



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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February 2021 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Huntsville Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Submitted the Final Budget Report to the CHP Program at TU and received our **10% holdback of \$475** to complete the grant since it was approved, well-received, and accepted by PA TU; **\$18, 673.31** in matching funds were applied to the **\$4750** grant

Healing the Scars - The Mining Legacy in Northern Appalachia Film Project with ISI

- Convened a conference call with ISI to continue working on the Reclaiming PA! educational videos for EPCAMR; EPCAMR received a **\$105,000** 3-year grant from ISI and the Mental Insight Foundation

OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Stewards Individual Placement Program (SIPP)

- Paid Invoice #16032 for our VISTA placement of *Kyle Argenziano* to Conservation Legacy
- Worked with *Kyle* to finish up a flyer/poster on "[What EPCAMR Does!](#)" so that we can use it for outreach and public relations as well as for grant application submissions
- Reviewed the draft "*How Can You Help Our Watershed*" Environmental Education document that *Kyle* and *Laura* have been working on and made suggestions and edits to the document

Technical Assistance

- Provided information from *Melanie Kessler*, PA DCED Program Manager, to the Huber Breaker Preservation Society that instructed them to properly apply for an extension of their project in the Huber Breaker Miner's Memorial Park in Ashley Borough, Luzerne County
- Talked with *Ryan Cherwinski*, Environmental Specialist for [Denali Water Solutions](#), who is interested in setting up a Zoom Meeting to receive an overview of their active water treatment system technologies for AMD

- Provided information and photos to *Chris Kulick*, PA DEP on behalf of Ashley Borough, after investigating an area along Solomon Creek that is in need of sediment removal that the Borough is requesting assistance with and an Emergency Permit to reduce flooding in the area; EPCAMR assistance was requested by Ashley Borough Councilman *Gerry Maldonado*; Created an aerial map of the photo locations and a description of the area and provided it to *Chris Kulick*; The Emergency Permit was approved and forwarded to Ashley Borough and copied to EPCAMR, although not necessary; The PA Fish & Boat Commission and the Luzerne Conservation District will have to be followed up with by Ashley Borough when they decide to remove the material from the stream and clear any debris from the channel
- Provided comments on the SRBC Comprehensive Plan and provided them to PA TU
- Discussed with King's College students their project to help EPCAMR develop a more efficient and table top iron oxide drying/processing/packaging system
- Talked with *Tim Denicola*, Civil Environmental Consultants, PG, CFM, Project Manager in West Virginia, who has done a lot of work on AMD remediation and stream restoration; Suggested he get on EPCAMR's mailing list for future events and conferences; Initially had met *Tim* at a PA AMR Conference a few years ago and CEC wanted to stay in touch with EPCAMR; Suggested that CEC become a Sponsor or Exhibitor at the October 2021 Conference
- Provided comments to the National RECLAIM Working Group on the Civilian Conservation Corps, ARRI, and how that program parallels the existing OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Program; Offered to be a PA spokesperson on RECLAIM and AML for the National RECLAIM database
- Received approval from ARIPPA to utilize funding for AMD sampling of discharges throughout the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley, including the Plainsville Borehole AMD discharge this Spring/Summer
- Forwarded an [article](#) and information on a [Green Infrastructure Plan](#) we've developed for the City of Wilkes-Barre already, for *Frank Sindaco* to review from a team of stormwater & equity workgroup members from the National Resource Defense Council, that have been working with two PA-based professor-researchers to develop potential uses for a Green Infrastructure (GI) Equity Index in the Chesapeake Bay watershed; As part of that effort, they are going to create a GIS StoryMap to explain why equity matters in green stormwater infrastructure and why a tool like the GI Equity Index is needed; Similar data is being collected that Frank has been pulling together for EPCAMR to add to our regional Community Data layers
- Provided some technical assistance and comments on the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and how it related to our OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Program that we sponsor at EPCAMR to the National RECLAIM Working Group

- Provided a letter of support to *Janet Sweeney*, PEC NE Office, for their grant application to NFWF's Innovative Nutrient & Sediment Reduction (INSR) grant to partner with the WVSA on *Accelerating Green Infrastructure Implementation in the Wyoming Valley*, Luzerne County
- Reached out to *James Pagnotti*, Pagnotti Enterprises to talk about regional projects, Reauthorization of the AML Trust Fund, RECLAIM Act, Hazleton City Water Authority's need for additional water supply and a possible project at the Hazleton Pump Shaft in the Jeddo Mine Pool, and to provide him an update on our work in Centralia where we will be planting apple trees on April 17th; Followed up with *Peter Haentjens*, EMARR from the EPCAMR Board to let him know that EPCAMR had reached out to Pagnotti to further the discussion on the Hazleton City Water Authority needs
- Provided *Duane Feagley*, Executive Director of the PA Anthracite Council with information on e-AMLIS and reclamation costs as well as statistics on AML/AMD for PA
- Reviewed PennFuture's [Buried Out of Sight Fossil Fuel Final Report](#) that uncovers PA's hidden fossil fuel subsidies
- Provided substantial comments to the PA TU draft Strategic Plan on Resource Extraction and Energy Issues
- Provided *Chari Towne*, Delaware Riverkeeper Network information on how EPCAMR recently went through updating our Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 after she requested insight
- Provided an EPCAMR letter of support to PEC's National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) Grant partnering with the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority (WVSA) and others on a project titled, *Accelerating Green Infrastructure Implementation in PA's Wyoming Valley*
- Worked with *Mike* on developing a scope of work for the Luzerne/Lackawanna/Susquehanna County Action Plan (CAPs) proposals with HRG, LDG, and LaBella to provide technical assistance with AMD monitoring and stakeholder outreach; Sat in on two separate Zoom calls with each of the consultant firms applying to be the lead in the development of the CAPs during the first week of February

Education & Outreach

- Requested by *Sarina Weiss*, Policy Aide, SubCommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, for Chairman *Raul M. Grijalva*, Arizona, to testify before the House Committee on Natural Resources Committee Hearing on AML Reauthorization, RECLAIM Act, and the Community Reclamation Partnerships Act on March 18th at noon before the full Committee via WebEx; Reviewed the list of the new House Natural Resources Committee members to gain a better understanding of what States they are representing across the country; Began my research to document facts and needs for the forthcoming testimony

- Informed *Jason Rano*, Federal Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to sign EPCAMR on to a sign on letter in support of the [Chesapeake Bay WILDS Grant Program](#); EPCAMR participated in a stakeholder engagement session on February 23rd provided by *Sara Ramotnik*, Chesapeake Conservancy
- Provided *Cassandra Krul*, who is a Program Analyst with the US EPA in Region 7, Kansas City, Kansas, with information on our OSMRE/VISTA AmeriCorps Program sponsorship; They are looking to develop a similar program in her region
- Singed up as a spokesperson in the National RECLAIM Working Group's database for any potential media that would want to reach out for more information on the Act and AML work in Appalachia
- EPCAMR agreed to participate in a media outreach effort virtually to talk about the benefits of the RECLAIM Act on March 8th and had a follow up interview with *Jim Dino*, from the Hazleton Standard Speaker
- Participated in several virtual meetings with area legislators and their aides to talk about the Choose Clean Water Coalition's goals for FY2021-22 that are in support of clean water and cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay watershed and received updates on Federal legislation from *Peter Marx*
- Followed up with some local union representatives (IUOE) to provide them information on the SMCRA Reauthorization and the RECLAIM Act to see if they were supportive of the bills; Asked them if they would be willing to write a letter of support for AML Reauthorization and the RECLAIM Act and provided them with our fact sheet on the importance to economic development, environmental reclamation, watershed restoration, and the creation of jobs for Northeastern PA and across the PA coalfields
- Spoke to *Denyse C DuBrucq*, EdD, and CEO of CryoRain, Inc. in Dayton, Ohio who has an interesting patent idea on how to put out abandoned mine fires; She forwarded EPCAMR some information to review and we let her know we would get back to her
- Forwarded the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition's [Restoration and Renewal: The New Appalachian Economy \(2021\)](#) Final Report to the Choose Clean Water Coalition's Energy Workgroup through *Mariah Davis*, Policy and Campaigns Manager; It has our GIS Solar Site Selection Criteria Tool highlighted
- Communicated with *Dr. Ken Klemow*, EPCAMR Board and Wilkes University Professor on how to move forward on getting the Science and Education Committee up and running within the EPCAMR Board; Provided *Dr. Klemow* with some content, reference documents, names of others who volunteered to be on the Committee, and an overview of the general direction and tasks assigned to the Committee

Community Volunteer Coordination

- EPCAMR was informed by *Greg Griffin*, Wilkes-Barre Citizens Blight Committee member, that the area near the Earth Conservancy Sugar Notch Loop Trail entrance in Hanover Township, Luzerne County, has been littered heavily; EPCAMR mentioned that it would follow up with *Terry Ostrowski*, EC CEO, to see if he is aware of the illegal dumping in the area; EPCAMR had cleaned this area up in the Fall of 2002; It's too early to schedule any coordinated cleanup effort until the Spring 2021; Provided Greg with ideas and suggestions from our [Green Infrastructure Plan](#) development for the City of Wilkes-Barre about some educational projects that could be done in some of the City parks at low cost for youth to have something to do when they come out and enjoy the greenspace; There are many ideas in it that I came up with that involve kids as well as stormwater infrastructure improvements that the City could benefit from under their MS4 Program with the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority. The City made some improvements that we recommended at the Spruce Street Park in the Rolling Mill Hill section that was in the plans we developed; EPCAMR recommended some kid's corner nooks in the parks that involved using the local trees (like pine trees with all the fallen pine cones to make natural bird feeders with peanut butter and bird seed that the kids could take home and put in their backyards to encourage backyard wildlife habitat, for example); Hollenback Park and Frances Slocum Park on N. Penn Ave came to mind; EPCAMR suggested mural art projects at many of the locations as well; These ideas fit right in with the Blight Committee work and the work of the block captains
- Signed *Matt Myers*, *Lehman*, *Shannon Blydenburgh* (member of the Stanley Cooper Chapter of TU), *Nanticoke*, and *John Sankey*, *Harvey's Lake*, up to become an EPCAMR Volunteers through the NAACC AOP Culvert Assessment Protocol Training
- Began discussions with *Andy Gegaris*, *MountainTop*, PA who is interested in getting a tire cleanup organized in the Solomon Creek Gap, between *MountainTop* and *Fairview Township* along State 309, where several hundred tires have been illegally dumped over the guard rail above and below Tunnel Road and along the steep banks of the Creek, along the Reading Railroad Corporation's right of way and on Earth Conservancy's property; Informed EC of the problem that was identified many years ago in EPCAMR's Coldwater Conservation Plan for Solomon Creek as far back as 2012

Conferences, Training, Tours, Exhibits, & Workshops

- Participated in a monthly PA AMR Conference Planning Committee call; Received the updated PA AML Campaign logo from *Anne Daymut*, WPCAMR for videos we are producing; A Committee is working on updating the logo for the entire PA AML Campaign; EPCAMR put out a 'Call for Virtual Tours' to our EPCAMR Region partners through Mailchimp; *Ed Wytovich* (CCRA) and *Wayne Lehman* (SCCD) will be recorded at the Oneida #1 AMD Treatment System in the Catawissa Creek to give a virtual tour for the Conference; EPCAMR to schedule a field visit to record the video later in the Summer; *Todd Wood*, PA DEP BAMR will be willing to video the Rausch Creek Active AMD Treatment System in the Anthracite Region and possibly others, if needed;

Determined that EPCAMR doesn't need to make any changes to our Annual 319 Work Plan to move the Conference in 2021 to the Fall instead of the Summer 2021

- Attended the QGIS Training through OSMRE-TIPS to obtain a certification in *Introduction to QGIS for Hydrologic Modeling and Assessments* and had help from *Eric Oliver*, PA DEP Moshannon District Mining Office; Completed the **12** hours of certification and received a Certificate of Completion
- Attended the virtual PA American Fishery Society Research/Plenary Presentations
- Participated in our weekly PA AML Campaign calls with state-wide partners to hear updates on the AML Reauthorization, Community Partnerships Reclamation Act, and RECLAIM Act

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for February 2021 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Provided *Denise* with the February 2021 Statement for reconciliations; Made a deposit to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables
- *Dr. Marchese*, Ph.D. King's College, Wilkes-Barre, asked if EPCAMR needed any assistance from his Senior students for a capstone course he teaches in the Human Resources major starting in mid-February; Sent notes to *Shannon Drevitch*, who will be working on compiling the materials and PowerPoint presentation on The Deming Method and Systems Approach to Non-Profit Management following a Zoom call with her and her Professor
- Updated our Grant prospects, Quarterly Project Status Updates, and Jobs (Projects) List and convened our 1st Quarter EPCAMR Board Meeting on February 18th virtually to review projects, updates, and regional activity by our partners
- Directed *Denise* to draw down and allocate remaining funds in the Huntsville Creek Coldwater Heritage Plan grant and zero out the project since it is completed
- *Jenna St. Clair*, Schuylkill Conservation District, District Manager, provided EPCAMR with a piece of mail from the Department of State regarding our Decennial Reports related to the Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations that is due before December 31, 2021
- EPCAMR convened the 1st Quarter 2021 Board Meeting virtually over Zoom on February 18th; Provided a quarterly update on projects, grants, programs, and events
- EPCAMR will be looking into Ocean State Job Lots for donations of a \$100 gift card they provide to area non-profits