

Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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February 2023 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

• Informed *Denise Hernandez*, EPCAMR Bookkeeper that Invoice 29 would be sent to EPCAMR via ACH on February 6th to cover Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management costs for hauling and excavation of waste culm from the site to the Co-Gen Plants

Bear Creek Mine Pool Study and Conceptual Design Project

• Submitted a quarterly Progress Narrative Report and Reimbursement from November 2022 to *Trish Attardo* and *Dan Koury*, PA DEP to update them on the project through the end of January 2023 and had *Mike* send them down as a single PDF; Forwarded along information provided to EPCAMR from *Tom Clark*-SRBC to *Dan Koury*-PA DEP Pottsville District Mining Office, on the water quality results from the aeration tests conducted in the Bear Creek watershed and a conceptual plan layout that Skelly & Loy are working on for future treatment considerations in the area available from the landowner; EPCAMR found out that after reviewing just a small portion of the mine maps that Harrisburg U. had georeferenced under the Mine Map grant years ago were off in terms of use for the mine pool modeling and mapping that we are working on so we are going to be re-georeferencing many of those maps over the course of the project; We're continuing to working on several of the other Lykens Valley veins going forward; Met with *Trish Attardo*, Project Officer and *Shane Kleiner*, PA DEP to review the previous reimbursement request to clarify details that need a resubmission

NFWF Southern Wyoming Valley Small Watershed Assessment

• Worked on the outline for the final draft plan report until the Spring when some additional water quality and field monitoring will take place to wrap up the collection of data for the report; Worked with Mike to determine the best way to properly cite our bibliography and works cited; Started to work on the narrative sections of the report and collecting reference information that will be included; Provided Karley Stasko, North Branch Land Trust, some recommendations that we will be including in our plan for the Hanover Marsh Crossings in the Warrior Creek watershed after she had requested some ideas to help improve the wetlands area; Communicated with Arjeta Bajramaj, Project Officer to inquire about where to access the reimbursement form in the online portal

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

• Provided Laura Rinehimer the logos and websites for the credits for the "Brooky Saves A Stream" video; Created a press release for the EPCAMR website on the event to release the videos and created another event on Patagonia Action Works to advertise the event; Posted the event to the WNEP Bulletin Board Online; Reached out to Paul Golias-The Citizens Voice and Kent Jackson-Hazleton Standard Speaker to see if they would run a story; Shared the press release with the PA Environmental Digest and on our social media sites; Picked up a donated art piece from Sue Hand's Imagery created with iron oxide pigment by Sue Hand; EPCAMR Staff held our event at Damenti's Restaurant in Hazleton and had a great turnout for the small fundraiser and release of the two environmental education videos on our EPCAMR YouTube channel

MSI Program

 Began working with Mike on a draft grant application to the MSI Program for the new round of funding and submitted the grant before the deadline

Just Transition Fund Rare Earth Elements Federal Access Center Organizational Capacity Building

• EPCAMR is going to research avenues so that we can pull together some of our needs related to Rare Earth Elements in the Anthracite Region using some of our GIS data on AMD discharges; We may be able to create a separate tool that focuses strictly on AMD discharges where we can begin to identify private and public landowners where the actual discharges are located and create a layer that will help in the future with developing relationships with them should future grant proposals be submitted or private companies have an interest in extracting rare earth elements from AMD; Additional data such as flow, chemistry, lab sampling for rare earth elements and other attributes can be included; We can refer initially to the SRBC's Mine Drainage Portal where historically a lot of EPCAMR's data has been submitted years ago; Talked with Frank Sindaco, GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist about this; EPCAMR is still waiting to hear about our federal grant submission with Tetra Tech to work on rare earth elements and the future project proposals that will be selected; Informed that there would be a discussion on rare earth elements from AMD on the national RECLAIM conference call in early March that EPCAMR intends to be a part of

Technical Assistance

Shamokin Creek Watershed Assessment Office of Community & Economic Development Project with Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA) and Tetra Tech

