



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

Robert E. Hughes, *Executive Director*

101 South Main Street

Ashley, PA 18706

Main Line: (570) 371-3523

E-mail: rhughes@epcamr.org

Website: www.epcamr.org

August 2021 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Some waste culm material was moved in July and Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management, Inc. has started moving more material over the Summer 2021; Panther Creek Power Operating, LLC, submitted an invoice for payment to EPCAMR and was requested to hold off on submission until a revised invoice is submitted; Held a conference call to request a time extension on the project with Keystone Reclamation and PA DEP BAMR

Mill Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan

- Reviewed the macro sampling locations in the Mill Creek watershed with *Steve Cornia*; Followed up with *Rachel Kester-PA Trout Unlimited* about the request to perform an electroshocking survey on several stretches of Mill and Gardner Creek for an addendum to the Plan; Requested a 3 month extension of the grant from PA Trout Unlimited through December 31st, 2021 to finalize the drafting of the Plan and to finish up macro monitoring and an electroshocking survey of the watershed due to the pandemic; The extension was approved

Bear Creek AMD Treatment Survey/Design, O & M Plan and Permitting Package

- Provided *Trish Attardo*, PA DEP 319 Program Manager with several quarterly narrative update reports for the project to get the status of the project caught up through the late Summer 2021; Copied *Dan Koury*, PA DEP Pottsville District Mining Office with information on the project

PA American Water Keep our Communities Flowing Community Cleanups Project

- Provided *Bernie McGurl*, LRCA with a copy of *The Tire Guys* receipt for the travel, pickup, and recycling of hundreds of tires from the Lackawanna Valley cleanup efforts that occurred in 2021

Healing the Scars: Reclaiming Northeastern PA! with ISI

- Met with *Joe Sapienza* and *Laura Rinehimer*, to scout filming areas for upcoming short environmental education film with our trout puppets; Ordered a large rock prop from Amazon to hide the puppeteer behind when doing the filming on-site; The two trout puppets arrived at EPCAMR by FedEx from California; Coordinated with *Claudia*

Meglin-ISI Inc, who will be coming into the region in mid-August to assist with the filming efforts over the two-day shoot in the Wyoming Valley; Reviewed the script for the film and made edits, suggestions, and comments; Sought and received permission from Ashley Borough to open the gate to the Borough Park along Solomon Creek where EPCAMR completed a stream habitat restoration and dam removal project a few years ago; Coordinated the puppeteers with *Laura, Denise, and Shawnese* and the children who will appear in the video; Kept a close eye on the weather for the week of the filming and kept everyone apprised of the forecast; Prepared a letter for Lamar Radcliffe's employer requesting his participation in our video as the main puppeteer for the educational film; Ordered wick-free EPCAMR t-shirts for Staff from [The FieldHouse](#) in Dallas, PA, who also provided us with an updated vector file; Filmed the video episode with EPCAMR Staff, the trout puppeteers, children, at Solomon Creek and Askam Treatment locations; Breakdown of all filming supplies and equipment and organized them in the warehouse side of the Office; Convened a conference Zoom call with *Claudia Meglin* and *Pam Campbell-ISI, Inc.* to talk about how the filming went

Technical Assistance

- Received the scheduled tour date of August 27th for the Catawissa Creek AMD Tour by *Ed Wytovich-Catawissa Creek Restoration Association (CCRA)* and *Wayne Lehman-Schuylkill Conservation District*; Tour includes the Catawissa Water Dam, bridge stops along the Catawissa, and the Oneida #3 Active AMD Treatment System; Video footage will be used for the PA AMR Conference Video Tour track on AMD Treatment Systems; Attended the tour with *Laura Rinehimer*, who videotaped and edited the video following the tour
- Provided Ashley Borough with information, documents, a project map, and other resources to include on their Keystone Application grant for additional financial support for the Huber Miner's Memorial Park
- Reviewed communications from *Dr. Lowell Sieck*, CSI Environmental, LLC about rare earth elements research and funding opportunities in the future; Provided him, *Craig Stevens*, and *Benjamin McInerney*, with a lay of the landscape for funding and our assessment of new potential funding sources that could come down the line from the Infrastructure bill, if passed, through the Economic Development Agency; Reviewed CSI Environmental, LLC's proposal to assist with rare earth element research should there be a future opportunity for a partnership as funding becomes available
- Toured areas around the Southern Wyoming Valley and in the Back Mountain for two days for wetlands mitigation potential with *Joe Wescott and Mike Post*, [RES](#), however, the AMD sites weren't the most suitable locations for their purposes; Referred *Joe* to *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District for some of the more riparian areas in agricultural lands in Luzerne County that might be more suitable

