

EPCAMR 2020 Annual (3rd Quarter) Board Meeting

Minutes – August 20th

Zoom Conference Call

11:00AM	Discussion and Correspondence	Robert, Mike,
Info. Portion of Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to new OSMRE VISTA, Kyle Argenziano, and board members Dr. Ken Klemow• Update on US House “Coal Package”: SMCRA Reauthorization (HR 4248), RECLAIM Act (HR 2156) & several other bills• Update on Coal Refuse Energy Tax Credit (HR 4735) Letters of Support	
12:00PM	Call to Order Business Meeting: Attendance - Joe Simons III, Christine Haldeman, Cristy Sweeney, Bernie McGurl, Ed Wytovich, Cheryl Brobst, Mike Korb (quorum), John Welsh, Alana Mauger, Andrea Nerozzi, Kenneth Klemow, Gary Leander, Bobby Hughes, Michael Hewitt, Denise Hernandez, Steve Cornia, Shawnese Taylor, Laura Rinehimer, Frank Sindaco, and Kyle Argenziano	President
Begin Business Portion of Meeting	Minutes from Last Mgt. (February 20th): File for Audit (Bernie, Joe and all)	Secretary
	Treasurer’s Report	Treasurer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See Balance Sheet, Open Sales Orders, Jobs List and Grant Prospects. “Flurry of grants since COVID 19 started, currently 19 active sources and 17 prospects” (Alana, Bernie, and all)• File for Audit: Checking & PA Invest Account Balances	
	AMR Program Reports (3 minutes each; PowerPoint Presentation) March 17 th office was closed due to COVID so we began to work from home on our laptops. Google Meet, Chat and Hangouts. Purchased external hard drives to take home for staff working on MSI program and video cameras for zoom calls. Returned on July 6 th with CDC guidelines and limited access to public.	Staff
	Committee Reports	Respective Comm. Chairs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AdHoc Communications: Report by Chair• Strategic Planning Committee: Updated notes have been incorporated into a draft document to be sent out to the Committee in the Fall 2020•	
	Old Business	President
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•	
Hotlinks in this document will take you to more info.	New Business	President
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motion to approve committee decision(s)• Moved to approve ARIPPA award to Earth Conservancy: flow monitoring. (Ed, Cheryl and all. Cristy abstains.)• Moved to adjourn business portion of the meeting (Joe, Ken and all)	
1:00PM	Next Meeting: <i>Tentatively</i> November 19 th , 2020 11:00AM (possibly virtual) Tentative for 2020: November 19 th , 2020	President
Info. Portion of Meeting	Grants, Conferences, Events, Workshops	Robert
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020 PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference: A Clear Future for Reclamation, June 24-25th 2020, Virtual Conference through Whoava.	

Watershed Reports

All

Stanley Cooper TU - July and August have been tough for trout streams, dry, hot water is low in pools. Found a wild trout in upper Schuylkill. Apply for a TU Forever Wild Grant to place a diversion well on a tributary to Bowmans Creek (Watertower Run). pH is 4. 20 tons of limestone piled near the stream. Whitefly hatch on the Susquehanna is in full swing.

Friends of the Nescopeck – we were shut down to a spell, but organized a zoom meeting to get running again, met a few times at the borough building (social distanced). All events were cancelled for this year. Continue to collect and analyze samples in Gary's lawn social distanced. Jeddo discharge overflowed the abandoned bridge and eroded the bridge. It was a massive flush after a rain event. We are moving the monitoring point downstream at the new bridge.

Catawissa Creek Restoration Assoc. – SRBC finished QHUP and submitted to BAMR. Waiting on comments. Centralia Graffiti highway covered in soil. Maybe Dr. Ken Klemow would help decide what trees could go on the shallow soil?

Oneida #3 is accessible, and Oneida #1 could be sampled if you ask Eagle Rock.

Lackawanna River Conservation Association – QHUP at old forge is on hold.

