

Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation



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December 2023 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swoyersville Harry E. AML Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Worked with *Denise Hernandez*, EPCAMR Bookkeeper, on completing the request for reimbursement of August and September's Invoices from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management for the hauling, excavation, and removal of the waste culm material at the project site; Provided the Progress Report narrative to *Riyad Barkawi*-PA DEP BAMR; Compiled 2022 Invoices for the project with *Denise* to provide to the auditor for testing for the 2022 Single Audit; Received the November 2023 Invoice from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management for review; Worked on and completed the submission to the PA DEP BAMR for approval and payment

EPCAMR Conservation District Mining-from East Project

- Worked with *Mike Hewitt* to revise budget, task and deliverables, and the scope of work for the FY 2024-26 grant and submitted to our PA DEP Project Officer; Reviewed the primer on matching funds together; Participated in a conference Teams call with PA DEP 319 Staff to work on finalizing budget and revisions to the task and deliverables; Submitted the final documentation and the match letter from the EPCAMR Board to *Rachel Nelson*, PA DEP Grants Center; E-signatures were sent around to the EPCAMR President and Treasurer for signatures

Just Transition Fund Rare Earth Elements Capacity Building Project

- Provided *Dr. Tammy Shannon*, Penn-State University Environmental Resource Management Program with an example of a service-learning project and course outline that EPCAMR developed with *Dr. Margaria Rose*, King's College to see if any students were interested in future remote service-learning opportunities with rare earth elements and AMD and a list of rare earth elements that EPCAMR knows very little about, in terms of their market value, use, and product potential or commodity

The Luzerne Foundation Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) 3D Printer on Mines, Macros, and Mining Artifacts Project (*proposed*)

- Presented before the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) of The Luzerne Foundation EPCAMR's proposal to purchase a 3D Printer, supplies, filament, nozzles, design templates, and to allow Staff to spend time working with the Wilkes-Barre Area School District's and Wyoming Seminary's Maslow STEM Programs to create and discuss how to come up with a design to model 3D underground mines using mine maps, create sample mining artifacts and tools, and macroinvertebrates that are found in our streams and waterways; Stroud Water Research Center

already has free design templates for [macroinvertebrates](#); Other design templates are available for mining tools online; Found out not long after that out of the **18** selected, the YAC could only fund **8**, and regrettably, EPCAMR was not able to be funded this round; Mike Shimko from Wilkes-Barre Area's STEM Program followed up after hearing that we were not awarded this round and still would very much like to work with us and produce some of the suggested designs until we can secure funding to obtain our own 3D Printer and he discussed researching handheld scanners that could create 3D images such as items and artifacts in the Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour; *Ed Wytovich*, Pioneer Tunnel Board, sent a link to EPCAMR for [Frank Wyso](#) to get an idea of objects that could be printed eventually and some things could potentially be sold at the Mine Tours, if allowed; EPCAMR Executive Director connected with *Al Budinsky* and *Morgan Bratton*, [TerraCon](#), who requested that we submit our proposal to their philanthropic arm of their company, so all grant information was forwarded to Al to provide to his company's Foundation review Committee for consideration in 2024

Technical Assistance

CWOs and AMR Engagement Project with POWR (proposed)

- EPCAMR Executive Director provided draft comments and a proposal to SRI and WPCAMR for consideration to apply for a **\$27,700** proposal to engage and survey community watershed organizations and Conservation Districts across PA working on abandoned mine reclamation and AMD projects; Provided Cliff Denholm, SRI with links to EPCAMR Staff bios, reviewed his final budget, and supported its submission by Stream Restoration Inc.; Proposal was submitted on December 15th; January 8th SRI and EPCAMR have a scheduled call with POWR about the proposal
- Provided *Jordi Comas*, PA DEP Environmental Justice NC Coordinator with contact information and websites for several community organizations in the EPCAMR region at his request so that he can reach out to them to attend some upcoming informational sessions on climate justice and environmental justice in the coalfields
- Participated in several calls with *Arthur Seidenfeld*, Rare Earth Metals Reclamation Corporation, New York, to discuss future opportunities in PA and EPCAMR's current work and outreach on the potential for finding critical and rare earth elements in AMD and coal ash from Co-Gen by-products; Provided Arthur with a brochure on EPCAMR and discussed his company's interest in eventually working in PA
- Provided *John Welsh*, [Rare Light Media](#), with specific information and history on AMD sites in the Lackawanna Valley that he will be visiting with *Mark Clement* for a video he's producing including the [Gravity Slope](#) and the Old Forge Borehole; Sent him information, photos, water quality, 3D modeling [presentation](#) by EPCAMR on the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley, references to the [Anthracite Region Remediation Strategy Report](#) from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, information from the Underground Miner's website on the [Gravity Slope Colliery](#), and an [article](#) on the Lackawanna River fishery
- Forwarded *Mike Hewitt* the zip file of the water quality lab results from the November 2023 AMD Sampling of a number of sites in the Shamokin Creek watershed
- Provided *Chelsea Tarbell*, PG, [HDR, Inc.](#) with contact information for *Chirstine Haldeman* to see if they can provide geophysical work

