardcoal@epcamr.org](mailto:hardcoal@epcamr.org)  
Website: [www.epcamr.org](http://www.epcamr.org) or  
[www.orangewaternetwork.org](http://www.orangewaternetwork.org)