Potential project announcement soon. Upstream the LVC just acquired the former Lehigh Electric Superfund site (Former Old Forge Colliery) for a dollar. Also purchased Ruby's Wrecking in Scranton along the railroad grade. Von Stoch mine tunnel was backfilled but needs work on that property to stabilize. Lots of virtual activities we are trying to get in place. Dine out in Caluso's in Jessup tonight.

Scaled down version of RiverFest on Sept 26 including the Duck Race.

Wyoming Seminary - developing a climate and sustainability certificate, STEM certificate and ways for students to help EPCAMR since there is a big community service aspect of both. Artwork for the Hexagon Project related to mine drainage at several exhibits throughout the area. Students want to make a book about mine drainage for younger children. Video also in production that documented one of their field trips to mine drainage impacted streams in the area. Sent samples of Iron Oxide to a Buddhist Iconography artist that works with natural pigments in Wales and he showed them to an audience of international audience.

Alana – Iron Oxide and Art store on Etsy. All pieces are made with Iron Oxide and has donated \$140 back to EPCAMR since mid June.

ARIPPA – Looking to have Senator Casey introduce a bill to compliment HR4735. Might be working on relating it to Rare Earth Elements. Working on the AEPS program on the state level. Close the border to tier 2 resources to in state only to help the Waste Coal to Power Plants.

Schuylkill Headwaters – Completed the Reevesdale Project with a limestone up flow cell and settling/flushing pond. Porter Coal Silt AML Pilot site along the Schuylkill River floodplain and Bartram Trail connection. Silt was removed and will function better as lowland to help water spread out and mitigate floods. Behind Roller Roost along the West Branch of the Schuylkill the SHA was donated an AML coal bank. Intend to remove all the coal and reclaim back to a floodplain area similar to the Porter site.

Wilkes University – 2017 PEC, OSM and state collaborated on reforestation project on the Avondale Site near Plymouth to put in several thousand tree seedlings with a forest reclamation approach (FRA). Ken is on the ARRI task force for science and Wilkes was asked to long term study the tree survival and growth. Haven't been able to get out there this spring/summer, but hoping to get out there in the fall. Would like to display initial findings at PA AMR Conference. It is the most northerly FRA project for ARRI and we want to know if it works this far north.

AMR Program Staff Anticipated Work for Next Quarter (looking forward)
Text from Robert's PowerPoint

