



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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January 2021 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Mill Creek/Gardener Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Provided *Shawnese Taylor*-EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist with the hard copy folder of the Mill Creek/Gardner Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan in order for her to begin to develop the outline for draft of the report

PA American Water Mill Creek Temperature Monitoring Project

- *Steve Cornia*-EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist and the Executive Director installed several HOBO Temperature loggers throughout the Mill Creek Watershed; See [post](#) about our field work

Huntsville Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Drafted the Final Draft Report of the Coldwater Conservation Plan to submit to the municipalities and partners for review and CHP before finalizing it; *Steve Cornia*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist inserted the Recommendations Map, macroinvertebrate survey locations, and biological and visual habitat assessment data, to the final report; Requested a 30-day extension to have a scheduled Zoom Call with the partners and municipalities to present to them the Final Draft Plan on January 27th that was approved by PA Council of Trout Unlimited; Held the virtual meeting that was well attended and made additional comments to the Plan before finalizing and submitted it to *Rachel Kester*, Program Manager for the Coldwater Heritage Program with PA Council of Trout Unlimited; All information on the Huntsville Creek and Lower Toby Creek, as well as the previously completed Upper Toby Creek Coldwater Conservation Plans are posted to the EPCAMR website at the [Toby Creek Watershed](#) page; **97** Recommendations were presented; Requested a copy of a newly published Brook Trout Poster from *Rachel* to include with the Plan and a link to it to disseminate online

Reclaiming Our Backyards in the Coalfields Appalachian Tree Planting Project

- Discussed with ISI reaching out to Heller's Orchard before Spring to determine when apple trees might be available for ordering for the Centralia Tree Planting Project that we had to postpone last April 2020; Talked about budget adjustments and logistics

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

- Convened a kick-off Zoom call on January 18th with *Claudia Meglin* and *Pam Cambell-ISI*, *Joe Sapienza-Centone Productions*, and *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR Environmental Outreach Watershed Specialist to develop our storyboarding and work plan for the new 3-year grant with the Mental Insight Foundation; Held a separate creative exploration session with *Claudia* on January 26th to further develop the content for the short films

Mine Mapping Grant Project with the Mine Subsidence Insurance Program

- Talked with Staff about workload submission of the necessary numbers and hours (workload spent) on inventorying maps, scanned maps, georeferenced maps, digitized maps, and PHUMMIS, for submission of reimbursements

Reclaiming Appalachian Coalition Innovative Mine Land Reclamation and Economic Development Projects Mini-Grant Program

- Provided *Joey James*, Principal-[Downstream Strategies](#), with a quote for his press advisory on the release of their 2020 Annual Report, [Restoration and Renewal, The New Appalachian Economy](#); The report highlights sites in the coal regions of Alabama, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia that represent prime opportunities for a variety of funding sources, including Abandoned Mine Lands Pilot funds appropriated by Congress, state and federal brownfields funding, and the RECLAIM Act, a bill which would accelerate the distribution of \$1 billion of existing funds over five years to revitalize coal communities. As the Appalachian region faces both the COVID-19 economic crisis and the decline of the coal industry, local leaders continue to develop innovative economic solutions that are specific to the context and problems of their communities, including outdoor recreation, sustainable forestry and agriculture, and technology and clean energy using solar on formerly reclaimed abandoned mine lands; Attended the webinar announcing the Report that highlighted EPCAMR's work on January 14th
- Followed up with *Henry Anreder* and *Tina Carr* from AC Power on positive developments with our Site Selection Criteria GIS Tool for Solar development on abandoned mine lands
- Followed up with *Bernie McGurl*-Executive Director and *John Morrow*-Project Manager, Lackawanna River Conservation Association (LRCA) to request assistance with identifying landowners in the Lackawanna Valley where EPCAMR has identified several potential solar sites for consideration for future development
- EPCAMR Executive Director and *Steve Cornia*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Specialist participated in a Zoom meeting with *Dan Kester*, Director of Innovative Mine Land Reclamation Program for the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, & Engineering to discuss their Solar Site Selection GIS Tool and EPCAMR's to see if we can work together in the future
- Followed up with *Steven Greer*-Vice President of Business Development for ARM Group, to briefly discuss our work on the Site Selection Criteria GIS Tool for Solar development on abandoned mine lands and to learn more about their company and services

Small Watershed Grant-National Fish & Wildlife Foundation for the Southern Flank of the Wyoming Valley

- Worked with *Mike* to develop the Quality Assurance Protection Plan (QAPP) of how EPCAMR Staff will collect the data and the methodologies that will be used before we can begin collecting field data; Followed up with *Andrew Young*-NFWF to finalize the grant agreement which we hope to begin in the Spring 2021
- Requested technical assistance and support from *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District Watershed Specialist and EPCAMR Board Member to help add elements to our QAPP related to waterfowl habitat assessment in the mining impacted watersheds and patches that have been identified in the project area; EPCAMR will incorporate his suggestions into the QAPP and set up a Zoom call with Staff to discuss in late February; *Kathleen Lavelle*, Trout Unlimited also sent EPCAMR the Electroshocking protocols for the Unassessed Waters Protocols from the PA Fish & