



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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December 2021 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Worked up the September and October Progress Report for the AMLER Project and reviewed the invoices and documentation provided by Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management for submission; Completed the Invoice and requested *Denise* create our QuickBooks Invoice 15 to submit for October and September to *Gerard Schmidt*-PA DEP Project Advisor; Gerard informed EPCAMR that the request was sent to Harrisburg no December 7th; A tentatively planned tour event with the Office of Surface Mining Control Reclamation & Enforcement (OSMRE) scheduled for December 6th was rescheduled to a later date with PA DEP BAMR and community partners; Received the Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management Invoice for November 2021 late in the month and worked up another Progress Report and Invoice to PA DEP BAMR

Healing the Scars: Reclaiming Northeastern PA! with ISI

- Participated in a Zoom call with *Claudia Meglin* and *Pam Campbell*-ISI Inc. and *Laura Rinehimer*-EPCAMR Environmental Education Specialist to catch up on the edits to the first Reclaiming PA video with Centone Productions; Reviewed and researched a potential grant source from the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation on the [Catapult Filmmaking Fund Development](#) grant and provided *Joe Sapienza* and *Laura Rinehimer* a breakdown on the fund and some of the stipulations and criteria as to who can apply next year from January through February 28th, 2022; Worked with *Denise* to create a 4th quarter invoice to submit to ISI, Inc.; Reviewed the second edit of the short video and provided feedback

Mine Subsidence Mine Mapping Project

- Coordinated with the EPCAMR Staff on monthly work progress on scanning, digitizing, georeferencing, cataloguing, and mosaicking of mine maps for November; Requested that Staff take a look at a few loose mine maps for the Blackwood Colliery, Schuylkill County that *TJ Matinas*, Planning & Development Section Chief-PA DEP BAMR to see if they were previously scanned and input into the PHUMMIS Mine Map Inventory; The maps were scanned by the Harrisburg Area Community College; Followed up with a few candidates for upcoming interviews for the part-time GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist position

Mill Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Assessment Project

- Provided *Kathleen Lavelle*-TU with a zip drive of photos of fish and our electroshocking survey on October 1, 2021 for her Summary Fishery Survey Report under the TU TAG Grant; Provided *Tom Clark* and *Andrew King*-SRBC and *John Levitsky*-Watershed Specialist with the Luzerne Conservation District, with a tour of the Packer AMD discharge on Gardner Creek and obtained another flow measurement and some field chemistry; SRBC will come back out in January and obtain some upstream and down stream chemistry to take a look at the source of pollution to assess it's overall impact on the watershed since it contains high levels of aluminum; Sent Steve the GPS Coordinates for all of the **42** Project Recommendations for the Story Map and comments on additional maps that are needed for the report and data for various tables; Provided *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District a list of the draft recommendations from the Mill Creek CHP to get his thoughts and to see if there were any additions to make to the list; Requested a formal brief extension until mid-February 2022 from PA TU to finish up the plan and get a virtual public informational meeting on Zoom out to the stakeholders to review the final plan and seek any additional comments; The extension was approved

Luzerne/Lackawanna County Action Plan with Larson Design Group

- Provided *Joshua Glace*-Associate Project Manager-LDG with an invoice for the professional services monitoring that was completed in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties to monitor **39** AMD discharges for flow and chemistry as a part of the CAP to obtain some current field data to be included in the Plans and sampling from the Friends of the Nescopeck Watershed Association at multiple sites in the Nescopeck Watershed in Luzerne County, of nitrogen and phosphorus; EPCAMR provided comments on the draft CAPs for both Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties and had participated in all of the stakeholder meetings; *Mike* provided LDG with a spreadsheet of all of the AMD discharges that were sampled and located with GPS for inclusion in the Plans as well as our recommendations on how to proceed forward on future monitoring; Denise created an Invoice at the request of LDG and submitted it to *Joshua Glace*; Provided Justine Harman-LDG with a copy of EPCAMR's Certificate of Liability Insurance, ACH Vendor Form, and a W-9

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

- Working on developing the subcontract agreement for the SRBC to perform tasks associated with the project following the New Year; Submitted the subcontract agreement to the SRBC for approval, execution, and signature

Just Transition Fund Cycle 2 Planning Grant for Capacity Building Expansion of EPCAMR GIS Solar Site Selection Tool (proposed)