- *Scott Jackson*-University of Massachusetts Extension Professor informed EPCAMR that NAACC announced a new feature of the NAACC database, the Stream Crossings Explorer (NAACC-SCE); The NAACC-SCE is a search tool that EPCAMR can use to visualize data on road-stream crossings, as well as data from other sources, and filter them to meet our own prioritization needs
- Formally introduced *Andy McAllister*, WPCAMR Regional Coordinator to *Jay Janson*-Global Business Developer, [KMX Technologies](#) via a virtual Zoom call to talk about AMD efforts of both Coalitions and KMX's background and services; Encouraged KMX to become an Exhibitor at the PA AMR Conference in October 2021
- Provided *Alexis Rourke Reyes*-Senior Planner for the [Office of Community Revitalization](#), US EPA, Washington DC with available GIS data for the Shamokin Creek watershed that EPCAMR had that was publicly available and a link to our [RAMLIS ArcIMS Online Tool](#)
- Participated in the PA DEP Aggregate Advisory Board Zoom conference call
- EPCAMR was invited to give a presentation to the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited Annual Picnic Meeting in September by *Walt Nicholson*, to discuss some of our AMD monitoring and suggestions for future AMD treatment in the Lycoming Creek on Red Run and Dutchman's Run above Ralston, Trout Run, and McIntyre, in the McIntyre Wilds and to discuss rehabilitation options for existing treatment systems in the Loyalsock Creek Watershed; EPCAMR assisted the Chapter and members of the Lycoming Creek Watershed Association and Ralston Borough, by sampling some of the AMD for them and providing them with the results earlier in the Summer; EPCAMR suggested SRBC to be a part of the effort since they were also monitoring in the watershed; *Tom Clark*-AMD Basin Coordinator was invited to be a co-speaker with the Executive Director to discuss options for the watershed and a discussion on support from community partners to move forward
- Aquatic Informatics, Vancouver, British Columbia, informed EPCAMR that they were excited to inform us that we have been selected as the winner of our Ripple Effect (Spring 2021) grant prepared by the Executive Director; Their review team commented that our application and work has very clear socio-economic importance, was extremely well written, and felt that making an award to EPCAMR would amplify the impact of our efforts; Our project is well-aligned with our theme for their grant call, and a perfect match for the [Ripple Effect](#) program; Provided Aquatic Informatics with some photos in case they choose to use them later of EPCAMR Staff conducting AMD monitoring and field work; [EPCAMR Win International Ripple Effect Software Donation Grant from Aquatic Informatics](#)

- Participated in an interview with *Falon Marie Weidman*, University of Pittsburgh student who is working on a paper related to solar development potential on abandoned mine lands

Luzerne/Lackawanna/Susquehanna County Action Plan (CAP) with [LDG](#)

- Placed an order for refill reagents for some of our water testing and began to schedule field dates to monitor the AMD discharges in the Lower Lackawanna Watershed and Lower Luzerne County AMD sites; Reviewed all of the sites that the EPCAMR Staff will be going out to monitor in the Lower Lackawanna Watershed; Sampled all of the Lower Lackawanna Watershed Sites for chemistry and flow

Education & Outreach

- Participated in weekly PA AML Campaign conference calls with partners to hear updates and give updates on legislation and the Infrastructure bill's recent passage in the Senate; Senator *Bob Casey* tried to have introduced an AML Amendment related to AMD Treatment that was regrettably not considered for a vote; His amendments would have allowed States to treat all of their AMD to restore clean water & fund future operation of AMD treatment systems; AML reclamation creates good jobs; AMD treatment creates good, permanent jobs; Clean water will provide millions in fishing & recreation revenues to local communities every year; Informed Senator *Pat Toomey's* Office of the amendment to let them know that EPCAMR supported it; Discussed additional outreach strategies on AMD and the benefits of cleanup of our polluted waterways; Reviewed the draft logo designs for the PA AML Campaign
- EPCAMR signed on to [SEIA's](#) national sign-on letter for strong clean energy policies in upcoming infrastructure legislation and sent the letter to Senators Bob Casey and Pat Toomey, emphasizing the importance of the Commonwealth's solar industry to the local economy and the potential for future growth
- Participated in the *Reimagine Appalachia* PA Update Zoom conference call
- EPCAMR reviewed the latest articles on cryptocurrency and abandoned mine land reclamation; [Stronghold Buys PA Co-Gen Plants to Power Bit Coin Mining](#); [Burning for Bitcoin](#); *Jarett Gibbons*- ARIPPA followed up with Mike and the Executive Director to fill us in on the business model that Scrubgrass Generating is using and the potential for the model to be used at other Co-Gen Plants in PA
- As a member of the USGLC PA Advisory Committee, EPCAMR submitted comments to Congressman *Cartwright's* office to inform him of our support for the International Affairs Budget that will be a part of the FY22 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill; This bill could create manufacturing jobs in areas where former abandoned mine lands have been reclaimed and companies could be encouraged to locate in Northeastern PA to improve the regional economies of the former coalfield communities; Followed up with a conference call with *Emily Tavino*, NE Regional Outreach Coordinator for the [USGLC](#) to provide her with more background on EPCAMR
- Conference call with PA DEP BAMR Staff to discuss clarifications and distinctions in the CFR 200 Code on eligible entities as sub-recipients or contractors for AMLER Projects

- EPCAMR communicated with the PA DEP Energy Program Office, which is a non-regulatory part of DEP involved with expanding opportunities for clean and renewable energy in PA through *Geoffrey Bristow* about our Solar Site Selection GIS Criteria Tool and provided them with a demonstration of how we are using it to help site potential solar projects on reclaimed abandoned mine lands; Geoffrey leads up an interagency group made up of several PA agencies (DEP, DCED, DCNR, DGS, PDA, PUC) who have an interest in maximizing the benefits of solar energy while also conserving natural resources that could be impacted by this development; Currently, there are around **400** grid-scale solar projects seeking approval to connect to the grid in PA; This represents almost **80,000** acres of potential land needs, so there is great interest in finding ways to encourage or guide this development to areas where it makes sense from a conservation or reclamation perspective
- Signed up for PennFuture's Climate Action visibility campaign to wear a t-shirt near an AMD site during a future storm event to highlight the connection between abandoned mines, flooding, stormwater, and water pollution in the coalfields
- Talked with *Gene Veno*-SRBC about the state of Federal funding for abandoned mine land reclamation and AMD cleanup
- Participated in a conference call with Appalachian Voices on Federal Outreach to Coalfield Communities
- Meeting with former Congressman *Paul Kanjorski* and *Bob McDonald*, to discuss the potential for wetlands banking in the Southern Wyoming Valley
- Reviewed the [S.2377 - Energy Infrastructure Act](#) language
- Downloaded some pictures of the new iron oxide processor created and designed by students from a Spring 2021 King's College Mechanical Engineering Class and EPCAMR that can dry and process our recycled pigment much faster than the flour sifters used by EPCAMR Staff and volunteers
- Interviewed by *James Bruggers*-Reporter for *Inside Climate News* on AMD/AML and it's direct indirect connections to climate resiliency; Provided him with links to our Swoyersville AMLER Project and a reference to the Old Forge AMD Borehole
- *Meghan Lehman*, Public Relations Coordinator-PA DEP NC Region, requested EPCAMR's contact information to provide to *Julie Grant* from [Allegheny Front](#), which is a special project of WESA (NPR station) in Pittsburgh; She is doing a story on the potential for more federal investment in AML reclamation work in PA with the infrastructure bill, the work we've done in the past, and the Huling Branch project
- Provided an interview with *Emily Scott*, a reporter with [Public News Service](#), a national wire service where she covers policy in Pennsylvania worked on a story about the letter sent to Pennsylvania's Congressional Delegation, that EPCAMR signed on to among 35 other organizations that calls for an infrastructure package that prioritizes economic and environmental investment in the Appalachia region; [PA Groups Call for Infrastructure Deal that Benefits Appalachia](#)

- Conducted a planning meeting with PA DEP 319 Program Staff to formalize the agenda for the Virtual Tour Meeting with US EPA 319 Clean Water Non-Point Source Program Staff in September on EPCAMR accomplishments throughout the region thanks to the financial support of the US EPA funding
- *Joe Sapienza*, donated some *Centralia: PA's Lost Town* Documentary DVDs and Blue Rays for distribution

Community Volunteer Coordination

- *Micalea Payne*, signed up to become an EPCAMR volunteer through VolunteerMatch
- Tentatively planning a much smaller roadside cleanup of Centralia, PA for the Fall of 2021 with a date to be announced once a sweep through town is completed in the late Summer, early Fall to see if one is warranted; Plans are to check on the apple trees we planted in the Spring 2021

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

- *Dave Hess*, Editor for the [PA Environmental Digest](#) informed EPCAMR that he'd like to become a **\$1000** sponsor of our 2021 PA AMR Virtual Conference; *Ann Devine*, PA DEP 319 Program, sent EPCAMR several US EPA 319 contacts to invite them to participate in the conference; [Aquatic Informatics](#) have signed up to become an Exhibitor; Followed up with OSMRE in Pittsburgh to see who will ultimately be presented on the latest version of the AMDTreat software; Confirmed that PA DEP Secretary *Patrick McDonnell* will be a Keynote Speaker; Registrations continue to come in for the Conference
- Requested by *Chari Towne*, Schuylkill RiverKeeper, to be an Intergeneration Panel Speaker at the [2021 Schuylkill Watershed Congress](#), to represent the Generation X to talk about the future of the environment; The Panel's title is "*Stories That Shape Us: Bridging Barriers to Environmental Justice and Climate-Resilient Communities Through Intergenerational Storytelling*" in September; Participated in an introductory call with other panelists at the end of the August
- EPCAMR sat in on a webinar with the EDA who made an announcement of **\$3B** in community revitalization, including a **\$300M** Coal Communities Commitment
- EPCAMR Staff participated in Earth Conservancy's [Environmental Workforce Training Program](#) on August 26th and trained the new cohort on how to read mine, surface, topographic, and underground mine maps; Hosted an AMD/AML Tour around the region to the Swoyersville AMLER Reclamation Project and the Solomon Creek AMD Boreholes; Referred EC to STA Transportation for bussing for the tour
- Participated in the [Annual Meeting](#) of the PA Council of Trout Unlimited on August 18th; EPCAMR Executive Director re-elected to the Eastern Vice President of the State Council during their Annual Officer Elections
- Provided a Chesapeake Watershed AMD Tour for the Gunston School (Eastern Shore of MD) in the Wyoming Valley, on August 30th to 12 high school students as a part of the *Chesapeake Watershed Semester Program*

- Participated in the virtual [PennFuture's 2021 Celebrating Women in Conservation Awards](#), on September 9th, to see *Louise C. Dunlap*, honored posthumously, for her decades of work on abandoned mine reclamation, AMD, and SMCRA; EPCAMR and the Foundation for PA Watersheds submitted her nomination earlier in the year and she was selected for the Lifetime Achievement Award
- Invited to be a guest panel speaker by *Heather Harr*-Project Director, PA League of Women Voters, on abandoned mine land reclamation and future job opportunities and innovations in the field of reclamation and AMD remediation for a Zoom Program with the [PA League of Women Voters](#) and the [Climate Reality Project](#) on September 29th from 6-7:30PM; Information is on the [ReimagineJobs](#) site
- Attended the Earth Conservancy's Newport Township ATV Study on AML at Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke, PA to learn more about the trail locations that are being considered for the Southern Wyoming Valley in the areas of the NFWF Study Area that EPCAMR is working on for the American Black Duck and Brook Trout assessment work
- AMD Treatment Tour to the Miller's Run Hydrogen Peroxide Active Treatment Plan run by PA DEP BAMR in Western PA with WPCAMR, SRBC, PA DEP BAMR, Tetra Tech, and OSMRE

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for August 2021 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Provided *Denise* with the August 2021 Statement for reconciliations; Made deposits to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables
- Completed the August 2021 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded them to *Mike*; Provided Mike with the updated Excel File of all of the additional partners and projects that EPCAMR had worked on and with over the last few years; Corresponded with *Trish Attardo*, 319 Program Manager to provide additional detail on the completion of the Final Report for the end of the June 2021 funding cycle for EPCAMR; *Trish* suggested that we might create a Story Map on the AMD monitoring that we do in the region going forward
- Received word that EPCAMR's ARC Project Proposal to map a mine pool in the McAdoo area for geothermal potential use with Little Leaf Farms, Inc., a major lettuce company was not funded; Informed Tetra Tech and Little Leaf Farms, Inc. of the disappointing news to determine what our next steps would be, should we all want to seek another funding grant funding source
- Provided a reference for *Kyle Argenziano*, EPCAMR's former OSMRE VISTA through the Stewards Individual Placement Program (SIPP), administered by Conservation Legacy, to *Michele Long*, Pike County Conservation District
- Provided SWIF with EPCAMR's Payroll Audit Review documentation for 2020

- Received instructions on how to access the PPP Loan Forgiveness 2nd Drawdown Loan documentation and application from *Mary Newsome*, First National Bank; OneSource provided additional documentation needed to be submitted with the loan forgiveness application through the online portal related to payroll expenses
- Followed up with *Alana Mauger*, Chairwoman, of our Communications Subcommittee for the Strategic Plan Update for EPCAMR to see if she can send along the notes from the meeting to add to the draft document; Followed up with Dr. Ken Klemow, Chair, of our Science/Education Subcommittee for his suggestions, comments, and edits; *Dr. Klemow* provided EPCAMR Executive Director with his draft; Reviewed *Cristy's* comments and great edits to the overall document
- Meeting with Board Member *John Welsh*, who dropped off some monitoring equipment donations for EPCAMR
- Reminded the EPCAMR Board and Affiliate members of the August 19th Quarterly Board Meeting that will be held virtually through Zoom; Drafted the final agenda for the meeting; Updated the Jobs List and Grants Prepared and Awarded document with *Mike*; Worked on the update from Staff presentation; Convened the Quarterly Board Meeting