- EPCAMR was awarded a **\$6000 Coldwater Conservation Planning Grant** from the PA Council of Trout Unlimited and the [Coldwater Heritage Partnership](#) for **Mill Creek/Gardner Creek** in Luzerne County
- [Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation PA AML Pilot Project](#) has halted operations due to COVID-19 in the Spring 2020/Summer 2020 and the lack of the need for fuel stock at the Co-Gen Plants that are experiencing a downturn in the energy market; PA DEP and our partners have been in communication
- Submitted a **\$50,000 Chesapeake Bay Small Watersheds Technical Assistance Grant** to assess the coal-impacted watersheds along the eastern flank of the Southern Wyoming Valley (Sugar Notch Run, Warrior Run, Nanticoke Creek, and Newport Creek) to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF); Early September 2020 announcements
- EPCAMR was awarded a **\$5000 Chesapeake Bay Trust Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) Mini-Grant** to work with **30** 4th grade youth from the Wilkes-Barre Area School District in the Fall of 2020
- Postponed the [Appalachian Tree Planting Project](#) that was to be held in April in Centralia to plant **300** apple trees and are working on a rescheduled date in the Fall 2020, if the trees are available, or we may end of planting in the Spring 2021; Centralia's Graffiti Highway was closed and backfilled by Pagnotti Enterprises during COVID-19; Number of trees may change for the Spring 2021
- EPCAMR was awarded a **\$3000** grant from the National RECLAIM Working Group through the Blue Green Alliance to provide educational outreach to our coalfield communities and Op-Eds on the importance of the RECLAIM Act to reclaim and remediate AML sites and to encourage economic development on AML sites; [RECLAIM Act](#)
- Completed our survey for participation in the PA Council of Trout Unlimited's [Trout in the Classroom Program](#) for 2019-2020 and registered for participation in the 2020-2021 Program year; Released our **140** rainbow trout fingerlings in Harvey's Creek, Luzerne County
- Our PA AMR Conference Committee has decided to have our **2020 PA AMR Conference** "virtual" on October 28 & 29th, 2020 using the WHOVA App (www.treatminewater.com)
- EPCAMR officially signed up and became a partner with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's [Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership](#)
- EPCAMR was provided with an additional **\$130,000** to be amended to our existing **PA DEP Growing Greener Conservation District Mining-East 319 Grant** through June 30, 2024
- EPCAMR Executive Director applied for a **PPP Loan** in the open second round of funding and was award **\$52,585** from our bank, First National Bank that will be given as a loan forgiveness grant by the end of the year
- Brought on two Summer Watershed Interns through the [PA CareerLink's State Local Internship Program \(SLIP\)](#) under an 8-week paid grant; Levi Sunday- Lefkowitz (Trucksville, University of Rochester student, NY) and Kyle Argenziano (Mountain Top, Bloomsburg University student, PA) and [Marissa Loftus](#), Wilkes-Barre, Kutztown University, PA) as seasonal Summer volunteer intern; See [article](#)
- EPCAMR Completed the [Upper Toby Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan](#), Luzerne County, PA and posted it to our website and provided it to the Coldwater Heritage Partnership with links sent out to all municipalities and partners
- EPCAMR was awarded a **\$5000** grant from [The Luzerne Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee](#) to purchase a drone, obtain several FAA licenses and to create an educational outreach poster to highlight services that we can provide and utilize the drone for in our work
- EPCAMR was awarded a PA Dept. of Education **\$3000 STEAM in the STREAMS Environmental Education Program** with Wilkes-Barre Area 6th grade students in the Spring of 2021; See [article](#)
- EPCAMR was awarded a **\$13,000** grant from the **Foundation for PA Watersheds** to support the cost of an OSMRE AmeriCorps Stewards 1-year position for in partnership with Conservation Legacy, and to support EPCAMR's continued work on the PA AML Campaign; Kyle Argenziano chosen for the position on July 20, 2020; See [article](#)

