



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

December 2020 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Mill Creek/Gardener Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- *Katie Van Orden*, EPCAMR Watershed Outreach Intern has been looking at the historical aspects of each of the small towns and cities and land uses within the watershed for the development of the draft CCP

Huntsville Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Working on drafting up the Final Draft Report of the CCP to submit to the municipalities for review and CHP before finalizing it at the end of December 2020

Reclaiming Our Backyards in the Coalfields Appalachian Tree Planting Project

- Held a Zoom call with *Claudia, Pam, and Laura* to update them on the project and tentative plans for the Spring of 2021 to plant the apple trees in Centralia and to distribute the remaining Growboxxes; Discussed submission of our end of the year request for the 4th Quarter invoice for the ***Food By Youth initiative*** and the future remaining invoices for 2021; Talked with *Joe Sapienza* about filming for 2021 since a new grant will be received from the Mental Insight Foundation to EPCAMR; *Ed Wytovich* provided EPCAMR with a contact in Columbia County for possible additional trees to plant in Centralia through the Columbia County Conservation District; Laura will follow up with *Brittney Hartzell*, Watershed Specialist as soon as we know more about our anticipated Spring 2021 Planting Plans

Mine Mapping Grant Project with the Mine Subsidence Insurance Program

- Working on communicating with Staff to compile the necessary numbers and hours (workload spent) for inventorying maps, scanned maps, georeferenced maps, digitized maps, and PHUMMIS, for submission of reimbursements before the end of the year with Staff

Reclaiming Appalachian Coalition Innovative Mine Land Reclamation and Economic Development Projects Mini-Grant Program

- EPCAMR made the news with the announcement of the near completion of our work on the GIS Site Selection Criteria Tool for Abandoned Mine Lands in the Citizens Voice on several occasions and many solar developers and energy companies have been calling us over the last few week to discuss; <https://reclaimingappalachia.org/news/>

- Submitted Final Summary Report to Reclaiming Appalachian Coalition and along with Staff provided *Joey James*, Downstream Strategies and AC Power representatives, *Tina Carr* and *Henry Anreder*, who are a partner with us in the Phase I of the project with a virtual walkthrough of the GIS Solar Site Selection Criteria Tool for Abandoned Mine Lands
- Communicated with [GP Joule](#), an Energy Company from Canada interested in our work on Solar; Will be following up with their Marketing and Communications Manager from N. America, *Michelle Montague* with a introductory Zoom call in the coming weeks ahead
- Communicated with *Jack Curry*, Senior Associate with [Nexamp](#), Boston, MA on our tool development and made an initial follow up phone call to him to briefly outline our work
- *Bob Barkanic*, Barkanic LLC, reached out to EPCAMR and has a proposal in to a solar developer and is interested in working with EPCAMR; Executive Director will set up a time to reach out to him
- *Bob Hedin*, Hedin Environmental provided EPCAMR with an interesting link to a solar project [article](#) on AML that was also using electricity to treat an AMD discharge
- Congressman *Cartwright's* Office reached out to provide EPCAMR with contacts for the Blue Green Alliance (BGA) and SEIA who work on Solar Projects; They suggested that local Labor folks might be interested in supporting our work as well

Small Watershed Grant-National Fish & Wildlife Foundation for the Southern Flank of the Wyoming Valley

- Working on edits to the budget's indirect cost rate and received information on the need from NFWF to develop a Quality Assurance Protection Plan (QAPP) of how EPCAMR Staff will collect the data and the methodologies that will be used before we can begin collecting field data; Communicating with Andrew Young to finalize the grant agreement which we hope to begin in the Spring 2021

Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) Meaningful Watershed Environmental Education Program with the Wilkes-Barre Area School District

- Assisted *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR EE Watershed Outreach Specialist, in submitting her final report to the CBT MWEE for December 2020

Swyersville/Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area PA AML Pilot Project

- Reviewed and filed the December 2020 Inspection Report from the Pottsville District Mining Office sent by *Joe McCarthy*

OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Stewards Individual Placement Program (SIPP)

- Worked with *Kyle* to identify locations of past projects for the development of a historical story map of EPCAMR Projects in the region
- Held a Quarterly check-in conference call with *JM Aurednik*, Program Coordinator for SIPP

Bear Creek Lykens Tunnels AMD Mine Pool Mapping & Conceptual Design for AMD Treatment

- Continued to work to secure *Kerry Teter's* signature through HelloFax, on the landowner access agreement form for the PA DEP in order to continue ahead with the grant agreement process to finalize the 319 Grant; Obtained the EPCAMR President's signature already

Technical Assistance

Old Forge Borehole Monitoring for Tetra Tech

- Passed along the November and December weekly water testing results and the episodic sampling of 24 sample events using the ISCO sampler, received from Hawk Mountain Labs in the mail that EPCAMR Staff sampled to Tetra Tech; Paid the invoices and requested reimbursement from Tetra Tech
- Provided *Willie Dodson*, Appalachian Voices with some information and suggestions for the Federal Applicant Violator System used by OSMRE on mining and reclamation projects since it was going through a website revamp and they were looking for input; EPCAMR is curious of how many States utilize a full cost bonding formula approach or an alternative bonding formula approach and whether or not those approaches take into consideration the treatment of AMD discharges and the size of the underground mine pool complexes that we think aren't greatly understood or studied by many across the country
- Informed *Pierre MaCoy*, SRBC that EPCAMR has continued to keep it's data logger at the Mocanaqua AMD Tunnel and will retrieve the data periodically; EPCAMR hasn't been down to the site lately and are unsure if the other data loggers were previously pulled from the monitoring wells by SRBC Staff earlier this year; American Energy Partners called to inquire if SRBC was going to make a decision to forward with a Phase III of the project; *Brad Domitrovitsch* said he would follow up with SRBC

Loyalsock Creek AMD Treatment System Monitoring

- Worked with the Sullivan County Conservation District and White Ash Land Association to reschedule AMD Monitoring of 3 treatment systems to after the rifle deer hunting season in the middle of the month; Informed *Colin Gardner*, Stormwater Solutions that he will need to follow up with PA DEP BAMR directly if there is a possibility of proposing an Agri-Drain retrofit to one of the AMD Treatment Systems on WALA property since they are ultimately responsible for maintaining the systems; EPCAMR is just monitoring flow and chemistry and noting changes that we see for SCCD, WALA, and LCWA

EC Nanticoke and Espy Run Watershed Monitoring

- Reviewed *Mike's* schematics for the stilling wells in the Nanticoke Creek and Espy Run headwaters that will be jointly installed and placed by the EPCAMR Staff and EC Staff

Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority MS4

- Provided *Jeff Collela*, WVSA with a copy of [EPCAMR's Green Infrastructure Plan for the City of Wilkes-Barre](#) completed under a previous NFWF Grant to assist them with identifying best management practice (BMPs) projects for the City to add to their Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP); EPCAMR had previously provided the Plan to the WVSA in January of 2019 but didn't hear back from anyone directly

Education & Outreach

- *Christine Haldeman*, EPCAMR Secretary and Vice President sent information along from a newsletter that had showed Senator *Dave Argall's* support for creating jobs on abandoned mine lands and keeping the Co-Gen Plants that are remaining in operation; His coal refuse amendment passed in the State Budget; EPCAMR will follow up with ARIPPA to learn more
- Provided *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR EE Watershed Outreach Specialist with assistance on the development of EPCAMR's PA DEP EE Grant related to budget items and Environmental Justice data needs before submission in the middle of the month on the 11th
- Provided EPCAMR's priorities for the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed Survey for 2021
- Held a conference call with *Joe Pizarchik* to go over suggestions of prioritizing which video shorts to work on first; Worked with *Laura, Mike, and Anne Daymut* from WPCAMR to upload a series of short videos created and directed by EPCAMR and WPCAMR to our [YOUtube](#) channels and to the PA AML Campaign website and to disseminate amongst our partners; Participated in a PA AML Campaign update phone call on HR4248 and RECLAIM and the new Congress and incoming Biden Administration; *Laura* had done some great video editing on a bunch of our video interviews that the Executive Director directed while she produced and edited all of the shorts a few months ago and now have the majority of them completed complete with sound, photos, links, and the video interviews
- Connected with *Kate Totino*, Misericordia University, who wanted to put me in touch with *Laurie Finnegan*, from their Sustainability Committee, to talk about future Spring Earth Day possibilities for 2021
- Spoke to the Energy Committee of the [Choose Clean Water Coalition](#) (CCWC) about our GIS Solar Site Selection Criteria Tool for Abandoned Mine Lands and updated them on the work that *Mariah Davis* and the Executive Director did on the CCWC Priorities PA Briefing Book for 2021
- Communicated with *Dana Kuhnline*, National RECLAIM Coalition, to provide her with some statistics on PA State Representative's *GT Thompson's* and *Conor Lamb's* Congressional District, in terms on of AMD and AML
- Participated on [Facebook](#) where U.S. Representative [Matt Cartwright](#) (PA-08) in a House Natural Resources Committee livestreamed forum on advancing environmental justice in the Appalachian region; The event focused on the environmental and public health impacts of the legacy of destructive industry practices across Appalachia, including in Northeastern PA where there are still more than 300 unreclaimed abandoned mine land sites; The forum aims to build support for the [Environmental Justice for All Act](#), of which *Cartwright* is a co-sponsor; This legislation would increase public participation in the National Environmental Policy Act process for deciding how and where to site major projects with likely public health impacts

- Conducted an interview with *Leah Moore*, Temple University student, on EPCAMR's work in the region on abandoned mine land reclamation and watershed restoration work
- Served as a judge of video presentations for 2020 Westminster College's Student Symposium and commented on all videos presented; Many were on AMD; Forwarded a few presentations that could be useful to Mike and Laura on [flow measurement methods](#) and [Phosphorus Adsorption](#) in AMD impacted waterways
- EPCAMR signed on to a support letter in support of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and supports a carve out for the Co-Generation Plants in PA that are reclaiming waste coal piles across the Commonwealth

Community Volunteer Coordination

- Signed *Vinny DeFeo*, Roaring Brook Township, Lackawanna County, PA up to become a Lead Observer under the NAACC Aquatic Organism Passage certification as a volunteer with EPCAMR; Vinny is a recent graduate of the Lackawanna College's Environmental Education Institute who participated in a tour with EPCAMR in recent weeks with his Professor *Gene Schultz*
- Forwarded *Fran Trakes*, Conyngham, PA to representatives from the Friends of the Nescopeck Creek who monitor the watershed since he was looking to get involved in monitoring close to home when there is a possibility of being trained to do so

Conferences, Training, Tours, Exhibits, & Workshops

- Participated in a monthly PA AMR Conference Planning Committee call; We've decided to once again go to the virtual conference format with WHOVA; Entered into an agreement with WHOVA for June of 2021 to provide technical services and the app for our conference coordination; Informed the Ramada Hotel & Conference Center in State College, PA that we will be back in 2022 and our \$1000 deposit will be carried forward
- Worked with *Erin Lee Frederick*, PSU Master Watershed Program Coordinator to set up two dates in 2021 to provide an introduction to EPCAMR's work in the region on AMD and abandoned mine reclamation to a state-wide audience of Stewards on April 27th and to the Luzerne-Lackawanna County Volunteer Stewards on May 19th
- Worked with *Beth Berkhauser*, Hexagon Project and *Dr. Andrea Nerozzi*, Wyoming Seminary and EPCAMR Board Member on a submission of a co-authored paper to the Pictures of Practice Committee with [INSEA](#) on our *STEM & Art: Changing the Perspective of Waterways Environmental Education and Connecting Art-Creating Solutions AMD Iron Oxide Curriculum Program*

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for December 2020 with Highmark and approved our grand mothered plan going forward into 2021; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Provided *Denise* with the November 2020 Statement for reconciliations Made a deposit to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables
- Suspended one of our Verizon MiFi Accounts until the Spring 2021 when we will need it to collect data in the field
- Worked with *Mike* to order a new cable for a donated flow meter that we'd like to get operational again
- Ordered parts for our Polaris Side by Side through funds raised through an online fundraising campaign set up by *Kyle Argenziano*, OSMRE AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteer
- Worked with *Kyle* to review a media outreach grant through HootSuite, called [HootGiving](#); EPCAMR is going to apply to see if we can obtain a 50% discount off the price of the platform
- Requested the PPP Payroll Wages from *Jessica Barbose*, OneSource to begin filling out the paperwork for First National Bank for our loan forgiveness; She provided them and then the Executive Director continued to add additional qualified expenses to the SBA Form 35008EZ
- Discussed with *Mike* about updating the e-commerce EPCAMR Store from Magento 1 to WooCommerce for WordPress and Mike began a transition to the new platform that is secure with HTTPS
- Received the results of the 2020 Personnel Evaluation Raises from the Personnel Committee and scheduled meetings with all Staff before the end of the year to discuss with them hopes and expectations going into 2021 and a review of the challenges that we had to face in 2020 and the ones that we had overcome; Met with each of the Staff independently due to COVID restrictions; Scheduled meetings with all Staff for end of the year discussions on workload, office use, working remotely, concerns, looking to 2021, EC protocols and the Governor's Restrictions
- Completed the December 2020 Board Report