



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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April 2021 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Healing the Scars - The Mining Legacy in Northern Appalachia Film Project with ISI

- ISI posted an appreciation [post](#) for the work that we did in Centralia; EPCAMR updated the webpage for the [Appalachian Tree Planting Project](#) following the event
- The event was amazing and completely successful few days that lead to the culmination event on Saturday April 17th; We spent both Saturday and Sunday in town wrapping up loose ends and gathering our equipment and supplies and removing the caution tape; Laura did a tremendous job of leading the day and organizing the event while talking the volunteers through the demonstration of the planting of the apple saplings in the morning while the Executive Director gave everyone the backstory and reason for the big event
- All of our Staff chipped in and made the event run smoothly; We estimated **100** volunteers spent the day with us; We were able to plant **110** trees and give away more than **190** more for the Wyoming Valley give away the follow weekend on April 24th; We had them sign a "In Memory of" document so we knew who they planted their tree in honor of; The canvas art project went well too; The media coverage was great and all over the place Joe's interviews were very positive and the feedback we heard from his crew was amazing; Talked with *Nick Poppy* from [Inside Edition](#), who has a YOUTube channel with **9.02** Million subscribers and wants to do a follow up interview with EPCAMR once the planting is completed and wrapped up; The press was unbelievable.
- [Group Plants 100 Trees in Centralia Gives Away 250 More](#)
- [Volunteers Plant Trees in Centralia](#)
- [Volunteers Beautify Centralia with Apple Trees and Wildflowers](#)
- [Apple Tree Planting Effort in Centralia](#)
- [Crews Prepare Centralia to Plant 250 Apple Trees](#)
- [EPCAMR Volunteers to Plant Trees in Mine Scarred Centralia](#)
- [EPCAMR Volunteers Plant Trees in Centralia](#)
- [Centralia Apple Trees Butterflies Pennsylvania](#)
- [Apple Tree Planting in Centralia is Part of Larger Environmental Effort](#)

- EPCAMR dedicated three of the trees ..one to *S. Loren Cole*, one to *Pieter Hoff*, and one to *Louise C. Dunlap*, on Sunday when we were down there alone following the planting; Out of the 7 residents of Centralia, 5 of them helped on Saturday and all of them were provided trees that they planted; That is a majority of the residents of Centralia!; Everyone that I talked to that were former residents and existing ones really appreciated our efforts. I am sure Laura heard the same thing from the volunteers and attendees
- The comments on our social media pages were overwhelmingly positive and supportive except for those who were proponents of the Graffiti Highway, illegal trespassing, vandalism, and felt that the trees that we were planting were somehow going to be creating toxic apples, which is the furthest from the truth; We did the soil tests and there are existing apple trees that are decades old on some of the parcels that we planted on. We ended up with 5 plots; We chose not to plant in some areas due to root obstruction from mother trees on those lots that spread out into areas we initially thought were suitable so that reduced our total number of trees planted and because of the need for sunlight; We also abandoned some holes and filled them and moved on when we encountered lots of rock and fill material that wouldn't have been suitable areas to plant on some of the plots; We stayed well away from the roads; They were all caged up temporarily with chicken wire and stakes so that the main trunks can reach high and get above the browse line in case of deer.
- EPCAMR received a lot of positive comments on the project. Here are a few of them:
 - State Program Contact for Centralia with the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation had three words to say... "WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL! "

This quote was from the Mother I talked about in my post...Linda, who lost her son years ago...who loved Centralia and was a young man; She even sent us a \$50 donation.

- Bobby, I hardly know where to begin. I am just overwhelmed by your kindness, dedication, and all of the hard work of you and your work team to make Centralia and our world a better place, not just for ourselves, but for future generations to come. My son, *Nathan Hundertmark*, loved that area and would have wanted to have been an active participant in the cleanup and planting efforts if he were still with us. Thank you so much for the tree dedicated in his name. We are very appreciative for everything that you have done.