• SCRA informed EPCAMR that they awarded the grant project to Tetra Tech to conduct the Shamokin Creek Watershed Assessment; EPCAMR will be assisting with water quality monitoring and flow measurements at 9 AMD sites throughout the watershed; SCRA convened a meeting with PA DEP BAMR, Tetra Tech, and EPCAMR to review the future scope of the project; Follow up call with Tetra Tech to discuss the water sampling and flow monitoring needs in the Shamokin Creek; Passed along to member of the SCRA some photos of brown trout that were caught in the Shamokin Creek downstream of a number of the AMD treatment systems in the watershed sent along to EPCAMR by Ed Wytovich, Ashland and former EPCAMR President

Loyalsock Creek Watershed AMD Treatment System Monitoring

• Communicated with Walt Nicholson, Susquehanna County Chapter Trout Unlimited who was interested in finding out what the PA DEP BAMR might be doing to enhance or revamp existing treatment systems in the Loyalsock; EPCAMR reached out to Todd Wood, PA DEP BAMR to see if he can provide our partners with an update; They are looking to perform upgrades to the Loyalsock treatment systems and have signed Landowner Consents from White Ash Land Association and are working on a design Scope of Work to be sent out to their consultants for proposals; They also had discussions with OSMRE (Brent Means and Rich Beam) on suggestions for long term treatment and plan to incorporate their suggestions

Solar on Abandoned Mine Lands Focus Group Outreach Sessions & Summit with PA DEP Office of Energy and Technology

 EPCAMR created a website for the project outreach: EPCAMR made suggested changes to the website from Robert Young, PA DEP Energy & Technology Office and Cassidy Robinson, LaBella Associates; Secured St. Vincent College, Latrobe, (March 29th) at the Fred Rogers Center and the Educational Conference Center Auditorium at Luzerne County Community College (April 5th) for the two remaining focus group sessions from 1-4 to have invited stakeholders provide input and feedback to LaBella Associates that will be placed into a Summary Document and Report to be presented at a one day Solar Summit on Mined Lands in State College on July 19th at the Ramada Inn; EPCAMR Staff called stakeholders and emailed them as invite-only requests to keep the focus groups small and informal from our EPCAMR database; Provided Jake Smith with links related to solar development on abandoned mine lands for his school project and invited him to attend the April 5th focus group forum at LCCC, Nanticoke; Informed Cristy Sweeney, ARIPPA about the upcoming focus group meetings and the Summit; Submitted draft questions to Robert Young, PA DEP Energy & Technology Office and Cassidy Robinson, LaBella Associates, to be considered for inclusion in the future survey after the focus group meetings and some for the focus group meetings; Reviewed LaBella's stakeholder engagement questions; Participated on two conference calls with Corey Hindin, AC Power and Kyle Miller, to inform them of the upcoming focus group meetings and to invite him to attend; Krista L. Schneider, PennTAP Technical Advisor informed EPCAMR of a March TEC Talk: Energy Technologies & Transitions - PennTAP (psu.edu)

ARIPPA Mini-Grant Program

- Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA) sent along photos of the wooden educational signs that will be placed at one of their treatment systems where they installed a jumping weir with funding provided by ARIPPA; The signs are wood-burned by students and are receiving a graffiti-resistant glaze
- Reviewed the <u>PA Mine Fire Story Map</u> created by *Mike* on the status of mine fires across PA in ArcGIS
- Downloaded several study guides to review for the FAA 107 License to be able to fly EPCAMR's drone for use in our work across the region
- Provided Sarah Benson, a Chemical Engineering and Biochemistry student at Northeastern
 <u>University</u>, Boston, MA, a tour of AMD sites in the Wyoming Valley where she grabbed water
 samples for her senior project; Provided Sarah with reference links on anthracite vein
 nomenclature and referenced watershed reports

- Coordinated with Renee Carey, Northcentral PA Conservancy about receiving a donation of a
 electroshocking back pack unit; Coordinated with Gary L. Schetrompf, Course Leader, with the
 US Fish & Wildlife Service about obtaining proper training and completing an online course for
 future utilization of the backpack unit for some of our Staff; EPCAMR needs to sign up for a US
 Department of the Interior Talent Account
- Reviewed a PennBid RFQ provided to EPCAMR by LaBella Associates to determine if EPCAMR could be a partner with them on mine treatment design and engineering, however after reviewing it, qualified engineers are needed to design and treat AMD; EPCAMR can perform water quality monitoring and flow measurements of AMD discharges but do not design or engineer treatment systems ourselves; For many of the AMD discharges that are in the Susquehanna River basin, there is a great need for the establishment of long-term field monitoring stations and data loggers, water level loggers, etc., weirs (when possible) to properly assess the field conditions of the chemistry and flow to obtain the proper loadings that lead to future design/construction of AMD Treatment systems; These things are not in place currently in a large majority of the basin due to historic lack of funding for this type of monitoring effort; We don't know how firms are going to design treatment systems without the proper data collection and solid historic flows and chemistries to understand what the best type of treatment system will be needed; Suggested that they review the AMDTreat software tool that allows one to determine the type of treatment systems, costs for both active and passive technologies, for AMD treatment
- Connected Bernie Hansen, BlueCup Ventures LLC, with Jaret Gibbons, ARIPPA to see if he
 could provide him with some historical background information on a formerly reclaimed site on
 the west side of SR 309 about a mile south of the SR 424 & SR 309 intersection in Hazleton
 where the former NEPCO Co-Generation Plant had once operated; Suggested that Bernie also
 contact the PA DEP Pottsville District Mining Office to see if there were any information available
 in the historical permit history file archive
- John Levitsky, Luzerne Conservation District Watershed Specialist requested that EPCAMR visit a site in the Abraham Creek watershed between West Pettibone Street & Shulde Lane, Wyoming Borough to perform a quick field chemistry sample to determine if the seep might be an AMD discharge, manifestation of the mine pool in the area, or just a vernal wetland pool area, if the chemistry is good; John provided the directions and coordinates; This was an area we had investigated years ago during our Abraham Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan that was a mosquito infested area along the railroad tracks that we had initially thought was a manifestation of the mine pool in the area; It seemed to be flowing at around 30 gpm; Mike Baloga, Wyoming Borough Council member, was concerned about a flow of water that has surfaced in the last year; There is no obvious odor, coloration or other evidence that it is mine discharge flows and it is very interesting that the flows surfaced last year as precipitation was below average last summer and moderately dry at the present time

Education & Outreach

PA Trout in the Classroom EE Project

- Released the fry into the tank on the 6th of February; *Mike Shimko*, STEM teacher at Wilkes-Barre Area School District inquired about the program and how to get one started as well as who would they have to seek as a community conservation organization as a sponsor; Referred Mike to the Stanley Cooper Chapter Trout Unlimited for a request to help with costs of the chiller; Provided several other links to resources that he will need for the students
- Suggested that Mike Shimko, STEM teacher at Wilkes-Barre Area School District check with
 the Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society (they have a few projects going on) or the North
 Branch Land Trust or even The Lands at Hillside; Diane Madl at the Nescopeck State Park; The
 PA Game Commission may still be doing white-nose syndrome monitoring at the Glen Lyon Bat
 Caves of various species of big browns, little browns, and Indiana brown bats that we helped
 them survey a few years back; Mike had two outdoor wildlife game cameras he'd like to see go
 to local monitoring projects and the Glen Lyon Bat Caves are on the PA DCNR Bureau of
 Forestry lands that are an abandoned mine doubling as a habitat for bats
- Provided Emily Baldauff, Mid-Atlantic Organizer, Trout Unlimited with a link to the news story on an illegal spill that happened in 2017 into Toby Creek in Luzerne County, PA; EPCAMR just recently completed a Coldwater Conservation Plan for the watershed in the Spring of 2022; Charges filed against Dallas Area Municipal Authority for untreated waste water dumped in Toby Creek | Times Leader; WNEP News Story
- Provided Jacob Smith, National Fish Coalition with EPCAMR's logo that he requested to place
 on a few signs that he'll be creating for future placement around the Wyoming Valley that identify
 wild brook trout waters to ensure their protection and conservation
- Communicated with Mariah Davis, Choose Clean Water Coalition about attending the trip to Washington DC on March 1st to meet with PA legislators and their Aides/Staff to discuss projects and work that is ongoing in the Chesapeake Bay watershed related to AMD and abandoned mine land reclamation as well as solar energy development advocacy on abandoned mine lands
- Scheduled a meeting with the new <u>Penn-State Master Watershed Steward Program</u> Coordinator *Karl Borton*, who was interested in finding out ways some of his volunteers from Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties can partner with EPCAMR throughout the year and to see if we can schedule a watershed field tour with them later in the year
- Followed up with *Bill Reichert*, Schuylkill Conservation District about *Chris Breischy's* tree order for his property through the Keystone 10Million Trees Partnership; Followed up with *Chris* to let him know that the order was placed and that he would have to coordinate the pickup
- Met with Jeff Randolph, BlueCup Ventures, LLC to discuss future abandoned mine land reclamation economic development projects in the Hazleton Area and in the Wyoming Valley
- Participated in a Teams call with the PA DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Board;
 Participated in another Teams call on federal funds availability for EJ communities, including coalfield communities

- EPCAMR let *Liz Hughes*, Earth Conservancy, know that we would need a table cloth for our exhibit at the Junior Achievement INSPIRE educational outreach event to high school students in April at the Mohegan Sun, Wilkes-Barre on our work in the region to provide examples of the type of career opportunities that are available in the field of abandoned mine land reclamation and AMD cleanup; Registered to set up a virtual booth online;
- Mailed some iron oxide pigment to Rachel Bacon (in the <u>Diepenheim Drawing Centre</u>, Netherlands), who is interested in creating some artwork from AMD
- Reached out to *Todd Burns*, PA Trout Unlimited to provide him with an update on the Jeddo Mine Tunnel future proposal by PA DEP BAMR to study infiltration points to come up with a plan to reduce surface water into the mine pool complex and to begin thinking about future treatment options; Mentioned to *Todd* that it would be fine to forward EPCAMR's information on to the Western Pocono Chapter TU that has an interest in supporting efforts to clean up the Nescopeck Creek; Provided additional information and resource links to *Janet Schmidt*, President of the Western Pocono Chapter TU after receiving a letter from her asking EPCAMR if we would continue to support efforts to clean up the Jeddo Mine Tunnel;
- Conference call with Bernie McGurl, Lackawanna River Conservation Association to discuss a few updates on the Old Forge AMD Borehole project with PA DEP BAMR and Adam Rousselle, Energy Aggregators
- Completed a survey on EPCAMR's work on eastern brook trout in our region over the last few years for the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture at the request of *Lori Maloney*
- Participated in the bi-weekly Reclaiming Appalachia conference call to discuss projects, funding, partnership opportunities, and federal updates
- Participated in a Choose Clean Water Coalition conference call and webinar; Attended the Choose Clean Water Coalition Chesapeake Bay Day event in Washington DC to meet with PA leaders in Congress and congressional and senatorial aides and key Staffers to provide them with updates on projects within their districts on abandoned mine lands and in watersheds impacted by AMD; Discussed success stories around the EPCAMR Region that utilized various funding sources targeted within the Chesapeake Bay watershed
- Provided Tom Mayka, Stormwater Coordinator for the Dallas Area Municipal Authority (DAMA)
 with regional contacts and organizations that might be in need of funding for small projects in the
 Toby Creek Watershed and also provided him with Mike Shimko's, Wilkes-Barre Area School
 District, and Ron Kirkutis, Lehman School District who have implemented and are looking to
 implement a Trout in the Classroom Project with their students
- Participated in four weekly PA Abandoned Mine Land Campaign conference calls to hear updates on legislation, funding, updates from regional partners around the state, STREAM Act, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill funding as it relates to abandoned mine land reclamation
- Dr. Beth Berkhauser, Art Professor, informed EPCAMR that our Executive Director and Dr.
 Andrea Nerozzi, EPCAMR Board Member from Wyoming Seminary, were selected along with Dr. Berkhauser to receive the <u>National Art Education Association</u> (NAEA) Award posted by the NAEA Ecology and Environment Interest Group in April 2023; She used our wonderful teaching

mural project with exploring the abandoned mine reclamation and using AMD as a pigment for creating art hexagons in Luzerne County and the amazing multi-school project organized by *Valerie McEuen* and many teachers and students in Sullivan, MO, which traced connections between students in a rural community to the effects of pollution in the Gulf of Mexico through the river systems. EPCAMR and the teachers from Missouri both used the Hexagon Project Special Theme "*Transforming Conflict*"; The Hexagon Project only invites and promotes deep integrated learning and action-taking with important art-making; It's the talented, imaginative and engaged teachers who take little hexagons to heights that no one can imagine – who put it into concrete, visible learning through Art; *Dr. Berkhauser* will be accepting the award on our behalf

 Publicized on EPCAMR's social media outlets the Pennsylvania American Water's 2023 Protect Our Watersheds <u>Art Contest</u>; The contest is for fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students in schools served by Pennsylvania American Water, as well as individual students who live in the company's service area

Shickshinny Creek Watershed Coldwater Conservation Plan (proposed for future grant)

• Reached out to some project partners in the region to see if EPCAMR could begin to pull together letters of support for a coldwater conservation plan on the Little Shickshinny Creek drainage area in the southern portion of the Wyoming Valley just south of Shickshinny, in the former Stackhouse Colliery abandoned mine workings and State Game Lands 261; Native Fish Coalition-PA Chapter, Luzerne Conservation District, and Stanley Cooper Chapter TU were initially targeted for outreach; The proposal for the PA TU CHP grant is March 10th and we may not have enough time to pull together a complete proposal for this round, however, it may be ready for a future round of funding; EPCAMR would propose to complete an assessment, water quality monitoring, macro ID, and culvert assessments at publicly accessible roads, bridges, and culverts using the NAACC aquatic organism passage (AOP) survey sheets; We will end up asking TU to conduct an electroshocking survey at several locations to be determined; We would make recommendations for future implementation projects; We would sample any AMD we find that might be discharging from the former Stackhouse Colliery; If we find native trout areas (we have heard there are both native brooks and reproducing brown populations in the watershed: There are two other tributary streams close by on SGL 261 that we would want to investigate that are 1st or 2nd order that go directly to the Susquehanna River called Paddy Run and Rocky Run that could be very productive trout waters; It may be overly ambitious to get the proposal completed by March with all of the other work EPCAMR is currently working on throughout the region

Community Volunteer Projects Coordination

• EPCAMR was made aware of an illegally dumped tire pile on Earth Conservancy property that is abandoned mine lands in the Nanticoke Creek watershed on Leuder's Creek in Hanover Township, Luzerne County, that was blocking a culvert with nearly 250 tires; EPCAMR Executive Director got permission to investigate it and pull together some volunteers to remove the tires and utilize some funding from the PA American Water Charitable Trust to pay for the removal of the tires by The Tire Guys; The photos shared on social media went viral and a news station picked up the story when Earth Conservancy offered a reward; 7 EPCAMR volunteers showed up to pick up the tires on February 15th in a few short hours; Found a dropped U-Haul security access key at the site with a magnetic strip and a cardboard box with an address on it, and turned it over to Sergeant John Van Why, Hanover Township Police Department for further investigation as a possible piece of evidence

- EPCAMR was informed of yet another illegally dumped tire pile that is on abandoned mines in another part of Hanover Township, Luzerne County, on North Point's property; Reached out to *Brian Stahl*, from North Point development, to access the site, take pictures, determine the number of tires, and then follow up with the developer; Around **250** additional tires are at this location; Communicated with North Point and am waiting on approval to see if they would like EPCAMR to coordinate a cleanup in the Spring 2023; Followed up with *Sam Guesto*, Hanover Township Manager, and *Andy Reilly*, Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority who also own land in the area that may need to be accessed to remove the pile
- Kathleen Mooney, Wilkes University student reached out to EPCAMR to let us know that she
 would be available in the late Spring and Summer if EPCAMR does any more culvert
 assessment work in the Wyoming Valley