- EPCAMR Staff participated in a coordinating meeting with the Lackawanna River Conservation Association, PA DEP BAMR, and Kleinfelder, in Scranton to discuss some potential paths forward to take a much closer look at the Old Forge AMD Borehole and the Duryea AMD Outfall and discussed some grant funding opportunities; Finding a way to reduce the flow at Duryea would be a significant accomplishment going forward; Some monitoring needs and mine pool mapping is going to be necessitated at some point now that maps are more readily available than they were a decade ago when EPCAMR first started scanning them for the Commonwealth of PA's Mine Subsidence Insurance Program
- Provided *Molly Upgrove*, Director of Outreach, Reimagine Appalachia with contacts for various groups, agencies, and non-profits that are involved with youth and STEM programs since they are looking to reach a younger audience to involve in community outreach efforts
- Followed up with *Corey Parry*, Lehigh Engineering to direct him to the EPCAMR [website](#) we developed related to solar on previously impacted mine lands since Dan Koury, PA DEP Pottsville District Mining Office informed EPCAMR that Reading Anthracite has plans for looking at solar development on areas throughout Schuylkill County
- Provided Brother *John Paige*, CSC, Ph.D., King's College, with EPCAMR contacts with local trail and conservation organizations in the Wyoming Valley for his proposed outdoor education learning experiences in the Summer 2024
- Followed up with *Elizabeth Tate*, Associate Partner, with [US Practice](#), who is working with a client that is investing in US renewable energy projects, particularly large-scale solar, hydro, and wind; They are interested in former mining sites and one of their US leaders formerly worked for the Clean Energy Demonstration Program on Current and Former Mine Land (CEML) at the Department of Energy; Convened an introductory call to discuss if there are any mutual interests in exploring future opportunities to collaborate and to provide her with state of these types of projects on abandoned mine lands across PA and some of the challenges and opportunities
- Followed up with *Diana Polson*, Ph.D., Senior Policy Analyst, Keystone Research Center, to provide her with information and have a discussion on abandoned mine lands in Pennsylvania and the influx of federal funds that can lead to opportunities it presents to both clean up environmental damage and create good jobs; She asked for some thoughts and recommendations from EPCAMR on how PA DEP BAMR can help to make the process smoother for nonprofits to apply for grants and how can groups like ours be supported; She asked what kind of data and monitoring needs to be collected or funded
- Provided *Judy Rodd*, [Friends of Blackwater](#), Thomas, WV, information on AMD issues that PA DOT ran into during the construction of the [I-99 Corridor](#) outside of State College since she is expecting to follow some construction activity along a highway within the Blackwater watershed

Education & Outreach

- Participated in 2 weekly PA AML Campaign calls; Forwarded a link to the PA AML Campaign to a story on Senator Fetterman asking questions about AMD; [John Fetterman Questions Experts On 'Acid Mine Drainage' In Army Corps Water Resource Projects](#)

- Approved final comments suggested by *Sara Ramotnik*, Choose Clean Water Coalition for the 2024 Legislative Briefing booklet on some considerations that should be given to abandoned mine land issues and AMD issues across the Commonwealth being addressed by EPCAMR's coalition partners, including the Conservation Districts, watershed groups, and other regional non-profit organizations
- EPCAMR was informed that *Phil Dunn*, has become the Executive Director of the [Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance](#)
- *Cathy Tombasco*, Black Creek Township, Luzerne County, informed EPCAMR that she has become the new PSU Master Watershed Stewards Program Coordinator for Luzerne/Lackawanna County; EPCAMR provided her with links to information related to AMD, abandoned mine lands, watershed assessment and restoration, and our community partners in the region, that she can pass along to her new cohorts and volunteers in the Program
- EPCAMR convened a Zoom Call for our Education/Science Committee led by our Chair, *Dr. Andrea Nerozzi*, to build on a strategic educational plan going forward for EPCAMR and Staff to guide our ongoing and future educational efforts as funding allows and is sought for various proposed ideas and suggestions; Provided *Dr. Nerozzi* with a few images of the confluence of the Solomon Creek AMD boreholes with the main stem of Solomon Creek in Hanover Township for a poster that her students are preparing of mine outfall microorganisms for the upcoming KCCA Exhibit at Wyoming Seminary
- Received updated information for *Carl Rodzewich*, Client Manager for [Cedarville Engineering](#), who moved on from Tetra Tech recently; They focus on infrastructure engineering, design build, survey, environmental, grants, and construction projects; *Jen Orr-Green* is their Environmental Team Lead
- *John Welsh* introduced EPCAMR to a photography student of his at Villanova University, [Emma Witanowski](#) who is pursuing her Bachelor of Science and Arts in Environmental Science & Geography; She does a lot of work with ESRI products, ranging from ArcGIS Pro, ArcGIS Online, and Story Maps; She also dabbles in photography and is a trained traditional and graphic artist; Followed up with her via email and let her know that we could reconnect after the New Year to see if there are any volunteer opportunities she might want to get involved with at EPCAMR
- EPCAMR promoted through our social media, The Luzerne Foundation's [Wish Book](#) they created for area non-profits, including EPCAMR, that is in digital distribution and was provided to donors
- *Ed Wytovich*, EPCAMR Board member informed EPCAMR that he was able to follow up with *Bill Nace*-formerly with the Wiconisco Creek Restoration Association (WCRA) and *Abbie Walsh Wertz*, the principal at Upper Dauphin HS about seeing if they have any students or programs that might be interested in helping to feed the limestone diversion wells on Rausch Creek; She is going to follow up with *Bill Nace* to see if some younger high school students are able to assist with the ongoing maintenance of the diversion well since the organization has dissolved
- Received some positive feedback from *Bob Kent*, a local fly fisherman that had recently fished the Mill Creek watershed in Luzerne County following his reading of our Mill Creek Coldwater Heritage Conservation Plan prepared by EPCAMR, which he thoroughly enjoyed, by letting us know that he caught some brook trout in the area

- *Michael Silverman* and his students from Wyoming Seminary informed EPCAMR that they were going to begin working on making a video or two from existing videos and photos in our social media albums and from our website over the school break and would follow up with EPCAMR in mid-January 2024
- Informed [Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance](#) how they can order iron oxide pigment from our online store for future AMD tie-dye t-shirt programs with youth in the Shamokin Area with the [Shamokin Sustainability Coalition](#); Sent them an [instruction sheet](#) on how to fold the t-shirts and perform the tie dye process with the youth
- Followed up with *Bernie McGurl*, [Lackawanna River Conservation Association](#) (LRCA) to inform him of some very positive communications with an adjacent landowner that lives right next to the Old Forge Borehole; Provided him with her contact information so that he can follow up with her to discuss with her recent discussions on potential steps forward in the area around the borehole

ISI Healing the Scars of NEPA Education Project

- Worked with *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR EE Specialist to provide *Claudia Meglin*, ISI Inc., with a final report on the STEM EE videos, curriculum development and activities, STEM Camps, and website development and completion

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

25th Anniversary PA AMR Conference

- Followed up with the Altoona Grand Hotel to request that *Alexa Smith's* room charges be added to the Master Scholarship Room bill for the Conference and removed from her work card where it was charged by mistake; Provided the Altoona Grand Hotel with an updated list of scholarship recipients for them to total up the bill for the rooms that were secured and blocked for those who were awarded travel scholarships to attend the Conference; The Conference Planning Committee was updated and told that we are waiting for a revised final invoice prior to payment; Provided a few Mayfly Award photos to the entire PA AMR Committee of *John Stefanko* and *Janie French*; Jen West, Director of Marketing for the Ramada informed us that she was moving on to a new position, therefore, *Beth Wiesinger* will be our new point of contact for 2024 Conference planning and will touch base with us after the New Year

Penn-State University Alumni Career Panel Presentation for Environmental Resource Management Program on EPCAMR (planned)

- EPCAMR Executive Director spoke to **75** students and faculty in State College in the Ferguson Building, with two other alumni on the work of EPCAMR across PA and to discuss ways students can become more involved in the efforts of community groups, Conservation Districts, and regional or local non-profit organizations working on AMD and abandoned mine land issues

