



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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February 2018 Progress Report

Education & Outreach

- EPCAMR Executive Director developed a message to ask Enviro, Land Conservation, Watershed, Sportsmen's Groups, and local and County governments to Adopt Resolution Urging Congress To Act on bill to reclaim PA's abandoned mines; <https://paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com/2018/02/epcamr-asking-groups-to-adopt.html>
- Huber Breaker Preservation Society passed a resolution in support of the RECLAIM Act and provided EPCAMR with a copy on February 5th
- Sullivan County Commissioners were the first County to pass the RECLAIM Act resolution; The Sullivan County Conservation District followed with a support letter of the same from *Holly Miller*-District Manager
- The PA Anthracite Section Board of the AIME is also in the process of passing the RECLAIM Act resolution as is Olympus Power, LLC
- Provided *Jennifer Learn-Andes*-Reporter for the Times-Leader with several head shots for a news article on the RECLAIM Act the newspaper will be running
- EPCAMR requested that the PA Federation of Sportsman Club (PA FSC) pass the RECLAIM Act resolution and corresponded with the Lackawanna County Commissioner's Office to do the same
- EPCAMR Executive Director and Program Manager attended the Luzerne County Council Meeting to present and request the support of the Council to pass the RECLAIM Act resolution presented before them during their work session; It was placed on their agenda and the Executive Director spoke before the Council during the public work session detailing the benefits of the RECLAIM Act for Luzerne County and surrounding coalfield communities that still have impacted from abandoned mine lands
- EPCAMR/WPCAMR provided members of the PA AML Campaign with a copy of our presentation on SMCRA, the PA AML Campaign, Reauthorization, and survey results of the PA AMR watershed community across PA, that was given at the 2017 NAAML Conference
- *Abbie* sent out our February 2018 monthly newsletter to our members and volunteers in our MailChimp database

- Sent out an Op-Ed piece written by the Executive Director with assistance from *Jan Jarrett*, to 16 newspaper outlets in the EPCAMR Region on the RECLAIM Act to see if they would run the opinion in their Letter to the Editor or Opinion section, which included the *Williamsport Sun Gazette*, *Sunbury Daily Item*, *Scranton Times*, *Bradford Era*, *Wellsboro Gazette*, *The Daily Review*, *Sunbury Daily Item*, *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*, *Bloomsburg Press Enterprise*, *Hazleton Standard Speaker*, *Wilkes-Barre Citizens Voice*, *Wyoming County Examiner*, *Lebanon Daily News*, *Scranton Times*, *Republican Herald*, and the *Allentown Morning Call*
- Interviewed along the Susquehanna River near the site of the Knox Mine Disaster site by Director, *David Brocca*, who EPCAMR has assisted with the development of the documentary that has yet to be released on the tragedy and disaster that occurred at the site; www.knoxminedisaster.com; There was lots of ice on the River, ice jams, and the shooting day was reminiscent of January 12, 1959, in terms of the conditions on the River; Provided *David* with some background information on the history of the use along the River by Native American Indian tribes and other geological features of the Valley in the area of the Mine Disaster
- Provided *Gavin* a contact with the South Wilkes-Barre Railriders to see if EPCAMR can become a part of the Community Organization of the Month program in 2018 to assist us with outreach and awareness in the region
- Discussed with *Joe Sapienza II*, Centone Productions, LLC and EPCAMR Board Member some ideas around seeking funds for the development of an educational television pilot series on EPCAMR and our work in the region; Provided *Joe* with contact information for *Dan Bochicchio* and *Chris Brooks*, partners with Skybernetics, that has drone footage over Centralia; Need to schedule EC/EPCAMR Conference Room for April 2nd and 3rd for Host/Hostess Interviews for potential EPCAMR Pilot series
- EPCAMR participated in PA DEP's "Sweet on Streams" campaign for Valentine's Day
- EPCAMR Executive Director sent along a support letter from EPCAMR to *Senators Toomey* and *Bob Casey, Jr.* and Congressman *Lou Barletta* to expand and not cut the AmeriCorps budget and the Corporation for National Service; It's that time of the year again that they are looking at Trump's 2018-2019 Budget and EPCAMR wrote about the importance of having the positions with EPCAMR over the last two years
- Congressman *Lou Barletta* is supporting the "**Coal Refuse Remediation Act**", HR 4977, a bill to reclaim abandoned mines with waste culm that is supported by the Co-Gen industry (ARIPPA) and EPCAMR; Barletta's legislation would provide a performance-based production tax credit of \$12 per ton to help support coal refuse-fired plants as they sell electricity. To be eligible to earn the credit, at least 75 percent of the coal refuse facility's fuel, by BTU energy value, must be coal refuse and recovery sites must be remediated and reclaimed.
<https://www.timesleader.com/news/local/692523/barletta-bill-would-add-incentives-to-clean-up-coal-waste> and <https://www.newsitem.com/articles/bill-to-clean-up-coal-refuse/> and <http://arippa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Summary-of-Benefits-of-the-Coal-Refuse-to-Energy-Industry-as-of-Feb.-2017.pdf>
- EPCAMR continues to follow the current Federal Government's budget development process for FY2019; President Trump is proposing 56% Cut in State grants to administer Federal EPA Programs; He's calling for the elimination of the NRCS Farm Conservation Programs and does not mention RECLAIM at all; <https://paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com/2018/02/trump-proposes-34-percent-cut-in-epa.html> and https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/fy2019_bib_bh029.pdf; EPCAMR signed on to the Choose Clean Water Coalition's annual Congressional Appropriations Request Letters

- Provided *Denise* with the Executive Director's biography summary for inclusion with the US EPA Environmental Justice grant entitled, "**From City Streets to Trails and Trees: What's In Your Neighborhood**"; EPCAMR received a Letter of Support and Commitment from the Living Youth Ministry at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Wilkes-Barre from *Harlan Tabron*, Director of Youth Ministries
- Secured the EPCAMR/EC Conference Room for April 4th for *Diane Madl*-Environmental Education Specialist for the **PA DCNR Community Connections Watershed Forum** and AML/AMD Tour with regional High School students from Luzerne/Lackawanna Counties; EPCAMR and EC to present
- Requested a training date for EPCAMR Staff to become certified Fishing Skills Instructors with the PA Fish & Boat Commission from *Walt Dietz*-Aquatic Resource Program Specialist; Settled on April 10th and will await confirmation from PA DCNR at Frances Slocum State Park

Technical Assistance

- Reviewed HB 1960 and provided comments as well as signed on to a letter through the Choose Clean Water Coalition opposing the bill; <https://paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com/2018/01/house-bill-1960-short-circuits.html>
- Provided *Tabitha Tripp*- Shawnee Sentinel, Illinois, with information on a project in PA where industrial hemp is being grown on reclaimed abandoned mine lands; <http://www.pahic.org/author/pahic/> ; <http://paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com/2017/10/dep-reclamation-project-turns-abandoned.html>
- Provided *Amanda John Kimsey*-Program Manager for PA & DE-National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) contact information for the SRBC in order for her to obtain information on federal funding to the SRBC
- Blue Marble Geographics announced the release of Global Mapper v19.1; This intermediate release augments the impressive list of new features and functions with even more new tools and improvements to the existing functionality; Highlights of this release include a completely redesigned attribute querying tool; a new option to save and export 3D lines from the Path Profile tool; support for drag-and-drop docking of most floating windows; and the ability to create a 3D mesh in the LiDAR Module's Pixels-to-Points tool; EPCAMR downloaded and registered for the version and forwarded the notice to *Mike* for him to download separately; <http://www.bluemarblegeo.com>
- EPCAMR reached out to *Heather Smiles*, PA Fish & Boat Commission to see if we can obtain a copy of any available design standards and permit application specifications so that Staff can better understand the process that PA DOT or PA DEP review down the road should we recommend a culvert replacement or work with various levels of government to secure future implementation funds to propose a project; One of the unknowns for us at the moment as we look to develop implementation projects is the costs associated with replacement of the various culvert types and sizes, lengths, and materials; Heather put us in touch with *Tom Shervinskis*, PA F & BC who will follow up with us directly
- Contacted *Susan Turcmanovich*, External Affairs Manager-PA American Water with questions prior to considering submitting a grant application to their Environmental Grants Program

- EPCAMR Staff met with *Mark Spatz*-HRG, WVSA Executive Director *Jim Tomaine*, and Jeff Collela, WVSA GIS Director, to discuss a future partnership on MS4 Development and Outreach within the 32 municipalities within the Wyoming Valley; Discussed Staff capabilities and professional technical services that we could provide as well as GIS expertise and knowledge of quantity and quality of AMD discharges throughout the entire Valley; Forwarded off many pieces of resources and links to information that will prove useful prior to possibly developing a more formal MOA with the WVSA before the Summer; Forwarded the WVSA Regional PRP to all EPCAMR Staff for their review; Requested that they review it and look it over to get a handle on what's in it and how it's been presented to see what services that EPCAMR can provide; <http://www.wvsa.org/RegionalPollutionReductionPlan.pdf>
- *Andy Friefeld*, graduate student at Temple University in Landscape Architecture, Philadelphia met with the Executive Director to review his Senior Capstone Project work on the "Black Desert" abandoned culm bank site in Exeter Borough on the grounds of the former Exeter Colliery, owned by Pagnotti Enterprises, Inc.

Project Coordination

- ARIPPA will be providing a donation of **\$5000 (\$2500** to each Coalition-EPCAMR/WPCAMR) to continue to support our **2018 AMD/AML Mini-grant Program**; Executive Director reviewed the updated RFP application provided by *Anne Daymut*-WPCAMR and suggested that we go to print with it soon and start taking applications
- Provided *Brad* from AEP, Inc. with directions on the steps to follow as required by PA DCNR under the State Forest Research Agreement (SFRA), which is in the process of being extended officially, before the exploratory drilling of the monitoring boreholes on the Pinchot State Forest **Mocanaqua AMD Mine Pool Consumptive Use Feasibility Study Project**; Requested a meeting on-site on February 20th with PA DCNR Staff to obtain verbal approval of the locations where we intend to drill several monitoring wells into the mine pool; EPCAMR Staff prepared a few aerial maps for the field with the existing pool boundaries for when we meet in the field; Met with *Brad* and *John* on February 6th to catch *John* up on the project; Met on the project site with SRBC, PA DCNR, AEP, Inc. and EPCAMR Staff to obtain GPS locations of the drilling areas for monitoring wells within the mine pool areas of the Mocanaqua AMD Tunnel and received approval of the locations from PA DCNR; Reviewed AEP, Inc.'s 2017 Annual Report of Activities and Findings draft prior to it being sent to PA DCNR as an update for the SFRA and submitted comments back to *Brad* and *John Pippy*
- Signed and sent along the PA TU CHP Assurances document to *Tali MacArthur* to expedite the release of funds for our **Upper Toby Creek CHP Watershed Assessment** in the Wyoming Valley that we were recently awarded in the amount of **\$5000**
- Discussed with *Mike* and the MSI Staff more efficient ways in which we can provide additional QA/QC over the scanning and geo-referencing of the **MSI Mine Maps** on a monthly basis

- Met with *John Gibbons*, Ashley Borough Council Chairman to discuss progress on the **Solomon Creek Dam Removal and Habitat Restoration Project**, EPCAMR was able to work with the PA F&BC and River Logistics, LLC to create a large scour pool feature that will have a deeper pool to accommodate the trout stocking that will occur next month with the Ashley Trout Stocking Association; The scour pool will be created just above the lowest cross vane that was constructed just above the dam that was removed; Requested that Ashley Borough open the gate to the park to allow the equipment to get in to perform the repairs to a few of the cross-vanes and to create the scour pool
- Followed up with *Tim Altares*, PA DEP BAMR to see if the Real Estate Division has signed off on the landowner access agreement to allow Keep PA Beautiful to place surveillance cameras in Centralia in partnership with EPCAMR; Put *Joe Sapienza* in touch with *Tim* to talk to him about Centralia; *Joe* is interested in also matching the purchase of 3 additional cameras for Centralia once the placement is approved by the PA DEP Real Estate Division; *Aaron Semasko*- Enforcement Support Coordinator for Keep PA Beautiful, provided the model types and costs of the cameras that will be used to *Joe*
- Followed up with the Department of Labor & Industry to determine if EPCAMR needs to obtain a Prevailing Wage Rate for the eventual **Harry E. Bank Reclamation PA AML Pilot Project** in Swoyersville, PA; EPCAMR is waiting on a fully executed grant and announcement from PA DEP BAMR; Northampton Fuel Supply, it is believed who has to have the conversation with D of L & I; Contractor and sub-contractor background checks will then be completed to assure they are in good standing by PA DEP BAMR; EPCAMR, however, still followed up with *Terry Peck*, at D of L & I; A number was assigned to the Project and *Terry* provided EPCAMR with several documents for review and completion; Forwarded some additional mine pool information to *Brian Miller* and *Don Roth* from Miltech Engineering, *Hank Zelinski*- Northampton Fuel Supply, and *Matt Cochran*-Olympus Power from an older OSM Mine Fire Report Study of the area and a description of the location of pool and suspected boundaries and elevation in the area of the culm banks; Provided *Gerard Schmidt*, PA DEP BAMR Project Officer with EPCAMR's FEIN Number and SAP Vendor Number; *Dean Baker*-PA DEP BAMR sent EPCAMR a PDF of an example of the grant sub-contract with another PA AML Pilot Project for reference when beginning to develop ours
- Met with *Aaron Clauser*, Clauser Environmental, LLC about our partnership effort that successfully led to another NFWF Technical Assistance Grant with the City of Wilkes-Barre to perform **Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Management Planning and Concept Design Project** for 10 City Parks and Public Outreach within the City; Aaron is waiting on the grant agreement contract from NFWF before he can develop the **\$5000** sub-contract agreement with EPCAMR; EPCAMR will be putting together a press release soon and running it by the City of Wilkes-Barre before submitting to the local papers once we obtain the grant language summary from *Aaron*

Community Volunteer Coordination

- *Amelia Bender*, from Missouri, sought out EPCAMR to do virtual volunteer hours; She found our post on www.Givegab.com and was interested in doing some hours; She has an obligation to do 8 hours a month; She was looking to do graphic design or simple website design volunteer work; She provided her resume and her online portfolio; EPCAMR Executive Director followed up with her about continuing with our "Actions Speak Louder than Words" Outreach Campaign; Her portfolio can be found at ameliabender.portfoliobox.net

- *Ryan Sotelo*, Shickshinny, PA signed up to become an EPCAMR volunteer; Followed up with him to see if he can get an early start on obtaining donations of gift cards from grocery stores for refreshments and paper products, drinks for upcoming Summer and Fall 2018 Illegal Dump Site Cleanups under our **COALS Program**

Conferences, Training, Tours, & Workshops

- EPCAMR Staff and EC Staff conducted the February 1st AMD/AML Brownfields Tour with **23** selected candidates for the **US EPA Brownfields Environmental Workforce Development Training Program**; Provided *Jane Aston*-Director of Continuing Education-PSU Wilkes-Barre, with EPCAMR's FEIN Number for payment of our invoice; *Robert Finn*, one of the students in the Class personally sent along an e-mail to the Executive Director to thank EPCAMR for our teaching points and job training
- Attended the **Keystone Legends & Lore Event** at the PA State Museum in Harrisburg, PA to exhibit on EPCAMR and to talk about our work on cleaning up Centralia, PA and our involvement in the recently released documentary, "*Centralia, PA's Lost Town*"
- Provided *Beth Burkhauser*, Keystone Lackawanna College, the RFP for the **20TH Anniversary PA AMR Conference** in order for her and *Melissa Cruise*, Scranton Area School District to submit a proposal on Iron Oxide and Art as a part of STEAM Curriculum that has been recently developed by the two artists, along with the Executive Director of EPCAMR as a joint collaboration; Discussions by several PA AMR Committee members on keeping the price to attend the same as the previous year, however, the full Committee needs to make that decision in March 2018; Graymont and Ernst Conservation Seeds became Bronze Sponsors of the PA AMR Conference after speaking with the Executive Director and coordinating the limestone quarry tour and discussing exhibiting at the Conference; Both companies sent EPCAMR logos for the website and the Program brochure; Forwarded *Missy Recker* our PA AMR Conference logo for her to use and mention in her Kiski-Conemaugh newsletter; Had a conversation with *Jason Horner* from Earthtech Engineering, Inc. (www.earthtechin.net) out of the Somerset area, who is interested in presenting on drone technology and exhibiting or becoming a sponsor; Forwarded him the Sponsor information and directed him to Anne for information on submitting an abstract to present; *Cristy Doyle*-Director of Finance & Public Affairs, informed us that ARIPPA will be a Silver Sponsor and also found a metal artist who may potentially be able to create our Mayfly Awards for 2018 from Drums, PA
- Presented before the **Susquehanna River Heartland Coalition** at SEDA-COG in Lewisburg, PA on EPCAMR's work in the region before several colleges and university professors
- EPCAMR Executive Director was asked by *Dr. Bode Murin*, Historic Site Administrator, of the PA Anthracite Heritage Museum, to speak at the Anthracite Heritage Museum in Scranton, McDade Park on April 21st on our work in the region and will a sponsor of the event for their "**Anthracite Legacy 7 Part Lecture Series**"; www.anthracitemuseum.org/; EPCAMR accepted the offer to speak

- EPCAMR Executive Director was asked by *Dan Snowden*, PA DEP, to speak at the 2018 **PA Recycling Organization Professionals (PROP)** Conference in Harrisburg, PA on EPCAMR's unique ways of recycling AMD into pigment and other recycled uses during a Panel Presentation entitled "**Unique Types of Recycling**"
- Received an update from *Dennis Pennington*, PA Chapter President of the AIPG on the number of attendees so that we can order lunch and drinks for the AIPG Symposium on EPCAMR's and EC's Regional Activities on AMD on March 3rd; <https://www.facebook.com/events/151967675467672/>
Received the Bus Contract from White Transit Bus Company, Nanticoke, signed it, and sent it back to confirm the tour following the morning presentations; Ordered the hoagies from Vino's Deli;
- *Anne Daymut*-WPCAMR and the Executive Director co-presented at the **Keystone Coldwater Conference** in State College, PA on February 23rd on the PA AML Campaign, SMCRA, RECLAIM, Reauthorization, and WPCAMR's survey results of reclamation and watershed partners across PA on how they've been able to maintain such a strong network for decades on the issue of abandoned mine land reclamation and AMD remediation
- Talked with *Julie Vastine*, Director with ALLARM (dickinson.edu/allarm) at Dickinson College, who is interested in bringing a few dozen Political Science students up to the coal region in April on the 21st in the morning to see a few AMD sites and to speak with the EPCAMR Executive Director

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Accounts and PA Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register
- Convened a conference call with *Bernie McGurl*, EPCAMR President to discuss projects, updates, news on RECLAIM Act, and board meeting agenda items
- Provided the EPCAMR Staff with information from OneSource on a new tax law that is called the Commuter Expense Reimbursement Account for 2018; Employees are permitted to allocate up to a maximum of \$260 per month for transit expenses and up to \$260 per month additional for parking expenses, should those types of expenses not be reimbursed by the employer already
- Ordered new EPCAMR Checks
- Received policy updates from *Katie Foley*-Program Coordinator for the Stewards Individual Placement Program related to government shutdowns and disciplinary actions for AmeriCorps and forwarded a copy to *Abbie* for reference
- Provided *Denise* with a link to free online grant training with the Federal government; <https://cfo.gov/grants/training/>
- Attended and facilitated the Quarterly EPCAMR Board Meeting on February 15th