- EPCAMR was informed by *Rachael Young*-Just Transition Fund that our proposal was going to be referred for full funding to the Grantmaking Working Group; EPCAMR had to provide some administrative paperwork and banking information for their fiscal sponsor, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) and complete information in their online grant portal, called Fluxx; *Heidi Binko*, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Just Transition Fund congratulated EPCAMR on the grant award and provided us with some directions on reporting; Signed the RPA Sponsored Project Grant Agreement and submitted it back to *Benjamin Goldberg*-Finance Assistant to verify the ACH Transfer of grant funds by calling him for a voice verification

Plainsville AMD Borehole Consumptive Use Mitigation Project (*proposed*)

- EPCAMR Staff conducted a field investigation to sample AMD at the Plainsville AMD Borehole with *Tom Clark* and *Andrew King*-SRBC, along with *John Levitsky*-Watershed Specialist from the Luzerne Conservation District; Discussed a potential consumptive use mitigation project for the site and possible acquisition grant of the property; Prepared some notes about follow up discussions with potential partners and additional research that will be needed should a proposal be considered in January 2022

Aquatic Informative Ripple Effect Software Water Quality Data Management Project

- Received a final copy of the Business Analysis from *Tim Finegan*-Aquatic Informatics with Mike's location updates into the final migration file on the cloud-based web portal; EPCAMR looks forward to the final data integration after the New Year when the Implementation Team moves to the configuration phase of the project under the direction of *Randy Romero*-Director of Program Management, Aquatic Informatics

Technical Assistance

- Provided *Angela Meck* and *Heather Trexler*-Tetra Tech, with Tom Clark's contact information at the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC)
- Talked with *Jake Cacciapaglia*-Head of Commercialization at [Living Carbon](#) about reforestation projects with hybrid poplars on abandoned mine lands and carbon sequestration and credits; Provided him with contacts with Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership, PEC, and on EPCAMR Projects related to tree plantings and riparian restoration efforts; Reviewed Living Carbon's Landowner Carbon Project Program; Let *James Pagnotti* know of Jake's line of work and forwarded him a brochure on the company
- Worked with Staff to complete a needs assessment survey for the TIPS Software Inventory Assessment from the OSMRE; It allowed EPCAMR to be a part of the planning process to let them know about tools and programs that we use that are beneficial to EPCAMR in providing our coalfield communities valuable resources and data on abandoned mine land reclamation and AMD throughout our past mining impacted watersheds; Earthvision, Global Mapper, Pix4D were a few programs that we sought additional technical assistance
- Informed *Mike Shimko*, STEM teacher at the Wilkes-Barre Area School District, that EPCAMR would enjoy a visit to see the Program and work with him on bringing some of our digitized underground mine maps to see if we can incorporate them into the [Microsoft HoloLens 2](#); It sounds like a promising environmental education tool in a 3D environment; EPCAMR is interested in getting a tour at some point after the New Year of the new school and the STEM Program so we can see how we can continue to work together

Community Volunteer Coordination

- Informed *Rob Dubas*, Keep PA Beautiful that EPCAMR will package up the two remaining trail cameras that were a part of the Camera Loaner Surveillance Program used in Centralia over the last few years and send them back to his office
- Provided Eagle Scout candidate, *Alex Smulowitz*, with some locations for future Spring 2022 cleanups in the Toby Creek Watershed that were recommended in the Upper Toby Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan; He was looking for community service projects to undertake next Spring

Education & Outreach

- Provided *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR Program Manager with a copy of the notes forwarded to *Gary Merritt* and *George Wolff* on legacy sediments
- Provided Dr. *Joe Simons III*, Stanley Cooper Chapter TU, with the names of a number of Vice Presidents from PA TU to reach out to from Northeastern PA, Northcentral, Southcentral, and Southeastern PA to ask them to vote for the Catawissa Creek as the River of the Year for 2022 since all other watersheds are located in Western PA
- Provided *Ngani Ndimbie*-Regional Coordinator-Office of Environmental Justice with a few topics for the agenda related to AML/AMD for an upcoming EJ Organization Meeting from state-wide stakeholders with representative Staff from the Governor's Office on December 20th; EPCAMR Executive Director participated on the call and had a few minutes to provide some suggestions to the Governor's Office and the PA DEP OEJ on being able to provide them with additional data layers of information for the EJ Mapper or EJ Screen and also discussed the issue with the various definitions being used to describe EJ communities differently by the various federal agencies in the Interagency Working Group
- *Joycelyn Pickens*-Legislative Assistant for US Senator *Bob Casey* messaged EPCAMR to thank us for our continued advocacy on AMD and our efforts to restore waterways in PA; She informed us that *Senator Casey* was disappointed that his Casey Amendment were not included in the final Infrastructure bill language, however, he was committed to finding other avenues to pursue the provisions and was grateful for the reauthorization of the AML Trust fund and additional \$11.3 billion to be spent on reclamation projects across the US over the next approximate 15 years; In the New Year, the Senator plans to tour some AML sites to highlight the great work that groups like EPCAMR and the State have done to remediate these areas and lands and EPCAMR offered to host him when the weather breaks; Provided this update to the PA AML Campaign along with the contact information for *Aimee Wechsler*-the Northeast PA Regional Manager for *Senator Casey* in his Scranton Office who will be assisting with scheduling an AMD/AML Tour after the New Year in Northeastern PA; EPCAMR provided her with information on our organization and our work in the region as well as some suggested sites for a tour route after a conference call with her in early December

- EPCAMR shared information with PA DEP BAMR Staff on our concerns with the Justice 40 requirements and our thoughts that were relayed to PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice; We were unsure if AMLER or AML under SMCRA were going to fall under those same requirements and we were seeking additional clarification of the definitions of Environmental Justice areas, transitional communities, distressed communities, and energy centers that are being used by the various Interagency Working Group federal agencies; We have noticed some changes to the [PA DEP EJ Mapper](#), however the points are tied only to Title V Active mining permits and not Title IV AML; If the OEJ might consider using the AMLIS Problem Area polygon centroids, that would be ideal and the derived point layer could still maintain some of the polygon attributes like the total number of AML features and AML features reclaimed; The Federal List of Impaired Waters or Non-Attaining 303(d) List of streams, lakes, and waterbodies would also be a great addition to the EJ Mapper; EPCAMR pulled together a comprehensive list of EJ criteria that will be forwarded to the Office of EJ
- Provided *Cristy Sweeney-ARIPPA*, with contact information for the [Mahanoy Creek Watershed Association](#) that is only available through their Facebook social media page
- Updated *John Zaktanksy*, Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper on the promotion of the Catawissa Creek to partners to get them to vote for the Creek as the River of the Year for 2022; EPCAMR has put the word on voting to our PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Community social media page, our EPCAMR Page, and encouraged Staff to share it; EPCAMR has spoken to members of the Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance, Northumberland County and *Ben Paul* at the Northumberland County Conservation District and they are also pushing out the word to vote for the Catawissa; Plugged voting for the Catawissa on a webinar with PennFuture and other partners in the Choose Clean Water and Delaware River Watershed Coalition where *Cindy Dunn*, was also a guest panel speaker along with the Executive Director, and several other watershed group representatives to talk about gaining additional support for Growing Greener 3 and talk about the Infrastructure Bill
- Mailed a copy of the Centralia: PA's Lost Town DVD to *Marie Duda*, Hazle Township, PA
- Shared the AMLER Sign-On Letter from **25** organizational groups nationally, with *Congressman Cartwright's* Office and informed him that it was sent to the Chairs of the House and Senate Appropriation Committees asking for a budget of \$165 million for the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program for FY 2022, which has brought enormous benefits to coalfield communities hit hardest by the decline of the coal industry; EPCAMR also signed on to the letter

- Provided *Dana Kuhnline*- National RECLAIM Campaign Coordinator with additional contact information for Congressman Cartwright's Office since Cassie Steiner will be moving on shortly; Provider her with *April Niver* and *John Blake's* contact information; Provided an update to the National RECLAIM Working Group on EPCAMR's outreach to State agencies on clarifications on eligible entities or organizations that can either apply for funding or be contractors, sub-contractors, or sub-recipients and on how the Justice 40 Executive Order will determine any prioritization of funding to economically distressed communities in Appalachia and elsewhere or will other criteria and definitions of environmental justice be utilized by agencies in the Interagency Working Group at the federal level; Provided comments on a discussion document related to questions that many national groups are having about the provisions, guidance, implementation, and interpretation of the bill and the language contained within it for the AML Fund Reauthorization and spending plan going forward as well as State and Federal agency interpretations
- Provided *Ben Paul*-Northumberland County Conservation District Watershed Specialist with contact information for Patagonia and on EPCAMR's use of iron oxide pigment for creating t-shirts and other artistic expression; Reviewed *Ben's* kiosk panel description of AMD and provided him with our EPCAMR logo for inclusion on the interpretive kiosk that Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance is having created as an educational too for the community; Provided *Heather Makal*-Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance with a few sample letters to submit to municipalities for letters of support for grants
- Made a virtual introduction to *Francisco Torres*, Co-Owner of [Eco Well-Cappers](#), who specializes in well capping and methane mitigation and let him know what EPCAMR does in the region; Referred him to some contacts related to the [Oil & Gas Program](#) for PA and the online [GIS mapping system](#) that locates the wells across PA; Let him know which counties in Northcentral PA he may want to consider reaching out to in relation to [Conservation Districts](#) and their Watershed Specialists about the need for well capping and orphaned wells in the Marcellus play
- *Emily Scott*-Reporter from Keystone State News Connection provided EPCAMR with a link to the [story](#) she wrote on budget policy and priorities for the Infrastructure bill and mine reclamation in PA
- *James Brugger's* [Story](#) also was published in Inside Climate News that highlighted a number of stories within stories related to coal and abandoned mines across the country
- Provided *Brenda Shambaugh*-PACD Executive Director with information on the federal Infrastructure bill and funding for abandoned mine land reclamation and AMD remediation in PA and how Conservation Districts can and should play an important role in either administering some of the grants or becoming potential subcontractors for projects

- EPCAMR signed on to a Letter to US Department of Interior *Secretary Deb Haaland* from the PA AML Campaign and prepared an individual organizational letter from EPCAMR to discuss the desire for many groups to see that AMD, including Operation, Maintenance, and Repair, and the Set Aside Account are utilized for cleaning up polluted AMD
- EPCAMR signed on to a joint letter from the Choose Clean Water Coalition and the Delaware River Watershed Coalition that provided comments on PA DEP's spill guidance
- Interviewed by *Julie Grant*-Managing Editor and Reporter for [The Allegheny Front](#) on a story about AMD, reclamation, reauthorization, and infrastructure development across PA's coalfields
- EPCAMR was asked to participate in a media event with Congressman Matt Cartwright at the Old Forge AMD Borehole on December 29th to discuss possibilities of future AMD and reclamation projects in the region that could be proposed under the new funding from the bipartisan infrastructure bill; Provided some contact information to *April Niver*, Ph. D. and Economic Development Director and *Colleen Gerrity* from the Congressman's Office of regional partners in reclamation
- Reached out to *Lindsay A. Griffin*, Executive Vice President & COO of the [Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce & Chamber of Business & Industry](#) to schedule a meeting with her to talk about AMD, reclamation, and economic development on abandoned mine lands throughout the Wyoming Valley and to introduce her to EPCAMR
- Reviewed a Interagency Working Group [Progress Report](#) and [Fact Sheet](#) from the White House
- Researched some information on a proposed [Nacero](#) Gas Plant in Newport Township, Luzerne County, located in the Newport Creek watershed that is heavily impacted by AMD and abandoned mine lands; [Article](#) on Nacero Gas Plant proposal; Requested a meeting with State Representative Kaufer to find out more about the project; Returned a phone call to *Jacqui Bonomo*-President & CEO of [PennFuture](#) to learn more about the project; Provided *Joe Simons III*, EPCAMR President with some of the information collected about the proposed project
- Followed up with *James Pagnotti* to talk about future abandoned mine land reclamation projects in the region on parcels that are in need of reclamation and to discuss remediation topics of AMD discharges in the region; Informed him that there will be a media event near the Old Forge AMD Borehole on December 29th to discuss future infrastructure and AML funding coming to PA; He's interested in working with EPCAMR to potentially refurbish the former defunct USGS Gauging Station at the Jeddo Mine Tunnel if it's viable; EPCAMR to inspect it in the Spring of 2022

- Met with *Frank Sindaco*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist to learn more about the work he has been doing with the [Keystone Research Center](#) on labor issues and their connection to poverty, jobs, and abandoned mine land reclamation projects moving forward; Provided Frank with a list of Environmental Justice criteria that we should be able to incorporate into his Community Data sets for EPCAMR on a regional and watershed scale basis in the New Year
- Reached out to *Alex Brush*, General Manager for Ri-Corp Development, Inc., Frackville to discuss some potential future reclamation projects on some sites that may have waste culm suitable for feedstock but are much further away from the Co-Gen Plants

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

- Informed *Eric Oliver*-PA DEP Moshannon District Mining Office that the recorded videos from the PA AMR Conference in October were uploaded to the WHOVA App, including the one that Qualified Ventures did on reforestation; Eric provided EPCAMR with a preview of a video on reforestation on abandoned mine lands through [One Tree Planted](#) and [Green Forests Work](#) that he was working on that will be released soon
- Provided a presentation on EPCAMR and our projects in the region to the Environmental Engineering & Earth Sciences Class at Wilkes University and discussed career planning with the Senior Class students in *Julie McMonagle's* class and made another presentation later in the same week to *Dr. Ken Klemow's* Energy Class on EPCAMR Projects and discussions about clean energy alternative projects related to mine pool geothermal and solar development on abandoned mine lands
- Reached out to *John Dawes*, Foundation for PA Watersheds to see if he would be interested in being a speaker at a press conference scheduled for the 29th of December at 1PM at Old Forge AMD Borehole with *Congressman Cartwright* to discuss AMLER, the Infrastructure bill, Casey's AMD Amendment, and discussions around potential projects going forward that might be low-hanging fruit in terms of the paths of least resistance, regulatory compliance, and State, County, or publicly owned lands in need of reclamation as we continue to work with private landowners and developers who own a lot more of the abandoned mine lands to determine their interests in reclamation for economic development
- Coordinated a planning call with *Tammy* and *Dr. Rob Shannon* from Penn-State University's [Environmental Resource Management Program](#) to schedule an April 23rd, 2022 AMD/AML Tour with faculty and students to highlight some of EPCAMR's work in the Northeast Region; Penn-State would like to set up a bus trip on a Saturday for the student and faculty

- Communicated with *Joel Watkins*, WPSU to schedule a Zoom meeting with him and members of the PA AMR Conference Committee after the New Year to discuss live streaming services and to obtain a quote for the 2022 June Conference in State College at the Ramada Conference Center & Hotel
- Convened a WebEx virtual meeting with *Logan Seger*, [Socio](#) with members of the PA AMR Conference Committee to hear about their platform and to obtain a quote for review by the full committee on our wish to have a hybrid platform for the PA AMR Conference in June 2022

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for November 2021 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Made deposits to FNB for incoming reimbursements, checks, and accounts receivables
- Completed the December 2021 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded it to Mike
- EPCAMR Executive Director submitted a letter of interest to become a volunteer member of the Environmental Justice Advisory Board to represent the interests of coalfield communities that are also Environmental Justice communities
- Informed the EPCAMR Staff that the Earth Conservancy informed us that with the Holidays fast approaching and the increase in COVID case numbers and the omicron variant, that the entire Office will have to go back to masking up in common areas or when meeting together in confined spaces; All visitors must wear a mask regardless of vaccination status; Most Staff are continuing to work remotely and are only in and out of the office to obtain supplies, field equipment, make copies of materials, and pick up mail
- Corresponded with *Terry Ostrowski*, Earth Conservancy CEO, who informed EPCAMR that with the increasing number of Covid case numbers, the policy of the building and protocols to be followed will be that everyone needs to wear masks in common areas of the Office or when meeting together; All visitors must wear a mask regardless of vaccination status; Informed the Staff and we continued to work remotely for the remainder of the year with the exception of needing to come in to the Office for supplies for field investigations or monitoring purposes; Provided Staff with the EC Holiday Schedule for the building during the last few weeks of December
- Submitted the final invoice payment to Conservation Legacy for the OSMRE/VISTA placement and sponsorship of *Kyle Argenziano*, who completed his year of service with EPCAMR over the Summer 2021
- Requested that EPCAMR Staff review various styles of jackets over the Holiday so that we can order each of them one for the New Year
- Provided OneSource Payroll Services with EPCAMR Staff merit increases for 2022

- Renewed our Progressive ATV Insurance and cancelled our Suburban Vehicle Insurance and scrapped the vehicle due to estimates on repairs that exceeded the value of the older vehicle
- Worked with Mike on updating EPCAMR's [GuideStar](#) information
- EPCAMR received a final version of comments from *Dr. Ken Klemow* to include in the Environmental Education and Science portion of the updated Strategic Plan
- Received a word of thanks from *Emily Tavino*, NE Outreach Director for the [US Global Leadership Coalition](#) on EPCAMR's participation as a PA Non-Governmental Organization member to the Advisory Committee