

## Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation



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**April 2024 Progress Report**

**EPCAMR Conservation District Mining East Project**

### **Project Coordination**

#### **Swoyersville Harry E. AML Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project**

- Talked with *Riyad Barkawi* and *TJ Matinas*-PA DEP BAMR about requesting reallocation of funds from other line items in the budget for the continued hauling and excavation of waste culm materials from the site; Submitted a Progress Report update

#### **Penn State University National Science Foundation: A Socio-ecological Framework for Strengthening Local Infrastructure to Repurpose Fossil Fuel Assets for a Just Energy Transition Grant (*proposed*)**

- Provided *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR Program Manager with a copy of the DOE feasibility study proposal submitted by EPCAMR for \$150K on April 18<sup>th</sup> with PSU; The partnership that we put together would be working with PSU, Pagnotti Enterprises, and the Morea Mine Pool down in Schuylkill County; It's related to energy from the flooded strip pit for cooling and heating purposes

#### **NFWF Southern Wyoming Valley Small Watersheds Assessment Plan**

- Submitted an interim program report to *Emma Wigger* at NFWF; Informed NFWF that EPCAMR is currently finishing up writing the final plans for the project that will be complete by June 30, 2024

#### **Tetra Tech/ SCRA AMD Sampling**

- Provided *Mike Hewitt*-Program Manager, with copies of the lab results of March and April 2024 sampling data sent to EPCAMR from the PA DEP Labs for the sampling of several discharges and upstream and downstream monitoring points in the Shamokin Creek watershed for Tetra Tech (TT) and Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA); Sampled AMD in Shamokin Creek and dropped off the samples with *Brenna* from the Northumberland County Conservation District; Discussed with *Steve Moytka*, SCRA about future monitoring efforts beyond April 2024 and suggested looking at some other areas where additional discharge sources may be contributing to water quality issues above areas previously measured; Additional sampling will require the purchase of additional bottles and zip locks and coordination with PA DEP BAMR if they are willing to run the samples in the labs at no additional cost; There seems to be a few sampling stations on the old [ScarLift Report](#) for Shamokin Creek upstream of Excelsior; Some of

the areas in the Locust Creek watershed are more than likely on a geological divide or the deep mining allowed for the water to either go towards Centralia and the Centralia AMD Tunnel along Big Mine Run Road into Mahanoy Creek, the Douteyville Tunnel AMD, as well as the Locust Gap AMD Tunnel that also drains to the Mahanoy Creek; They are all over the hill once you get into Locust Gap on Locust Creek; EPCAMR believes that surface water stream contributions of Locust Creek to the Shamokin Creek once you get into the former Alaska Colliery area as it comes to the confluence with the N. Branch Shamokin before flowing west towards the former Reliance and Excelsior/Corbin Colliery areas

### **Loyalsock Creek AMD Sampling and Tour for Sullivan County Conservation District**

- Sampled several AMD treatment systems and upstream and downstream locations within the Loyalsock Creek watershed with *Jolie Coates*, Watershed Specialist for the Sullivan County Conservation District; Provided her additional details about each of the treatment systems and our upstream and downstream monitoring locations

### **EPCAMR/WPCAMR/SRI Survey of Community Watershed Organizations on AMD/AML**

- *Missy Reckner*-[Brandywine Conservancy](#), provided some input on the format of the survey and clarifications before our completing the final survey questionnaire; Reviewed the Zoom tools that will be used during the webinar for icebreakers; Participated in the April 10<sup>th</sup> evening webinar to give an overview of the need for the survey and participation from the community watershed organizations and Conservation Districts; We all began reviewing the raw data that was collected from the webinar following the event; Began following up with watershed groups and Conservation Districts to remind them to complete the survey; Cliff and the EPCAMR Executive Director presented before the POWR Board on the status of the project through a Zoom meeting in late April

### **Paddy Run/Rocky Run/Little Shickshinny Creek Watershed Assessment-American Water Charitable Foundation**

- EPCAMR was informed that we were awarded an **\$18K** grant to conduct a watershed assessment of several tributaries to the Susquehanna River in the lower Wyoming Valley in the area of the former abandoned Stackhouse Colliery on State Game Lands 250 and 55