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

- Participated in a PA AMR Conference Planning Committee call to work through logistics and the food choices for the menu; Reviewed the Conference Planning Committee minutes; Reviewed the third iteration of the draft contract agreement with the Grand Hotel, Altoona with members of the PA AMR Conference Committee and made several comments to submit to Shaina McNally-Director of Sales, for changes that need to be made before being signed; Submitted the comments and revisions on February 2nd; Reviewed the final draft of the sponsorship letter that can be posted and distributed for the Fall Conference for Anne Daymut, WPCAMR for approval; Requested that Jeff Ream-OSMRE make a presentation on AMD Treat 6.0 at the PA AMR Conference; Requested that Shanice Edwards-NCAC make a presentation on grant writing, grant management, grant funding at the Conference, however she was not able to attend; Requested that Juan Serrat or Justin Dula-PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice make a presentation at the Conference in EJ; Requested that *Tom Clark-SRBC* make a presentation on the Susquehanna River Basin Commission's Mine Drainage Portal or a project on the Moshannon Creek and asked him if he was going to still be participating in coordinating the tour route for the AMD/Watershed Bus Tour as a part of the pre-conference; Requested that *Robert* Young-PA DEP Office of Energy & Technology or Cassidy Robinson-LaBella Associates consider making a presentation on solar on abandoned mine lands once the Solar Summit is complete in July 2023 in State College, PA; Requested that Annie Regan-Reclaiming Appalachia make a presentation at the PA AMR Conference: Requested that Adam Rousselle-Energy Aggregators make a presentation on an update where his efforts are on the Old Forge AMD Borehole and his pump storage project proposal; Provided Cliff Denholm-Stream Restoration Inc. with a link to the Request for Presentations on the PA AMR Conference website; Provided Andrew Yablonski-Regional Business Manager for Profile Products, LLC, with information on the conference since he may want to exhibit; The National Association of State Land Reclamationists (NASLR) is interested in running their conference congruently with ours so the Planning Committee participated in Zoom conference call with their Committee to discuss the possibilities
- Informed *Pat Webb*, PA DEP BAMR, that the domain for the 2019 NAAMLP Conference would be expiring; EPCAMR had initially paid for the domain when we all jointly held the conference in Pittsburgh; Pat informed us that they had all of the content from the site archived and there was no need to renew the domain, so EPCAMR will just let it expire

- Participated in a Zoom conference call with Sara Ramotnik-Senior Membership and Program Coordinator-Choose Clean Water Coalition about the solar on abandoned mine lands advocacy work EPCAMR has been supporting across PA; Provided her with some contacts that she can reach out to for their "ForumPlus" CCWC Annual Conference on May 22nd, as a part of a deep dive into solar siting; The Coalition has partnered with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and are envisioning this workshop to be a mix of information sharing and an interactive workshop where they may want EPCAMR to participate; Teams call with Alexis Ondesh and Kelsey Forren from Energix Renewables to discuss EPCAMR's work on locating potential solar sites on abandoned mine land sites in PA
- Participated in an Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture on the importance of isolation, drift, and genetics for conservation of native brook trout

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for the February 2023 renewal with Highmark; Closed the Verizon phone account and are continuing with Ooma; Paid EC the rent; Made deposits to FNB for incoming checks
- EPCAMR 1st Quarter Board meeting was cancelled due to no motions to be acted upon this early in the year; Sent out notice of cancellation to the Board and partners
- Conducted a webinar test with the PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice on Microsoft Teams since they are transitioning to that platform entirely going forward
- OneSource provided a copy of Brady Mock's 1099-MISC form that EPCAMR forwarded to him;
 There was a misspelling on his previous form that needed to be corrected
- Met with *Tara Jones*, Scranton, who was interested in future volunteer opportunities with EPCAMR and to learn more about our work in the region and to learn of any future internship possibilities
- Completed the February 2023 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike*