



## Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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## December 2022 Progress Report

### Project Coordination

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

- Provided *Hank Zielinski*, VP Reclamation & Fuel / Northampton Generating Company, L.P. and *Sean Lane*, Olympus Power, with links to the new grant guidelines to begin to think about a Phase II reclamation of the project for a future grant round

#### **Just Transition Fund Cycle 2 Planning Grant for Capacity Building Expansion of EPCAMR Solar Project Development**

- Picked up our repaired retractable banner from Center City Print in Kingston that highlights EPCAMR's work on advocating for solar development on abandoned mine lands; Sent around to the EPCAMR Staff a link to the [Geospatial Energy Mapper \(GEM\)](#), an updated version of the Energy Zones Mapping Tool (EZMT); It might be advantageous to us in the near future for solar and rare earth or geothermal project ideas down the road; Prepared and completed the Final Report and submitted it to *Sara Sweeney*, Grants Manager, The Just Transition Fund

#### **Askam AMD Treatment in Wonderland Virtual Reality EE Project**

- Reviewed a [link](#) to a 3D video demonstration at the Whaleback geological feature in Bear Valley, Northumberland County; A similar 3D video demonstration will be created at the Askam AMD Treatment System in Hanover Township, Luzerne County under our grant with the PA DEP EE Grant program; Forwarded the link to *Laura Rinehimer* and *John Welsh*; Attached is the actual program [link](#) at the Whaleback; Participated in a grant check-in call with the PA DEP EE Program Office with *Kathleen Banksi*

#### **Healing the Scars with ISI: Year 2 Iron Oxide Short Educational Outreach Video Production**

- Worked on regaining access to the first video *Brooky Braves A Storm* from *Joe Sapienza* since the Vimeo link had expired; EPCAMR will soon place the video on our YouTube channel once we have the two videos released at the end of February 2023; *Joe* mailed the video on a thumb drive due to the size of the video and quality of the video format; Provided *Laura Rinehimer*, with a list of funders that where applications were written to try and support additional EE videos by the Executive Director

## **Just Transition Fund Federal Access Center Organizational Capacity Building Grant (proposed)**

- Worked with *Rachel Young* to provide her with additional follow up answers to some of her questions on the recently submitted application for **\$25,000** to support our continue capacity building to apply for a Federal grant for rare earth elements testing of AMD around PA and at the Hollywood AMD Treatment Plant in Clearfield County; EPCAMR was informed that we would be awarded the grant and are awaiting official acknowledgement from the Just Transition Fund that may come after the New Year

## **PA American Water Mill Creek/Gardner Creek Cleanups & Monitoring**

- *Steve Cornia* and the Executive Director tackled a woody debris and trash blockage at the water intake structure behind the small dam on Mill Creek along Tunnel Road, Jumper Road, and Westminster Road in Plains Township; Cleaned up the trash and debris at an unnamed tributary to Mill Creek in the area, a roadside pull off area, and inside all of the guardrails and over the hillsides at the intersection of the three roads; **5** bags of trash were picked up by PA DOT after coordinating with *Sharon Sherotski*; EPCAMR even removed a pool cover that had been tangled in the woody debris that backed up near the center spillway of the dam from the previous flooding events that carried the wood downstream; We maintained our safe distance and used a rake to scrape away at the leaf litter and to remove fallen branches, small root wads, and fallen trees that had blocked up the spillway; With some higher stream flows in the Spring, we expect that trout should easily be able to make their way through this area now  
The cleanup along First Street on December 5<sup>th</sup>, in Plains Township and Mill Creek and trash that was collected was removed by the Plains Township Department of Public Works after EPCAMR was able to make a connection with them through the Executive Director's niece, who also lives in the Township, who happened to be friends with the Chief of the Public Works Department; He was more than happy to help us out and had collected the trash from this spot at no cost; It only took a few short hours along First Street in Plains Township to cleanup an illegal dumping hot spot where the Luzerne County Transportation Authority (LCTA) Bus Stop is located just before the First Street bridge along Mill Creek; There wasn't too much trash other than beer cans, bottles, and too many McDonald's Coffee cups to count; With all the colorful aluminum cans, they looked like Christmas lights scattered among the weeds reflecting off the setting sun; The result of this cleanup was that the river left bank of Mill Creek looking downstream is now free of any trash and litter and the pull off area is also as clean as it is going to get; It was estimated that **150** more pounds of trash have been collected with this small effort; Submitted a Final Report to the PA American Water on December 15<sup>th</sup>

## **PA American Water Charitable Trust Foundation Environmental Education (EE) Grant on Iron Oxide**

- Met with several art teachers in December at two Wilkes-Barre Area Schools to discuss an interesting project partnership for 2023; Provided several art teachers in the Wilkes-Barre Area School District from the CAPP Program at the High School and the Jr. High School with information on a partnership with them to engage their students to work in iron oxide pigment to develop art pieces on various mediums that could be photographed for use in a calendar promoting the positive usage of recycled AMD pigment in art and as an educational opportunity; EPCAMR is working with our partners, the PA American Water Charitable Trust and The Interdependence Hexagon Project that is promoting the theme of Environmental Justice in 2023 as they are also seeking artwork from students who can enter their exhibition [call for entries](#) at the same time; Provided them with a short [blurb](#) on our website on our iron oxide recovery process and a brochure linked within it; Provided them with a past [article](#) of our

work with Wyoming Area's Maslow STEM School; Provided them with an [article](#) on pottery glaze AMD & Art creations in a Ceramics Magazine from years ago with *Skip Sensbach*, who used to teach at Misericordia University and owned Green Dog Pottery in the Back Mountain; EPCAMR is working with *Lindsay Barker-Jr* High School Science Teacher to make a presentation to students after the New Year who might be interested in participating in the art project and will be circling back to the High School with *Mike Corcoran* to see make a second presentation to the CAPP students; Provided *Laura Rinehimer*-EPCAMR Watershed Education Outreach Specialist with copies of EPCAMR's Iron Oxide brochures for future use and reference

### **ARIPPA EPCAMR/WPCAMR Mini-Grant AMD/AML Program**

- Worked with *Anne Daymut*-WPCAMR, *Cristy Sweeney*-ARIPPA, and *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR to update and upload the new [2023 Mini-Grant Application package](#) and process to the EPCAMR and WPCAMR websites after completing several revisions to the documents; Provided ideas and technical support to the Northumberland County Conservation District (NCCD) on the design and language for the jumping weir signage to be placed at the treatment system location; Forwarded high resolution organizational logos to *Ben Paul*-NCCD from ARIPPA, WPCAMR, and EPCAMR

### **Technical Assistance**

#### **Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance AMD Water Quality and Flow Monitoring**

- Worked with *Heather Trexler*-Tetra Tech to finalize a proposal at their request for water quality monitoring and flow monitoring of 9 AMD discharges within the Shamokin Creek Watershed for 6 events at 27 sites beginning in 2023; EPCAMR provided a quote to provide technical assistance to perform the data collection; Received the minutes and follow up answers to questions asked by several consultants at the SCRA pre-submittal meeting on Nov 17th to discuss the Shamokin Creek watershed assessment RFQ; Talked with SCRA about ensuring that they budget the entire amount needed for monitoring for all of the AMD discharges they were targeting during the watershed assessment; EPCAMR provided *Al Budinsky*-Skelly & Loy with a quote to provide technical assistance to perform the data collection at their request for monthly sampling for a year at the 9 AMD discharges for 12 events at 27 sites; Worked with *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR Program Manager to develop and prepare the quotes to submit; Provided *Jim Koharski*, President-SCRA with an In-Kind matching funds EPCAMR letter for their Quaker Run and Buck Run Watershed Restoration Plan grant through PA Growing Greener

#### **Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership**

- Received *Chris Breischy's* tree order form that will be submitted on January 17<sup>th</sup> when the orders are allowed to be submitted for the Spring 2023