~Gary, Linda, and Meg Hundertmark

- Many people dedicated the tree they planted to a loved one who had passed. The EPCAMR Executive Director asked all volunteers to pause for 30 seconds of silence to honor the moment of their loved ones and for EPCAMR to honor two very important supporters and financial funders of our project, *S. Loren Cole*, and *Pieter Hoff*, who we had just found out had passed away recently, who had invented the Growboxx and truly enjoyed working with us as his Northern Appalachian project partner, in addition to

Columbia-South America, and Ethiopia. The EPCAMR Executive Director also made a promise to dedicate one of the plantings to a Mother who continues to mourn the loss of her young 21-year-old son who loved adventuring to Centralia and had written a song about his adventures that she shared with us earlier in the week; She was from Clintonville, PA in Western PA, and could not make the event, but instead made a donation to it in her son Nathan's honor; The least we could do was immediately send her the picture of the planted apple sapling in the Growboxx where we personally wrote a dedication to him for her;

- After all these years of illegal dump site cleanups and having removed **53.5** Tons of trash, **575** tires, **475** volunteers, and over **35** hours of volunteer cleanups, **~15,000** spray cans removed, we finally reached the point where a beautification and tree planting project could take place. The event had the added benefit of carbon sequestration and understory diversity of tree and shrub species, along with wildflower mix as pollinator plants for the bees and the butterflies to do Mother Nature's work
- We can't thank enough, the estimated **100** volunteers who came out today and made a difference in Centralia; They did the dirty work and left their new legacy; This side of town and the areas where we planted were well away from the active fire face and zone that was on the opposite end of town; Everyone was safe and no one got hurt in any way; The former Graffiti Highway was not a part of this effort at all, although most media outlets used stock photos of the Highway that most people would recognize to that only led to some confusion and lots of assumptions in social media;
- Other EPCAMR communities have been calling our name for more restoration, reclamation, and remediation work throughout the region; We're very proud and honored to have been able to do what our small Staff have done over the years in Centralia; We've been able to make a positive difference against all odds; We've also made many new friends and gained the support of many new partners and local businesses in the area; We are grateful for their continued support

OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Stewards Individual Placement Program (SIPP)

- Provided Kyle with *Yvonne Besvold's* contact information for Patagonia for him to reach out to her about future donations and grant opportunities
- Signed off on Kyle's Quarterly Report Submission
- Worked with Kyle on making edits to a new educational [resource guide](#) for EPCAMR to our volunteers and the general public
- Reviewed Kyle's draft EPCAMR Story Map of projects and made comments and edits
- Kyle provided information on the costs to set up a cornhole tournament for a possible future EPCAMR fundraiser

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Worked with *Denise* to create a revised Quickbooks Invoice for March and April 2021 to submit to the State; *Gerard Schmidt*, Project Officer provided EPCAMR with an updated template to use for reimbursements; EPCAMR submitted two detailed narrative reports to catch the project up from the pandemic through April 2021 since there was little activity and an extension requested and approved

Mine Subsidence Insurance Mapping Program

- Worked with Mike to update and revise the job description for another part-time GIS position under the new grant amendment
- One of our scanners needed attention and was being temperamental until a repair was made by *Mike* after some parts were ordered and delivered; A delay in scanning maps occurred because the remaining maps are wide and large and don't scan through the smaller scanner

Luzerne/Lackawanna/Susquehanna County Action Plan (CAP)

- Provided LDG some water quality data that was collected on **12/20** AMD discharges in the Luzerne County area; We still need to hit **8** Lower Luzerne County sites in the Nescopeck Watershed and all of Lackawanna County AMD sites; There are no AMD discharges in Susquehanna County that we know of, but it has some mine lands and mine pools that we could suggest some of the stormwater runoff issues and stream restoration ideas we develop with Luzerne and Lackawanna Plans; Media outreach began to invite participants to become active stakeholders in the plan development; Sampled several discharges and reported them back to *Terry Ostrowski*, Earth Conservancy and to *Jen Demchalk* for review
- Participated in both the Lackawanna and Luzerne County virtual stakeholders meetings and provided necessary input as necessary

Southern Wyoming Valley NFWF Small Watershed Grant Program

- Provided *Andrew Young*, Project Officer our signed approved agreement to final approval
- Checked with *Stephanie Heidbreder*, NFWF on our submitted and completed QAPP that we are waiting for an approval on to collect data in the southern Wyoming Valley watersheds

Technical Assistance

- Received additional information from *Don Kane Jr.*-Huber Breaker Preservation Society to include in the draft Keystone Grant Application for the kiosks and pole building over the Wanamie Lokie in the Ashley Borough Huber Breaker Miner's Memorial Park; Informed *Don* and *Gerry Maldonado*, Ashley Borough Councilman that there were a lot of questions in the application process and files that needed to be provided by the Borough for the application that could not be answered by EPCAMR; EPCAMR was having difficulty staying signed in to the portal that kept timing out and not allowing access back in to the site; EPCAMR suggested that the Borough Secretary try and get in and add any information that she could to the application process that was provided by EPCAMR; They only have a Friday window to enter information and it conflicts with existing workload of EPCAMR; EPCAMR provided all the information that was compiled for the application and narrative and budget quotes for submission

- EPCAMR Executive Director provided historic mine maps of the Trevorton area to first responders from Mt. Carmel and Zerbe Township, who were working to put out a mine fire that started up with illegal trash and tires being thrown into a deep vertical crop fall opening; The area is owned by Northumberland County and leased to Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area ([AOAA](#)) for an ATV park; *Mike* also found a Coal Investigative Series Map (C-Series Map) for the area; There are multiple colors due to the number of different veins on the map and they even show the older Colliery names from the area of the former mining companies. Hopefully, they might help; Oftentimes, you can find an elevation on these maps too that indicates the depth of the veins; They are from the [US Geological Survey](#). (1887); EPCAMR Staff reached out to Legislative Staffer, *Kevin O'Keefe*, from Rep. *Fred Keller's* Office, to let him know of the fire and situation to stress the importance of gaining his support for the Reauthorization of Abandoned Mine Lands that are in his District; Here are articles from [Penn Live](#) and the [Shenandoah Sentinel](#); EPCAMR also discussed our recent AMD sampling in the Lycoming Creek watershed within his District in Lycoming County where we had provided water quality technical assistance to the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Ralston Borough, McIntyre Township] *Kevin* connected us with *Jeanne Keuhl*, from Rep. *Keller's* Office who will handle environmental issues of concern
- Provided *TJ Matinas*, P.E., Mining Engineer- PA DEP BAMR with information on abandoned mine land water-filled features within the Black Creek Watershed on the Mocanaqua Tract of the Pinchot State Forest outside of Lee; EPCAMR heard from Earth Conservancy's retired engineer, that the area was dug out to put a fire out in the area; The Black Creek is below the fill and unconsolidated material at a depth of nearly 80' and is saturated in the valley fill material up to the surface of the ground manifesting itself as flooded stripping ponds, but they are not treatment systems at this time; Provided him with our reference report from the USGS- We referenced the [USGS Black Creek Report \(1968\)](#)
- Provided *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District Watershed Specialist with information, data, and an AMD Treat report on the Derringer AMD Tunnel and on the Black Creek Watershed in lower Luzerne County and contact with the SRBC for electroshocking data from July 2020 that they collected to be put into the Luzerne County Tier 3 Correction Action Plan (CAP) Watershed Implementation Plan as a part of the Chesapeake Bay Restoration; We discussed the impacts of the Derringer and Gowen Tunnel AMD discharges on the Black Creek; Lots of aeration coming from the Gowen discharge and cold water; *Thomas Kehler*, US FWS, in Lamar, PA thinks this area could be great for a Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture project
- Provided *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District with an EPCAMR Letter of Support for his NFWF grant on the E. Fork of Harveys Creek watershed and circulated it among the EPCAMR Staff
- Toured the McIntyre WILDS area in Lycoming County with Susquehanna Chapter TU's *Walt Nicholson* and *Al Boyer*, McIntyre Township Supervisor and *Mike* to sample AMD discharges along several Lycoming Creek tributaries like Red Run, Dutchman's Run and other areas impacted by AMD and obtain flows

ACPower Solar Power on Reclaimed AML Landowner Outreach

- Zoom call with ACPower representatives and several EPCAMR Staff to discuss landowner outreach assistance in the Anthracite Region to identified landowners of reclaimed abandoned mine lands that have great potential for solar power development and follow up communications; Staff will run some RAMLIS Reports to provide details to ACPower that may be available in the attribute tables for various Problem Areas identified; A great example of work being done on abandoned mine lands in Kentucky was featured in an [article](#) that EPCAMR passed along to ACPower
- Followed up with *Neil Fowler*, State Program Coordinator for the Appalachian Regional Commission, on EPCAMR's Letter of Intent to apply for an ARC POWER grant to conduct a feasibility study on an isolated mine pool area around the McAdoo Industrial Park for Little Leaf, in partnership with Tetra-Tech and CAN-DO Development Corporation; Continued working on the draft application and budget with *Janet Carpenter* from Little Leaf, and *Mike Korb* from Tetra-Tech via e-mail and Zoom meetings; Requested and received letters of support for the project from both Congressman *Cartwright* and *Meuser*
- *Randy Perry*, Northeast Surveyors asked if EPCAMR could scan a few 40" wide mine maps for him; EPCAMR agreed and is waiting for a time he is available to come to the Office

Education & Outreach

- Worked with *Stephanie Wein*, [PennEnvironment](#)-Clean Water & Conservation Advocate, Philadelphia, who will be putting out a letter in support of Reauthorization and RECLAIM and asked if EPCAMR would like to sign on to the letter; Provided her with details from our PA AML Campaign for the letter, our logo, and agreed to sign on so that PennEnvironment can encourage their partners around the State to sign on if they are in previously mining impacted communities
- At the request of *Rachael Vresolovic*, [PennEnvironment](#), EPCAMR signed on to an Energy Efficiency Coalition letter showing our support for energy efficiency and water conservation standards for appliances sold in Pennsylvania; A new bill in the PA House, [HB1161](#), would make it harder to implement policies that Pennsylvania needs to participate in the ever growing solar energy market; Solar companies across the state are looking to show state legislators that this solar bill does not support the growth of clean, solar energy across the State; *Liz Robinson*, Executive Director for the [Philadelphia Solar Energy Association](#) is sending a separate sign on letter to State legislators asking them to vote NO on HB1161 and EPCAMR signed on to it as well and our logo was included
- *Jennifer Sheeran*, Producer, for [Expedition X-Discovery Channel](#), hosted by Josh Gates, called EPCAMR to request information on Centralia; Provided her with contact information for her to follow up with State agencies, Pagnotti Enterprises, and County officials; Informed her of the work that EPCAMR has completed in the Borough over the years, including the recent apple tree planting; Invited her for a tour of the Coal Region