Misericordia University Sustainability Symposium

- EPCAMR exhibited and interacted with Misericordia University students and *Linda Auker*-Program Director of Environmental Studies, at their Sustainability Symposium which was open to the Misericordia community and public; EPCAMR assisted one of the students in the Environmental Studies Science Track, *Carli Tabone*, with resources and links for her presentation on AMD and Environmental Justice in coalfield communities where she will be using the Shamokin Creek watershed as an example for her work; An excellent [Story Map](#) was produced for the event

AML & IRA Storytelling Tour of AMD, Reclamation, and Stream Restoration in the Southern Wyoming Valley

- Hosted *Beth Meiklejohn*-Principal, [TwoRoads Strategy](#) and several other videographers and an animation content creator from [Bonfire Media Coop](#), out of Philadelphia on December 13th who travelled to the area to film a short video on examples of infrastructure projects to be funded under the Infrastructure bill on abandoned mine lands for economic development, stream restoration, and AMD cleanup in watersheds; EPCAMR coordinated a half-day tour in the Wyoming Valley and in the Nanticoke Creek watershed to provide them with sites for the footage they will need and to discuss the [IRA funding](#) that Earth Conservancy received to work in the Nanticoke Creek watershed recently as well as explain to them the impacts from legacy Anthracite mining and the steps that groups like ours and our partners have been taking to restore the land and water for the last few decades

Anthracite History Month Presentation January 2024 Event (proposed)

- Worked on trying to secure a venue at Luzerne County Community College for a panel presentation on January 7th for Anthracite History Month by EPCAMR, *Sue Hand* (Sue Hand Imagery), *Eric Bella* (Lehigh Engineering), and *Nick Zmijewski*, Industrial Archives; The EPCAMR/EC Conference Room was eventually decided on for use because of the rental costs at LCCC and no sponsorship available to support the costs of that venue; The entire month's programs are listed online at the [PA Environmental Digest](#), of which, EPCAMR will be involved with 2 of them, speaking at both, and moderating and sponsoring/hosting the other

Society for Environmental Journalist AMD/AML Tour (proposed for April 2024)

- Followed up with *Bernie Brown*, Managing Editor for [Grid Magazine](#), Philadelphia, who wants to coordinate a day trip into the Coal Region of Schuylkill County as a part of the April 3-7th Annual Conference for the [Society of Environmental Journalists](#); He wants to plan a trip that will start in the morning with a look at the legacy of coal mining in Schuylkill County; Provided *Bernie* with contacts with ARIPPA, Schuylkill County Conservation District, and the Pottsville District Mining Office; EPCAMR was invited to be one of the speakers on the bus tour

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts with Denise in QuickBooks; Provided *Denise* with a copy of the monthly bank statement for Quickbooks; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for the December 2023 renewal with Highmark; Paid EC the rent; Made EPCAMR deposits to FNB
- EPCAMR received and paid our invoices automatically for payroll services from OneSource for the month of December 2023
- EPCAMR Executive Director put together a highlighted recap of our Staff's efforts, projects, conferences, workshops, deliverables, and some work products completed throughout 2023 for our 2024 Annual Appeal Letter to our members through mail and to post on our website
- Submitted a letter of interest to the PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice Office to inform them that the EPCAMR Executive Director would be willing to be reappointed to another 2-year term to the Environmental Justice Advisory Board to provide insight and guidance on environmental justice in coalfield communities across the Commonwealth

- Worked on the 2024 Proposed EPCAMR Budget with Mike Hewitt and our Treasurer; Provided the Executive Personnel Committee with proposed merit increases for 2024 for their review, consideration, and recommendations for approval; Prepared tentative agenda for EPCAMR Board Meeting and sent around to Coalition partners and Board Members; Convened the 4th Quarter EPCAMR Board Meeting on December 14th; Presented the 2024 Proposed Budget for approval that was approved
- Forwarded documentation from the Commonwealth of PA's Bureau of Fiscal Management that needs to be completed to finish up the 2022 Single Audit for EPCAMR of the Section 319 Conservation District Mining East, Bear Creek and the Swoyersville AMLER Grant; Informed the Bureau of Fiscal Management that the audit was underway; Uploaded documentation and invoice files and receipt files for testing to our auditor; Scheduled an office meeting with the auditor for January 3rd, 2024 to review additional documentation and to test various invoices and payments
- Completed the December 2023 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike* to upload to the website