### **Technical Assistance**

- *Jonathan Shears*, [Living Carbon](#), a reforestation company that specializes in restoring mine lands is looking to pay landowners to plant trees on their property through a lease structure where the landowner retains full ownership and receives a check every year as the trees grow and sequester carbon; EPCAMR provided him with regional contacts of organizations and landowners that he could follow up with and suggested that he exhibit and sponsor at our PA AMR Conference to reach the larger watershed community
- EPCAMR was requested to assist with updating an outreach and membership brochure for the [Huber Breaker Preservation Society](#) by *Don Kane, Jr.*; EPCAMR originally created the file years ago and the Board members have since changed and the HBPS wanted to update the brochure with new information and contacts; EPCAMR Executive Director made the edits and changes in Microsoft Publisher and provided the new file to Don
- *Tom Kane*, a Coal Township resident and adult student at Bloomsburg U. is looking for water quality data from the Shamokin Creek watershed for a Technical Leadership Capstone Course project he's working on; The project itself is hypothetical, but the data collected is not; He has to

put the project together including an implementation strategy and a budget to present to an Advisory Board of successful leaders in business and industry at the end of his semester; His idea is to put a micro-hydroelectric power generation station on Shamokin Creek; The station would be designed around the water condition and be adaptable for a wide range of water levels; His team's goal is to put this project together and to be able to leverage a significant portion of the revenue generated from selling the power to help the Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance facilitate water treatment efforts; He requested data from the Northumberland County Conservation District and Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance from around the Tharptown area; He was looking for flow data from any point from the Cameron Bridge to where it enters the Susquehanna.; EPCAMR provided suggestions of other data sources where some of the information he's looking for could be found

- EPCAMR went around and sampled some suspected AMD that had surfaced from old abandoned monitoring boreholes, air shafts, and boring casings throughout the Wyoming Valley following an incident where a mine subsidence opened up in Toby Creek in Luzerne, PA swallowing the entire creek for nearly 30 hours; Water had entered the larger mine pool complex beneath the Wyoming Valley; EPCAMR assisted PA DEP BAMR, the Luzerne Conservation District, Forty-Fort Borough, Swoyersville Borough, Kingston Borough, and Wilkes-Barre City, the PA DEP, and WVSA, in obtaining flows upstream of the incident and downstream on Toby Creek and provided them with water quality that we had collected at several locations; EPCAMR requested the ability to reference work we did years ago with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) on the mine pools for the Wyoming Valley and were granted permission to share the data and utilize it for research purposes
- Provided *Dan Mayer*-Policy and Advocacy Coordinator and *Cody Sullivan*-Associate Director of Communications for the PA/DE Chapter of the [Nature Conservancy](#) a contact point from Teichos Energy on the Audenreid Solar on abandoned mine lands project in Luzerne County

## **Education & Outreach**

- Participated in 4 weekly PA AML Campaign calls
- Emceed a press event with the Earth Conservancy in the Nanticoke Creek watershed at the request of Senator Casey's Office where the PA DEP joined everyone to make a funding announcement for a stream restoration project on Nanticoke Creek; The event was covered by several media outlets, including the [Times-Leader](#)
- EPCAMR supported the [Coal Cleanup Taxpayer Protection Act](#), legislation that would close loopholes currently abused by coal mining corporations at the expense of American taxpayers and our environment; Specifically, the bill would end self-bonding for coal mine reclamation liabilities while ensuring the integrity of existing reclamation bonds by requiring supplemental financial data that will not leave taxpayers bearing the burden of corporate environmental negligence; Congressman *Cartwright* re-introduced a substantively identical version of the bill
- Communicated with *Shaunna Barnhart*, Bucknell U. Center for Sustainability & the Environment to coordinate the AMD Educational Presentation and AMD Tie Dye Workshop with the entire Shamokin Creek Elementary 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class; Sent along a copy of the [AMD Avengers vs Pollution Posse Activity Book from](#) EPCAMR for the students; EPCAMR brought down the iron oxide pigment for the t-shirts; SCRA donated the t-shirts for the students and the teachers; Conducted the AMD Educational Program with SRCA support to **48** students that had a great time learning about AMD and local environmental projects and ways that their families and them

can help out in their community as volunteers for litter cleanups and tree plantings; EPCAMR Executive Director conducted the presentation and workshop and brought the two trout puppets along for photos; The Daily News Item published a great [article](#) on the program

- *Steve Chrimer*, Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance reached out to EPCAMR to inform us that he had read the Cornell U. Press book called [Grassroots to Global-Broader Impacts of Civic Ecology](#), particularly the chapter co-authored by the EPCAMR Executive Director; and complimented the insights and inspiration he found in the book as he identified with the story, anecdotes, and experiences growing up in the coalfields
- Followed up with *Vickie Skye-May*, to help her network with some environmental organizations in Northeastern PA; She has been living and working in British Columbia for many years for the Environmental Ministry in British Columbia and currently is working for Active Earth Engineering headquartered in Burnaby, BC; EPCAMR Executive Director met her daughter *Shannon*, who is a teacher at Hazelton MMI Prep School at the Luzerne Conservation District EnviroThon that asked if we would help her learn about some groups working on abandoned mines and water quality work in our region
- Virginia Democratic Rep. *Don Beyer* unveiled legislation that would impose strict deadlines for cleaning up surface coal mines that can leach toxic water containing heavy metals into streams, rivers and drinking water sources; *Beyer's* bill, the [Stream Protection and Vegetation Restoration Act](#), would amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, or SMCRA, to increase monitoring of ground and surface waters surrounding coal mine operations

### **Luzerne Conservation District EnviroThon**

- Attended the Study Day at Camp Kresge to help the Conservation District with the sustainable renewable energy topic to go over the anticipated test questions with the students from the school district teams around Luzerne County; Attended the Luzerne County EnviroThon on the 23<sup>rd</sup> to assist the Luzerne Conservation District as a community partner
- Provided *Jay Conroy*, [CEP Renewables](#) with contact information for WPCAMR, PA Anthracite Council, and the PA Coal Association; Provided him with a link to the PA AMR Conference website in case they are interested in joining us for the PA AMR Conference in the Fall 2024; Convened a conference call with *Jay* and his colleagues
- EPCAMR Executive Director exhibited at [NEPA Junior Achievement's](#) Inspire Career & STEM Exploration Event on April 17<sup>th</sup> at Mohegan Sun where over 2600 students over a 2 day period from 20 high schools in the region participated to learn about various career paths, skills, and environmental organizations and work that is going on in Northeastern PA
- EPCAMR Executive Director completed a vendor form to exhibit at the [Western Pocono Chapter Trout Unlimited](#) TroutFest 2024 in White Haven at the White Haven Museum along the Lehigh River on June 1<sup>st</sup> to conduct some outreach for the public on AMD in the Upper Lehigh River
- EPCAMR Executive Director interviewed by *Ad Crable*-[Chesapeake Bay Journal](#), who was writing a story about the proposed [Mineral Basin Solar](#) project that Department of Energy (DOE) just announced it would give \$90 million to for the state's largest solar project on 2,700 acres of active and abandoned coal mine lands in Clearfield Count; It has an environmental justice component to it and commitments to train the local workforce; EPCAMR provided Ad with some links and resources to work that we've been doing in the last year to advocate for solar development on abandoned and previously mined lands

- Informed *Todd Watne*, Sales Associate with [Drone Legends](#), that EPCAMR will be looking to submit a grant proposal in the Fall round to the Foundation for PA Watersheds to support the environmental education program we're proposing to implement in one of the underserved coalfield community school districts in the Wilkes-Barre Area that are also located in an environmental justice community
- EPCAMR met with *Matt Stutzman* and *Michael Duus*, with the [North American Land Trust](#) on April 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss future partnership opportunities on grants and projects on abandoned mine lands and AMD projects
- Participated in a conference call with *Joe Pizarchik* to discuss abandoned mine land reclamation funding opportunities
- Received the infographics from Dr. Margarita Rose's King's College Environmental Economics Class on rare earth elements that EPCAMR will use to create some social media posts to educate our viewers on a number of rare earth elements the students chose to write up and research on their uses in the open market as a commodity

### **Keep PA Beautiful Open Your Eyes to Litter Educational Booklets**

- Informed [Brady Mock](#), graphics artist and illustrator for the booklets that as soon as our full conversion over to Quickbooks online EPCAMR would be compiling *Laura's* and *Denise's* hours for a reimbursement upon the completion of the Book 2 work and translation to Spanish; EPCAMR will be including his invoice along with EPCAMR's for the completion of the second book; EPCAMR made a new contact thanks to *Megan Boone Valkenburg*-Community Engagement Manager-[United Way of the Wyoming Valley](#), a long-time colleague of EPCAMR's with *Martin Lacayo*, MS-Director of Hispanic Outreach and Student Services at King's College, Wilkes-Barre for future translation needs

## **Conferences, Training, Webinars, Tours, Exhibits, & Workshops**

### **26<sup>th</sup> PA AMR Conference Planning for 2024**

- Talked with *David Olexson*-Regional Business Manager from [Profile Products](#) after finding out more about his company and services suggested that he become an exhibitor or sponsor of the PA AMR Conference in the Fall of 2024 to introduce his products and services to the watershed and Conservation District community across PA working on abandoned mines and AMD watershed restoration; Andy McAllister-WPCAMR updated the PA AMR Conference Committee that he was continuing to work on our contract agreement with the Ramada Conference Center in State College with the new Banquet Manager; U.S. DOE Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations to provide a plenary presentation on its on Clean Energy Demonstration Program on Current and Former Mine Land (CEML) confirmed by *Cristy Sweeney*; PA AMR Conference Planning call held on April 30<sup>th</sup>

### **2024 International Mine Water Association Congress Organizing Committee Conference and W. VA AMD Task Force Symposium on April 21<sup>st</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> 2024**

- Attended the Conference and Symposium to learn more on mine pool mapping, geothermal use of mine pool water, rare earth element research and monitoring, and to network with the international mine water community and talk with them about EPCAMR's work throughout PA; Provided some iron oxide pigment to *Amanda Pitzer*, Executive Director for the [Friends of the Cheat](#), WV for their upcoming [Cheat River Festival](#) in May 2024

## **AMD Passive Treatment Course Training with the OSMRE for Conservation Districts and Community Watershed Organizations Fall of 2024 (planned)**

- EPCAMR is working with WPCAMR and OSMRE to plan on coordinating another 3-day AMD Passive Treatment Training Course in State College in the Fall 2024 before our State-wide Conference on Abandoned Mine Reclamation; Convened a call to discuss the logistics and planning for which counties and organizations to target for the training due to a max of 24 attendees will be available; WPCAMR has already applied for funding through the Foundation for PA Watersheds to support the training and scholarships for the attendees; Provided Anne Daymut-WPCAMR with the names of the targeted audience that EPCAMR reached out to for the planned course training

## **AMD Tour in the Wyoming Valley with El Tiempo Latino News from Washington DC**

- EPCAMR Executive Director provided an AMD Tour of the Wyoming Valley to El Tiempo Latino News from Washington DC as a Climate Change Story throughout the Nanticoke Creek watershed to explain stream loss, stream restoration, land reclamation, AMD treatment, and mine pools; Drone footage was filmed and an interview was provided at several spots around the watershed that will be incorporated into a short video to be put online in May 2024

## **[PROP 2024 Conference in Bethlehem on July 24-26<sup>th</sup>](#)**

- EPCAMR Executive Director was requested to speak on the continued work on the Swoyersville AMLER Reclamation Project on July 25<sup>th</sup>; Completed the registration process with the help of *Doug Orner*, Program Manager for PROP

## **Environmental Literacy Partnership (ELP) with PA DCNR the Luzerne Intermediate Unit #18 (LIU#18) Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) Workshop to include AMD**

- Continued working with *Rich Mackrell*-Assistant Director of STEM and Innovative Practices- LIU #18, *Diane Madl*-Environmental Education Specialist- PA DCNR Bureau of State Parks- Nescopeck State Park, and *Laura Rinehimer*-EPCAMR Environmental Education Coordinator, to plan an Environmental Literacy Project a teacher training for 3 days for up to 20 teachers in the [LIU #18 region](#); *Rich* will be ordering the supplies for everyone for field testing of AMD; Provided *Rich* with a copy of [EPCAMR's Field Binder for Monitoring](#) as a reference for the teachers; EPCAMR worked on the outline for the schedule of the program for the anticipated workshop day on May 28<sup>th</sup> hosted by EPCAMR; Met with *Diane Madl*, at Nescopeck State Park to discuss project; *Rich* provided EPCAMR with an Educational Code for FBI Fingerprinting through IndentoGo

## **EPCAMR Program Administration**

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts in QuickBooks; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for April 2024 with Highmark and United Concordia; Paid EC the rent; Made EPCAMR deposits to FNB
- EPCAMR Executive Director completed the [Act 126 Training](#) online through the [PA Department of Education's Standard Align System](#) (SAS)
- Worked on bookkeeping and accounting with *Marianne Beane*, Ignite Business Services at the EPCAMR Office in preparation for May EPCAMR Board Meeting
- Provided *Trish Attardo*, PA DEP 319 Program with our anticipated grant closeout dates for the 319 grant through June 30, 2024 and the Bear Creek 319 grant
- EPCAMR renewed our [POWR General Liability Insurance](#) and membership for 2024-2025 and dropped off the check to the POWR Office in Dallas in the Back Mountain
- Completed a Unemployment Compensation SIDES separation form for a former EPCAMR employee
- Completed the April 2024 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike* to upload to the website