- *Jen Quinn*, Legislative Director for PA Sierra Club, introduced EPCAMR to *Dan Taylor*, who is the new Appalachian Regional Field Organizer for Blue Green Alliance, covering PA, WV, and VA; *Dan* was looking to with folks on a wide variety of issues, including abandoned mine reclamation and economic redevelopment; EPCAMR Executive Director followed up with a conference call with Dan and caught him up to speed on our work with local union leaders in the area who we were talking with about supporting the Reauthorization of the AML Trust Fund and the RECLAIM Act
- Interviewed at the Shoal Center, Wilkes-Barre, by *Scarlett H. Spager*, Editor of King's College's *The Crown* on the topic of AMD and the Old Forge Borehole
- Worked on and completed a **\$2000** PA American Water grant on Eastern Brook Trout and Waterfowl Education and Outreach that was submitted for consideration
- Continued communications with *Austin Counts*, New Economy Field Coordinator, Appalachian Voices on the coordination of the RECLAIM Town Hall virtual online meeting; Participated in the RECLAIM Town Hall Meeting virtually
- *Laura* was notified that EPCAMR's video submission was selected as 1/15 grant applicants to be considered for future funding from the Luzerne Foundation and participated in a video forum on 4-20-21
- Provided EPCAMR's full testimony and responses to questions by members of the House Natural Resources Committee to the National RECLAIM Working Group; *Trey Pollard*, provided EPCAMR with a clipped [video](#) featuring the EPCAMR Executive Director and Rural Action on RECLAIM and Reauthorization to use to encourage our constituents to contact their legislators as a Call to Action
- Participated in a Zoom call with EPCAMR Staff and *Dave Rardin*, Apex Clean Energy to talk about our PA Solar Site Selection GIS Suitability Tool and their companies interest in solar development on abandoned mine lands
- *Yue Li*, Research Associate at Cornell University's Department of Natural Resources and the Environment requested the use of two of EPCAMR's photos for a presentation to Arizona State University and a quote from the Executive Director
- Participated in a virtual Executive Roundtable with former PA Secretary of Agriculture *Dan Glickman* and *Annie Kneedler*, Cargill's Senior Director of Corporate Responsibility upon an invitation from the [US Global Leadership Coalition](#); Discussed EPCAMR's work in the region and our reclamation efforts, economic development on abandoned mine lands, and our work to create community gardens and local foods with the Growboxx Technology from Groasis in coalfield communities throughout NE PA; EPCAMR Executive Director was asked to become a member of the PA USGLC Advisory Committee and was asked to join a virtual Summit in June on the 15th and 16th
- Created a Thank You Video for the PA American Water Company for their continued support of EPCAMR's efforts in the region and sent it along to *Susan Turcmanovich*, for an Earth Day release

- EPCAMR received a copy of the [SRBC 2020 Annual Report](#) and was asked to provide a link to it to our Board and constituents for their review
- Reviewed *Eric Dixon's* blog post from the Ohio River Valley Institute that goes into the difference between the **\$11.4** billion official AML estimate and the larger estimates in his forthcoming report, [The True Cost of Cleaning Up Historic Damage from the Coal Industry](#)
- Began reviewing the language in the *Booker* Bill that could bring additional funding to AL reclamation projects which has **\$10** Billion in reclamation projects
- EPCAMR signed on to a Choose Clean Water Coalition sign-on letter opposing "Reg Reform" Bills - HBs 72, 139, 288, 939, 950
- Congressman *Cartwright* talked with *Madame Secretary Holland* on AML and RECLAIM and said a few words of remembrance for our dearly departed *Louise Dunlap*; Her [obituary](#) appeared in the Washington Post; <https://youtu.be/GcFwFvbaUg4>
- Looked at some draft logo designs for the PA AML Campaign and none were really sticking out to the Committee members, so back to the design drawing board went the Committee
- The Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition released a [press release](#) to announce this year's mini-grant program for AML reclamation projects; EPCAMR sent it around to our social media outlets at *Kasey Osborne's* request from Downstream Strategies

Community Volunteer Coordination

- Provided *Palmira Miller*, Keep Northeastern PA Beautiful, with the return of one of the borrowed banners EPCAMR had often used for cleanups
- EPCAMR Staff will be providing tree planting assistance to *John Levitsky*, Watershed Specialist for the Luzerne Conservation District, at the Hayfield HOA, Lehman Township, in the E. Fork of the Harveys Creek watershed on May 14, from 9-12 to plant 350 trees in a riparian area with volunteers from [PA Aqua](#)
- Reached out to *Donna Gillis*, Public Relations Coordinator for the WVSA to let her know that we are working on trying to secure permission for a tire removal cleanup along SR 309 in Solomon Gap just above Bentley's, but more towards the top of the mountain where Tunnel Road is located on the southbound lane of SR 309 heading into Fairview Township; It's on Reading Railroad Corporation property and we are working to secure landowner permission before we move forward; The tires are over the steep bank of the road and down in a ravine as well as in Solomon Creek itself; We don't have a date set for it yet since we don't have the green light yet from the landowner to access the property; WVSA would like to help support the cleanup when we are ready

- *Shannon Drevitch*, King's College, student volunteer updated EPCAMR on her upcoming completion of the transferring of notes from the Deming Workshop Seminar attended by the EPCAMR Executive Director to a condensed PowerPoint presentation for the Staff and the Board to have as a resource; Shannon finished up the presentation and forwarded it to EPCAMR
- EPCAMR Executive Director was asked to be a Guest Speaker for Earth Day at King's College for two different time slots and groups in the morning and afternoon on Campus to talk about our work in the region and to then participate in two community cleanups along the Susquehanna River in Wilkes-Barre on both sides of the Market Street Bridge
- *Brittany Adams*, Harvey's Lake, signed up to become an EPCAMR Volunteer and was looking for an internship, however, we aren't offering them at the moment due to the pandemic

Conferences, Training, Tours, Exhibits, & Workshops

- Participated in the virtual Environmental Justice Conference to discuss issues important to EPCAMR and our underserved coalfield communities with regards to abandoned mine lands, polluted water, and the need for an increased prioritization of our EJ communities for funding; Sent *Bernie McGurl*, LRCA a copy of a document with potential funding sources for EJ related activities; Sent follow up responses to *Dr. Melinda Krokus* from Marywood University, where a Scranton/NE PA Hub was hosting the EJ Conference in the region following the Conference
- EPCAMR Executive Director was requested for a second year in a row to be a Brookies Field School Instructor on AMD by *Dr. Gary Alt*, PhD scheduled for July 23rd 2021
- *Leigh Ann T. Henry*, EPCAMR Board provided EPCAMR with a link to a US EPA Stakeholder Session on brownfields to consider on 4-23-21
- Attended the PA DEP 319 QAPP Training Webinar virtually for Non-Point Source Programs
- EPCAMR Executive Director participated in the Spotted Lanternfly Permit Certification through PSU Extension and the PA Department of Agriculture's Permitting Process; Provided all the training materials to the EPCAMR Staff; It's more of an educational awareness permit to check and inspect your vehicles and supplies before travelling in or out of a quarantine zone; Passed the Certification test and received our permit
- EPCAMR Executive Director gave a state-wide presentation to the PSU Master Watershed Stewardship Program on 4-27-21

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for April 2021 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Provided *Denise* with the April 2021 Statement for reconciliations; Made a deposit to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables
- Talked with *Dan Taroli*, Esq. and EPCAMR Board Member for some assistance in interpreting some PA rules, regulations, and codes when it comes to specific grants or agreements and he graciously provided *Mike* and the Executive Director with insight that we were looking for to determine whether or not EPCAMR should become a subcontractor in a grant agreement or a grant administrator
- Completed the PA Department of Labor and Industry Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) form online and submitted it to the Bureau of Labor Statistics for EPCAMR
- Completed the PA Department of State Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations Dicennial Report of Associations Continued Existence and will be mailing along the **\$70** filing fee in May
- Worked with *Frank Sindaco*, to obtain and purchase the ESRI's [Business Analyst](#) extension for our Community Data and to set up an second Arc GIS Online account for EPCAMR
- Reminded all Staff to make a trip into the Office to print off their timesheets and sign for me to sign and file as opposed to just sending them electronically due to the pandemic
- Received additional Strategic Planning Notes from *Cristy Sweeney* to incorporate into the goals sheets following the Strategic Planning Zoom Meeting with the Committee