#### **Datashed Technical Assistance to Stream Restoration Incorporated (SRI)**

- Spoke to *Cliff Denholm*-SRI about billing rates for grants

- Participated in a conference call with *Jerome Whittington and Zeynep Oguz* from New York University, NY to introduce them to EPCAMR's work in the region on abandoned mine reclamation, AMD, economic development projects, alternative clean energy advocacy, environmental education, and capacity building within our coalfield communities about your organization; Provided them with a lot of reference links to resources for their review and consideration before they come down for a visit in the middle of January 2023; They introduced themselves and were trying to get a sense of the lay of the land while developing what will hopefully be a long term relationship that's community focused; Provided them with other people to speak to in the region and to reach out to *Heidi Binko*, with The Just Transition Fund since her work connects to NYU's very closely; Let them know that I would keep them informed of the solar on abandoned mine land listening sessions EPCAMR will be hosting in the first half of 2023 with the PA DEP Energy Office so that they can participate
- Worked with *Dr. Ron Grevera* and *Dr. Brian Costello*, both Superintendents for the Greater Nanticoke Area and Wilkes-Barre Area School Districts to obtain a letter of support from him on EPCAMR's continued years of environmental education programs and presentations to the students within the school district that we included with our renewal application to the PA Department of General Services to be able to obtain surplus supplies and equipment from Harrisburg to support our educational programs; *Mike Corcoran* from Wilkes-Barre Area and *Nicole Mackiewicz* from Greater Nanticoke Area School District were able to provide EPCAMR with a copy of *Dr. Costello's* and *Dr. Grevera's* letters of support; Submitted the letters to the PA DGS and EPCAMR's Letter of Determination from the IRS as a Non-Profit 501 (c)(3) public, educational, scientific, charitable, and technical organization, to complete the renewal application process
- *Todd and Nate Eachus*-PureGreen BioAg requested EPCAMR's assistance on a call with Team PA and the PA DCED on conference call as they roll out a Hydrogen Hub plan for PA and may be looking at areas where abandoned mine lands could become utilized in the future for development
- Provided *Dr. Marianne Krasny*, Cornell University with a number of contacts and organizations that she could follow up with to discuss climate change provisions in the next Farm Bill to see if they would sign on to a letter she's developing
- Communicated with *Angela Meck*, PE, Tetra Tech on project proposal ideas for future AMD/AML grants in the EPCAMR Region
- Call with *Jeff Randolph*-BlueCup Development LLC on a potential AMLER Project in the Hazleton Area, Hazle Township, along SR 309
- Call with *Scott Reinert*-Qualified Ventures on potential Reforestation Projects; Set up a meeting with him at the EPCAMR Office in January 2023 to meet with EPCAMR and the Earth Conservancy; Provided him with contacts to reach out to in the Anthracite Region and a few landowners

## **Education & Outreach**

### **PA Trout in the Classroom EE Project**

- Provided *Laura* with a [link](#) to the PA Parks and Forests site; They have a cool section on painting by numbers; There is one with a cool brook trout on it called "Fish Grow on Trees"

- The STREAM Act passage by unanimous consent allowed EPCAMR to provide some comments for a [press release](#) from Appalachian Voices, a National partner of ours in Central Appalachia; Passed along the release link to the PA AML Campaign; The STREAM Act authorizes state AML programs to set aside up to 30% of the annual grants they receive under Section 40701 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in an interest-bearing state account to the cover long term expenses of operating, maintaining and rehabilitating AMD treatment systems built under the AML program; The resolution also supports amendment of S 3957 to allow states to similarly place a portion of IIJA grant dollars in a “Set Aside” account to cover long-term expenses in addressing AML-eligible mine fires and mine subsidence; The House also passed the Omnibus Bill on December 23<sup>rd</sup>
- EPCAMR was informed by [Patagonia Action Works](#) (PAW) that they have extended access for organizations who are very active on the platform, or who request to regain access with the intention of using the platform, and whose work Patagonia remains broadly aligned with; They checked with their colleagues on the grantmaking team and resumed our access to Patagonia Action Works; The access will run through August of 2023, at which point they will review the list of organizations who have been offered extended access to confirm recent toolkit usage and continued alignment; Worked with Amanda Powell, PAW to run a week-long campaign to encourage followers to contact their respective Senators in the Senate in PA to encourage them to support the passage of the STREAM Act as our first campaign; Link on [Reddit](#)
- Worked with *Rebecca Shelton*, Appalachian Citizens’ Law Center (ACLC), Ohio River Valley Institute (ORVI), West Virginia Rivers (WVR), and the Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM), on a **\$200,000** [MOSIAC](#) proposal to maximize community and worker benefits in the AML Program; EPCAMR proposed being a subcontractor to the ACLC under the grant for **\$20,000**, as did many other partners; The focus of this project is to ensure effective implementation of the **\$11.3 billion** included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for abandoned mine land (AML) reclamation
- *Michelle Giles*, Policy Analyst, Conservation Voters of PA reached out to see if EPCAMR would be a part of a joint petition they are organizing to urge our new state leaders to take the environment into consideration in all aspects of their policymaking and following recommendations put forth in *A Shared Vision for Pennsylvania’s Environment and Communities*; They want to remind Governor *Josh Shapiro*, Lieutenant Governor *Austin Davis*, House Majority Leader *Joanna McClinton*, and Senate President *Kim Ward* that there’s broad support for these policy recommendations; EPCAMR signed on to the petition since we helped to draft the Shared Vision document; Offered to share the petition with our members and followers when it is completed
- Updated *Mark Grochocki*, Senator *Lisa Baker*’s Office on EPCAMR’s support for a Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Innovation Fund and updated him on the recent passage of the STREAM Act; Provided *Wendy Wilson*, Director of Communications for Congressman *Matt Cartwright*’s Office with a quote on our thoughts on the recent passage of the STREAM Act
- Coordinated with *Diane Madl*, EE Specialist for the PA DCNR Bureau of State Parks Community Connections to Our Watershed Program to host 50 High School students that are a part of the annual program that will visit EPCAMR on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, to learn about our work, mine mapping, 3D mapping technology, and other efforts of the Staff

- Participated in weekly PA AML Campaign calls every Friday of the month to get updates on legislation, the STREAM Act, Omnibus package, and Bipartisan Infrastructure funding

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

- The PA AMR Conference Planning Committee settled on Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> for a visit to the Blair Convention Center and the Altoona Grand Hotel as the two locations to consider for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference; Travelled to both locations to tour the venues and ultimately decided on the Altoona Grand Hotel due to costs, space, dates available, and accommodations; Forwarded *Anne Daymut*-WPCAMR several suggested presentations from *Daniel Snowden*-PA DEP MRAB; Worked with *Mike Hewitt* to develop a draft budget for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference and provided it to the PA AMR Conference Committee for their review and consideration; Provided EPCAMR's Sales Tax Exemption Certificate to *Shaina McNally*, Director of Sales for the Altoona Grand Hotel once we decided to go with their venue; Financial numbers will be added once we determine the venue and associated costs of the facility and other expenses; Encouraged *Philip Light*-PA Chapter of the Native Fish Coalition to consider submitting a presentation at our Conference on the topic of stocking in areas where AMD projects that are completed have the opportunity to revert back and become restored to native brook trout populations as opposed to non-native brown trout domination that may outcompete the native brook trout that could repopulate these areas
- Tried to coordinate a field tour to our Swoyersville AMLER Reclamation Project with *Christian Piccioni*, a student who from Penn-State University that is doing research on waste culm energy projects in December, however, the weather prevented it from happening; EPCAMR will try and reschedule the tour in the early part of the New Year if the weather cooperates
- Coordinated with Professor *Bob Wolensky*, Anthracite Heritage Foundation to put together an educational program on Coal Breakers, Art, and Photography co-hosted by EPCAMR and the Earth Conservancy for January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in Ashley for Anthracite History Month; EPCAMR Executive Director to moderate the panel of 3 speakers; 2 are confirmed, Sue Hand and Eric Bella; EPCAMR worked with *Bob Wolensky* to develop a press release; Talked with *Dr. Andrea Nerozzi*, Maslow STEM School-Wyoming Seminary Upper School about hosting a presentation related to our work with her and her students on AMD on another day during January 2023; EPCAMR will still set up our retractable panel poster display on our work with her students at the event on the 17<sup>th</sup> along with our EPCAMR Exhibit Board
- Provided an AMD/AML Watershed Tour to [Rachel Bacon](#), Artist-in-Residence, Diepenheim NL from the [Diepenheim Drawing Centre](#) and *Meredith Davenport*, Drawing Research Network, [Ecologies of Drawing: In Situ](#), Loughborough University, UK with *John Welsh*, EPCAMR Board Member and Videographer, who also shot some film footage while the two visiting guests were taking pictures and learning about EPCAMR's work in the region and across PA