Full Monthly Reports for all staff are [available online](#) for your review

- EPCAMR was awarded a **\$5000 NEPA COVID-19 Response Fund grant** from the **Scranton Area Foundation**; See [article](#)
- **EPCAMR was awarded a \$7000 Mini-Grant** from **Reclaiming Appalachia** through Appalachian Voices to work with Downstream Strategies, and AC Power on the development of a PA Site Selection Criteria GIS Tool for siting future solar installations on abandoned mine lands (reclaimed or unreclaimed); **\$3000** in in-kind services from Downstream Strategies will also be provided in the partnership grant; See [article](#)
- EPCAMR was awarded a **\$7500 grant** from the **PA American Water Trust for the Mill Creek Temperature Monitoring Project** to determine where any changes in the stream flow occur that might indicate AMD discharges as well as transitional areas for native brook trout populations in the Cold Water Fishery sections and the zones where the Warm Water Fishery sections begin
- Held an online fundraiser through [GiveGab](#), the Scranton Area Foundation, and [NEPA Gives](#) and generated **\$750** in donations
- Completed the field assessments, macros, and chemical monitoring for the Huntsville Creek and Lower Toby Creek watersheds and will begin drafting the Huntsville Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan throughout the late Summer, early Fall, and have a draft completed by early November for comment and a Final Report completed by December 31, 2020
- EPCAMR Staff are currently conducting field assessments and research work for the **Mill Creek/Gardner Creek** watershed in Luzerne County to continue to develop the next Coldwater Conservation Plan anticipated to be completed in October of 2021
- Conducting monthly monitoring of the **Askam AMD Maelstrom Oxidizer Treatment System** for the Earth Conservancy and the **Connell B & C AMD Tunnels** in the Loyalsock Creek watershed for the Sullivan County Conservation District and the Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association; Coordinating an AMD Tour with Sullivan County partners of the various treatment systems on September 2nd that is anticipated to take up most of the day
- Assisted several community groups in the Wilkes-Barre Area install and construct community gardens using our [Growboxxes](#) that were donated as a part of our Food by Youth Project with [ISI, Inc.](#), Groasis, and the Mental Insight Foundation (N. End's "[Our Community Garden](#), [New Roots](#), [Restored Church](#), [Mt. Zion Baptist Church's Living Water Youth Ministries](#), and King's College Community Garden)
- EPCAMR Executive Director has been a part of a **60-member** State-wide group of educators, both traditional teachers and environmental education professionals chosen by the PA Department of Education State Board of Education as a [Content Committee](#) member to update and develop new standards and content for Environment and Ecology, Science, Technology, and Engineering; Draft updated Standards will be provided to the PA Department of Education in the Fall 2020 for their consideration and review and to be vetted by other partners; See [article](#)
- Partnered with Justin Dula, Regional Coordinator for the [Office of Environmental Justice](#) and became a member of their Advisory Committee to develop an EJ Roundtable for the Scranton Area (Lackawanna Valley focus on EJ Communities) in October 2020 and presented to the [EJ Advisory Board](#) on Impacts to EJ Mining Communities on August 11th
- Continued conversations and communications with the US ACE on the [Water Resources Development Act of 2020](#) (WRDA) and provided them with an exhaustive list of examples of EPCAMR proposed and identified projects that could potentially fall under their [Section 510](#) and [206\(j\) Program](#) for habitat and ecosystem restoration funding consideration in the future
- EPCAMR continues to work with ARIPPA on gaining support and educating Congressional and Senatorial Staffers on the benefits of the Coal Refuse Tax Credit ([HR 4735](#))-[The Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act](#)
- EPCAMR virtually presented to [PA Wildlife Leadership Academy](#) at the request of Dr. Gary Alt
- EPCAMR is continuing to provide technical assistance to the Lackawanna County Conservation District and the Lackawanna Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited on the installation of a [DIY Mayfly](#) Monitoring Station on the Upper Lackawanna River
- EPCAMR Staff are working with John Welsh and Alana Mauger on testing out a 360-degree software ([3DVista](#)) in the late Summer at the [Askam AMD Maelstrom Oxidizer Treatment System](#) to enhance our virtual learning capabilities and educational programming to schools; [Walden School](#) example

- EPCAMR Staff introduced ourselves to My Project Appalachia, a group of students from [Rutgers University ENACTUS](#), who are interested in partnering with us on further discussing sustainable agricultural practices in coalfield communities and on abandoned mine lands
- EPCAMR coordinated in partnership with the Wilkes-Barre City Blight Committee, the New Roots Resource Recovery Support Center, the PA Game Commission, Ashley Borough Officials, PA American Water Charitable Trust, and **75** volunteers to lead a large cleanup effort at “The Sandy” and “The Millie” on Solomon Creek that removed an estimated 4.5 T of trash from the creek on [State Game Lands 207](#) and a participating private property owner along State Route 309, Ashley Borough, Luzerne County; See [EPCAMR Event Page](#) with photos and [article](#)
- Assisted the [Stanley Cooper Chapter of Trout Unlimited](#) in preparing a [Forever WILD mini-grant](#) to the PA Council of Trout Unlimited to fund the construction on a modified diversion well for “Hightower Run”, an acidified tributary of [Bowman’s Creek](#) (Wyoming & Luzerne Counties); Surveyed and sampled the site for placement and water quality with Dr. Joe Simons, III
- EPCAMR Staff created several [ArcGIS Online Story Maps](#)
- EPCAMR and the [PA AML Campaign](#) updated our [SMCRA Fact Sheet](#) and OSMRE posted an updated [Report](#) on the Status of the AML Trust Fund
- EPCAMR renewed our PEC/POWR General Liability Insurance for 2020-2021
- EPCAMR is waiting on final comments and approval from the US EPA Region III 319 Program on our \$72,454 PA DEP approved Growing Greener **Bear Creek AMD Treatment Survey, Conceptual Design and Preliminary O & M Plan** grant for the Bear Creek Valley Lykens AMD Water Level Tunnel discharges, Dauphin County, PA in partnership with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC)