



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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February 2020 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Upper Toby Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Followed up with *Rachel Kester*-Program Director, PA TU to let her know that EPCAMR completed and submitted the Final Budget Document for the Plan and that we would be following up with *Kathleen Lavelle*, TU to make a request for the electroshocking survey report to include as an Appendix to the Plan; The final electroshocking survey has to be approved by Amy Wolfe before being released back to EPCAMR; EPCAMR hasn't received the final survey to be able to post on our website along with all of our other resources on the Coldwater Conservation Plan; *Tom Mayka*-DAMA Stormwater Coordinator provided EPCAMR with a copy of *Field Guide to Roadside Wildflowers* for our reference and commented on our great and impressed he was with the Final Upper Toby Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan and StoryMap; Requested that he place a link on his website for DAMA of the Plan for others to view

Swoyersville PA AML Pilot Reclamation Project

- Provided *Dean Baker*, PA DEP BAMR with an update on the project; 15% of the removal of the material has occurred to date; *Gerald Schmidt*-PA DEP BAMR Project Officer provided an update as well; **\$589,354.53** and **36,518.92** Tons have been removed since July 1, 2018

Bear Creek AMD Treatment Survey, Conceptual Design & Preliminary O & M Work Plan (proposed)

- *Trish Attardo*, PA DEP 319 Water Program Specialist for the Watershed Support Section informed EPCAMR that she had submitted our revised comments to the US EPA and that she would let us know when she hears back from them

NFWF Small Watershed Grant Technical Assistance for Watersheds Along the Eastern Flank of the Wyoming Valley (proposed)

- Informed *Liz Feinberg*- CalVan Environmental - Planning, Policy and Compliance, that EPCAMR reviewed the RFP and would be applying over the next two months for the **\$50,000** grant and will be seeking support letters from municipalities and local community groups; Participated in a conference call with Liz to flush out proposal ideas and registered for a March webinar on the grant application process

Growboxx Food by Youth, Reclaiming Our Backyards in the Coalfields Project

- Convened a conference call with *Claudia Meglin*, ISI, LLC and *Joe Sapienza* to discuss the video format of the short documentary-like films that will be a part of the project when the apple tree saplings are planting; Called ArkRentals to secure the auger necessary for planting the apple tree plantings; Began working with Claudia and Laura on designs for the *Appalachian Tree Planting Project* in Centralia, PA and created our logo; Discussed logistics with *Joe* on filming down in Centralia; Continued to work on a draft budget estimate for the project; *Ed Wytovich* provided EPCAMR with his expertise in planting the apple trees given his extensive background in horticulture and offered to help plant them on April 4th, 2020; *Amanda Powell*-Digital Advocacy Coordinator for Patagonia Action Works provided EPCAMR with the estimated value of the Facebook advertising costs (~\$300 per campaign/event) for us to utilize as matching funds in a grant proposal to the Mental Insight Foundation; Nominated *Amanda* for a PAEE Business Partner Award and she was selected to receive it at the *PAEE Annual Conference* in Champion, PA

Technical Assistance

- Forwarded the EC Environmental Workforce Training (EWT) Agenda to *Hank Zielinski*-Northampton Generating so that he had the time that we were going to be bringing the students to the Swoyersville PA AML Pilot Reclamation site; Provided the necessary training the entire day to the cohort at the EC Office on the Introduction to Brownfields and AML/AMD with the EPCAMR Staff
- *Cliff Denholm*, Stream Restoration Inc., asked EPCAMR to review the Datashed to see if any AMD treatment systems are missing on the database and to get back to him as he was beginning to plan for another round of sampling in the Summer for a Snapshot of the AMD treatment systems state-wide
- Provided *Scott Brady*-President of the Stanley Cooper Chapter TU, with EPCAMR's interpretation of the PA DCNR Riparian Buffer Grant Program
- Asked *Mike* and *Steve* to look into the In-Situ [Turbidity](#) Meter Testing [Equipment](#) for future consideration should we need it to test for TSS; Suggested we reach out to *Tyler Hinz*, In-Situ after we reviewed the various products
- Referred *Guy Sheets*, AMO Environmental with several construction companies in the Hazleton Area at his request that EPCAMR is familiar with that can be accessed through the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce; Met with *Greg Firely*-Senior Project Manager for AMO Environmental to provide him with some contacts and information, including a copy of my recent Testimony before the House Natural Resources Committee related to brownfields development on abandoned mine land sites; Suggested that AMO exhibit at our Summer 2020 Conference in State College, PA in June

- Provided *Joe Sapienza* some information on the Agnes Flood and contact information for Alan Stout, who worked on the [Agnes Flood Documentary](#); Wilkes University recently received a [grant](#) to archive and preserve some documentation on the Agnes Flood; Provided Joe with contact information for Tony Brooks, Wilkes-Barre Preservation Society and former Executive Director of the Luzerne County Historical Society
- *Dione Mercer*, Geisenger Health Systems, Henry Hood Center for Health Research ordered an EPCAMR CD on RAMLIS
- Provided *Jarred Whittaker*, Administrator of the Abandoned Railroads of the Wyoming Valley Facebook Page with contact information for *Bill Best*, Huber Breaker Preservation Society to discuss the preservation of the CNJ Culvert Street Overpass at the entrance to Carey's Patch, Ashley Borough
- Signed *Frank Sindaco*, GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist to complete the NAACC Aquatic Organism Passage Protocol Training to conduct field culvert assessments with the rest of the Staff
- Drafted a letter for the Huber Breaker Preservation Society (HBPS) to provide to the Ashley Borough Solicitor Attorney *Pete Moses* to write up explaining the transfer of the Miner's Memorial Park in Ashley to the Borough and the support they have stated for allow for the remaining funds in the PA DCED grant being administered by the Huber Breaker Preservation Society that is seeking a 1 year extension to complete the remaining reclamation work within the Park; Sent the letter to *Patrick Kennedy*, HBPS to send along to *Attorney Moses*; Worked with Pat to get another letter together to update PA DCED on the status of the project and to officially seek the 1 year extension; Suggested to George Lehman, President of the HBPS to follow up with *Joe Stefaniak* about seeing if he would still be willing to contribute additional funding to the project that he had initially committed years ago
- Provided a copy of our [link](#) to a few [StoryMaps](#) of some of EPCAMR's work to the National RECLAIM Working Group; Participated in a conference call to discuss how to set up PA AML/AMD Tours with local government officials and legislators
- Provided *Frank Dombrowski*, EPCAMR Intern, from Marywood University with a draft appeal letter of some of the reasons why we are looking for a donated truck for our operations and work throughout the Region; We need a vehicle that is rugged, 4WD, has space for our field equip, monitoring equipment, backpacks, educational supplies, waders, flow meters, and water sampling equipment to perform our tasks in the field
- Provided *Ben Donovan*, US ACE with two letters from EPCAMR that showed our support for working with them under their Section 510 and 206 Program to secure funds for AMD and abandoned mine land reclamation and or watershed/ecosystem habitat restoration projects
- Provided some slogans to ARIPPA for a bumper sticker campaign they were considering

- Discussed the MayFly DIY Monitoring Data Recorder Station that EPCAMR will be building for the Lackawanna County Conservation District's Watershed Specialist, *Cheryl Nolan*; Forwarded a technical contact from a TU member, *Russ Thrall*, who worked with *Paul Wilson*, from East Stroudsburg University in the Poconos, who installed one on the Cherry Creek
- Met with *Colin Gardner* from S3 Stormwater Solutions regarding active/semi-active treatment for AMD; They deal in stormwater but have heard of their products being tested for AMD; He left us with information on a modular canister style filter for removing metals from Fabco and a filter fabric fence for us to try out and demo at an AMD discharge location

Education & Outreach

- Informed *Amanda Schraeder*, 8th Grade Science Teacher at Greater Nanticoke Area that she could contact the PA Fish & Boat Commission for an additional batch of fish for the Life Skills Trout in the Classroom tank that we EPCAMR helped set up in the school through our donation of equipment in the Fall of 2019; Answered her questions about water testing and feeding schedules for the fish
- Coordinated an Earth Day Education Event with Kistler Elementary teacher and long-time friend and partner, *Mr. Matt McHenry* for May 7th
- *Long Sang Wong*, student at Wyoming Seminary Upper School provided EPCAMR with a final copy of their video of their AMD Tour with the Staff around the Wyoming Valley
- *Dr. Margarita Rose*, Ph. D., King's College, Professor of Economics reached out to EPCAMR to see if her Spring 2020 Class might be able to take on a small project for their class; Provided her with new numbers on the fishery evaluations that her students could use possibly, if the AMD streams were to be restored; Suggested that the students do a watershed evaluation of streams in the Wyoming Valley; Suggested to her something related to illegal dumping and the costs of cleanups to the communities that we are serving
- At the request of Representative *Parke Wentling*, Chairman of the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control & Conservation Committee, the EPCAMR Executive Director was invited to testify at a public hearing to discuss what impact a cap-and-trade program for greenhouse gas emissions would have on PA's coal refuse cogeneration industry; The [hearing](#) was held on February 21st at the Strand Theater in McAdoo, PA; Representatives from State agencies, stakeholders and local organizations were invited to participate in the hearing; The discussion centered on how a cap-and-trade program would impact the economic and environmental benefits of coal refuse cogeneration in PA, the two most important aspects surrounding this issue; Provided Sakura Ung-Project Manager for the Joint Legislative Conservation Committee testimony that was prepared in advance of the hearing and testified on February 21st

- Participated in a conference call with the PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice and will be working with the OEJ on the Climate Action Change Plan Update with NE Regional Coordinator, *Justin Dula*; EPCAMR planned on assisting with the coordination of a Scranton Roundtable in the Summer 2020; Informed him of many of the groups that we could help reach out to in the heart of our region in the Northern Coalfields including the Lackawanna River Conservation Association, who just received the River of the Year Award. Lackawanna Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited, Penn-State Extension, Master Watershed Stewards, Scranton U., The Scranton Area Foundation, Moses Taylor Foundation, Luzerne Foundation, The Greenhouse Project, United Neighborhoods Center, PEC NE Region, and the Lackawanna Valley Heritage Authority; Completed the Climate Action Plan survey and reviewed the Keep PA Beautiful Litter Research 2019 Brief
- Registered with the Choose Clean Water Coalition (CCWC) to attend Educational Meetings in Washington DC with area legislative Staff to discuss clean water issues in PA on March 4th, 2020; Participated in a webinar before heading down to DC
- Sent *Ed Wytovich* some pictures of our AMD Tie Dye Shirts to see if they might be able to sell them at the Pioneer Tunnel; Travelled down to Ashland on 2-11-2020 with *Laura* for a meeting with Board Members of the Pioneer Tunnel and brought down samples of the shirts, our iron oxide pigment, and ceramics that showcase the glaze we've had created from the iron oxide; EPCAMR will work in partnership with the Pioneer Tunnel to develop an environmental education curriculum for programs at the Museum
- *Dr. Andrea Nerozzi*, requested some iron oxide pigment to send to one of her Buddhist art instructors, *Andy Weber*, [Andy Weber Studios](#), who has an international reputation, and has returned to making his own paints; He lives in Great Britain; She also asked if EPCAMR could work with some of her students to come up with a [Geothermal Design Challenge](#) if a group was interested in pursuing it at Wyoming Seminary; EPCAMR agreed to assist her and the students should they pursue the competition; Student teams of two or three will use geographic information system (GIS) mapping to create a compelling infographic/poster or interactive map to discover potential opportunities from this renewable energy source, with a \$10,000 prize purse; Ideal candidates study or have an interest in geography, renewable energy, land surveying, engineering, and data analytics; A group of students met with *Mike* to review information that they would need for the competition
- Participated in two PA AML Campaign conference calls for the month
- Participated in an Energy Workgroup conference call with *Mariah Davis*, Choose Clean Water Coalition (CCWC) to discuss alternative energy projects on AML sites

- The Director of the Wyoming Seminary STEM Program would like to incorporate an AMD/AML Camp as a week of their Science ELL (English Language Learners, 9th grade); The reason is that it would let EPCAMR and Seminary run the program once; generate feedback, and then use that experience to garner a grant for the following year (likely from alumni); In the first year, it would include two field trips with EPCAMR Staff; The second year program would be open to any interested HS students and would run 5 days for 3 hrs each day; It would have a fee to cover expenses, but we would offer financial assistance for those who are in need
- Encouraged *Laura* to sign up for an account in the Environment and Ecology Professional Learning Community on PA Department of Education's [Standards Aligned System \(SAS\)](#) since the Science and Technology and Environment and Ecology Standards are being updated; They are seeking input from stakeholders, including EPCAMR and Conservation Districts
- Met with *Dave Casey* and his Staff from the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Penguins Organization to discuss a future fundraiser for EPCAMR at a Penguins game at the Mohegun Sun Arena in Wilkes-Barre; Introduced the Staff to our mission and goals and since they have a strong affiliation with coal from the Pittsburgh Region they were very excited to have EPCAMR as a future organization that they could support
- Reviewed an excellent [article](#) in the Washington Post Sunday Magazine on *Patrick Angel's* work, who was a retired OSMRE Inspector that has worked with EPCAMR for many years on his colleagues' work to study and reclaim mine sites with trees; The scientific studies to do it in mentions that they are sustainable, and grow larger than other methods; *Patrick* is an amazing colleague and we have enjoyed partnering with him on ARRI Forest Reclamation Approach Projects in Northeastern PA; We need more stories and story maps; Great pictures, quotes, full page photos of landscapes both reclaimed and unreclaimed, and images of people who you just look into their eyes and they tell their stories themselves and you can literally feel the passion and commitment they have for taking back and restoring their communities
- Promoted to our EPCAMR network and social media, the NFWF Webinar on the [Small Watershed Grants Program](#) that will be held on March 11th
- Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful provided EPCAMR with the release of two important research reports: *Pennsylvania Litter Research Study* and *The Cost of Litter & Illegal Dumping in Pennsylvania - A Study of Nine Cities Across the Commonwealth*; All documents and related material, including Fact Sheets, News Releases, etc., can be viewed and shared from DEP's website, [PA Littering Action Plan](#)

Community Volunteer Coordination

- Continued to talk with *Dr. Margarita Rose*, King's College, Wilkes-Barre on providing her with some ideas for her students in her Environmental Economics class to work on during the Spring semester
- Signed off on *Matthew Williams*, Trucksville, PA Eagle Scout Project; Matt, his troop members, Dad, Grandfather, and EPCAMR Executive Director constructed a kiosk for public information at the Ashley Borough Park, along Solomon Creek

Conferences, Training, Tours, Exhibits, & Workshops

- Coordinated an EPCAMR AMD & Reclamation Tour with *Dylan Brown*-Reporter from E & E News, *Jarett Gibbons*-Executive Director-ARIPPA, and *Cristy Sweeney*-ARIPPA; He was going to incorporate several tax bills, including Reauthorization, RECLAIM, and an Energy Tax Credit that EPCAMR supported along with ARIPPA to keep the remaining Co-Gen Plants open and reclaiming waste culm piles like our Swoyersville PA AML Pilot Project
- *Liz Hughes*, EC, informed EPCAMR that she would be the one representing EC at the PA AMR Conference and making the presentation on the Environmental Workforce Training Program partnership with EPCAMR, US EPA, PSU Wilkes-Barre, and PA CareerLink on the panel
- EPCAMR billed *Jane Ashton*, Director of Continuing Education, PSU Wilkes-Barre \$1300 for the Environmental Workforce Training *Introduction to Brownfields Program* for training the students in the class in partnership with EC
- Followed up with Graymont, to see who was interested in speaking at the *2020 PA AMR Conference* on the Economic Benefits of AML Reclamation Panel; Reviewed the minutes from the 2-6-20 PA AMR Conference Committee call; Discussed the final sponsorship and exhibitor cost levels with members of the AMR Conference Committee
- Requested confirmation from Staff to see if they would be able to attend the *Stanley Cooper Chapter TU Banquet* on March 28th, 2020 at the Holiday Inn, E. Mountain Inn, Wilkes-Barre
- Attended the **Keystone Coldwater Conference** on February 28th and 29th, in State College and gave the opening remarks, participated on a Panel Discussion on Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) and shared a Keynote Speaking Engagement over lunch with John Dawes from The Foundation for PA Watersheds on Reauthorization and the RECLAIM Act; EPCAMR was a sponsor of the event

- Executive Director enrolled in Cornell University's Civic Ecology Lab "[Environmental Education Outcomes](#)" free online course; Forwarded the information to several of the Staff for their consideration
- EPCAMR exhibited at the BENCO Dental Booster Fair to recruit community volunteers to assist with projects in the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for February 2020 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Made a deposit to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables
- Provided to OneSource, additional New Hire paperwork for *Frank Sindaco*, Wilkes-Barre, newly hired EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist, Part-time
- Received a resume from *Steven Grebe*, King's College student, for consideration of the second Part-time GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist position
- Received EPCAMR's SUTA Rate letter for 2020 and forwarded it to *Jessica Barbose*, OneSource; OneSource provided EPCAMR with a link to LifeMart discount program available to employees from ADP; After the EPCAMR Executive Director gets a chance to review it, it will be forwarded to all employees
- Sent out the Meeting Notice and Agenda to the EPCAMR Board for our 2-20-20 *Strategic Planning Retreat Meeting* at Nescopeck State Park; Worked with Mike to develop a powerpoint on the Strategic Planning Process that we will be working through at the meeting; Received attendance notifications from Board members on who will be attending; Provided Deming notes from Systems with a View to our Chairperson for the Strategic Planning Committee, *Leigh Ann Henry*; *Dr. Andrea Nerozzi* offered to help with the Strategic Planning notes; Convened the EPCAMR Strategic Planning Meeting and also showcased the trailer to **RECLAIMING PA!** that Joe Sapienza, fellow Board Member is working on
- *Gloria Norcross*, Dushore, PA introduced herself as the new Watershed Specialist/Chesapeake Bay Technician for the Sullivan County Conservation District and informed EPCAMR that she would be attending our 1st Quarter Strategic Planning Retreat Meeting at the Nescopeck State Park on 2-20-20
- Sought background information for a candidate for the 2020 Mayfly Award from partners and submitted the nomination to the PA AMR Conference Planning Committee for review and a vote

- Discussed with Staff about coming up with a grant proposal for the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) of the Luzerne Foundation related to drones and STEM learning activities for students; Applied for the grant and *Shawnese* and *Laura* will present our pitch at the 7th Annual Luzerne Foundation Forum on March 19th at the East Mountain Inn, Wilkes-Barre; Met with *Hannah Wolfe* from the YAC to discuss with her what our project proposal was going to entail and how we were going to use the drone for Environmental Education programs and to create content to help people understand the impacts of past mining practices in the region
- *Levi-Sunday Lefkowitz*, University of Rochester student, Trucksville resident, was interested in an internship with EPCAMR and was a former student at Wyoming Seminary in *Dr. Andrea Nerozzi's* Class; Informed *Dr. Nerozzi* to tell him to submit his resume and cover letter for consideration; Reviewed his resume, interviewed him, and approved him for a Summer Internship for 2020
- Informed *Kyle Argenziano*, Bloomsburg University Senior to submit his resume for consideration of a Spring/Summer Internship with EPCAMR
- The EPCAMR Executive Director was informed by PAEE that he had been nominated and selected as the Winner of the [2020 Keystone Award](#), the highest award given to an environmental educator in PA; This prestigious award recognizes an educator who has dedicated their life to advancing the quality and opportunity for environmental education in PA; Recipients of this award display uncommon and exceptional understanding, passion and commitment to environmental education and serve as an inspiration to other environmental educators; Initially registered to attend to receive the award at Seven Springs, in Champion, PA later in March 2020 at the Annual PAEE/PRPS Conference
- Signed on to a Sign-On Letter to the Democratic Leadership showing EPCAMR's support for the RECLAIM Act, Reauthorization, and the Black Lung Excise Tax; For communities that have sacrificed so much for our nation we now ask Congress to support workers by extending the Black Lung Excise Tax, provide a short term economic boost through reclaiming mine lands with the RECLAIM Act, and invest in the long term reclamation of our regions by reauthorizing the Abandoned Mine Lands Act
- Prepared and submitted a letter of recommendation to *Jessica Cronauer*, Leadership Wilkes-Barre, for *Kayleigh Saraka*, and EPCAMR volunteer who applied to participate in the Junior Leadership Wilkes-Barre Program; The EPCAMR Executive Director is a 2006 Leadership Wilkes-Barre graduate
- Reviewed EPA Comments for our FY2021-2023 Conservation District-East Program Grant and provided feedback to *Trish Attardo*, PA DEP 319 Water Program Specialist
- Provided *Gary Lewis*, Administrator for the BlackTop Warriors JEEP Club with EPCAMR's logo for a future event where we are helping to sponsor and spread the word about future cleanups and the need for volunteers

- Talked with *Jim Robinson*, The Weather Channel, about the Centralia Appalachian Tree Planting Project on a conference call
- Provided *Kayla Pilecki*, Grand Canyon University PhD candidate, Nanticoke, PA with information on her future internship if approved by the University later in the Summer 2020; Sent her the [NAACC AOP](#) links for her consideration and review prior to the internship in case she'd like to take the online portion of the training ahead of time; Set her up with an account to start the online AOP Protocol Training; Met with her to review all the necessary work plan information and scope for the Environmental Health Core Area as a part of her future internship
- Completed the February 2020 Board Report