## **Solar on Abandoned Mine Lands Listening Sessions and Summit-PA DEP Office of Energy & Technology Department**

- EPCAMR was selected for a procurement contract in the amount of **\$40,346.64** that was processed and approved on November 16, 2022; The PA DEP Energy Office plans a meeting in January 2023 after the New Year to kick off the project; During December the PA DEP Energy Office received and reviewed proposals for the competitive portion of the project (assessment report development) and selected [LaBella Associates](#) as the vendor and they were notified of the award on December 15<sup>th</sup>; LaBella is currently working with their procurement department to finalize the contract and purchase order; Once the procurement activities with LaBella are finalized, the kickoff meeting with all partners will be held to set a project schedule, set roles and responsibilities, and map out the process to complete the project; Everything is on track for the majority of the work (including focus groups) to take place in the February/March/April timeframe

## **Community Volunteer Coordination**

- *Nate Eachus* offered to become a volunteer with any future watershed cleanups that EPCAMR may coordinate throughout the year

## **EPCAMR Program Administration**

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for December 2022 with Highmark and had to approve the new premium plan for 2023 with Highmark that saw a 7.4% increase from the previous year; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Made deposits to FNB for incoming reimbursements, checks, and accounts receivables; Provided *Denise* with a copy of the December 2022 FNB Statement and Payroll Details for December 2022 for the 319 Program Reimbursements; Mailed the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter IRA contributions and match deposits to First National Bank for Staff
- Provided the Personnel Committee with recommended merit raises increases for consideration for 2023 for Management and Staff; Committee met on December 7<sup>th</sup> to make their recommendations for approval
- EPCAMR made a formal request to determine how we can renew our application to become an approved Educational Improvement Organization under the Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program within PA DCED
- Worked with *Mike* to get the best deal on ink cartridge refills for our printers from [Cartridge World](#) and reviewed some IT articles from Visual Edge IT on cyber security he forwarded
- Worked with *Mike* to obtain renewals on our 5 ArcGIS licenses and subscriptions fees for 2023
- Sent around training materials to *Steve* and *Shawnese* on the FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot license certification should they be interested in studying for it and taking the test; The Executive Director has been studying for it and will be scheduling it later this month; Currently, EPCAMR's drone is utilized for recreational purposes under a TRUST certificate already obtained by the Executive Director; In order to utilize the drone commercially, EPCAMR needs at least one Remote Pilot certified under the FAA Part 107; Steve and the Executive Director attended a networking event at the THINK Center in Wilkes-Barre with the PA Drone

Association to learn more about the group and to let them know about our work and intentions in the region once we get our FAA Part 107 license

- Talked with *Joe Sapienza*, EPCAMR Board Member, and thanked him for making a donation of supplies to the EPCAMR for the Christmas Holidays; Backpacks, grabbers for litter cleanups, wool socks, a Terabyte hard drive, a GoPro Hero 9 camera with attachments, drone propellers, and a car charger; He also contributed a donation towards a membership to the PA Drone Association for EPCAMR for 2023
- Coordinated with *Dr. Ken Klemow* to provide him information on the upcoming Education/Science Committee of the EPCAMR Board; Convened the Committee Meeting via Zoom on December 21<sup>st</sup> and a great discussion and additional ideas were generated for future implementation and consideration based on organizational capacity
- *Justin Bradley*, Verizon Wireless, provided EPCAMR with promotional offers and devices on phone upgrades since they are doing away with 3G phone services and devices with a CDMA shutdown of their older network; EPCAMR will likely go with a new carrier and end service with Verizon and port over our two phone numbers to [Ooma](#); *Mike Hewitt* is working with a customer service representative from Ooma; Worked with *Mike* to obtain a new phone carrier and ordered two new phones through Ooma that are shipping in December
- Provided *Karen Warho*-Earth Conservancy with our 2023 EPCAMR Board Meeting dates to secure the Conference Room so that there are no conflicts with other meetings planned for 2023 by EC or other organizations using the facility
- Placed an order for winter jackets for the EPCAMR Staff through Cabela's after receiving everyone's sizes
- Completed the renewal application for the PA Department of General Services, Supplies and Surplus Division; *Joyce Conrad*, PA DGS approved our application on December 15<sup>th</sup>
- Completed the December 2022 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike*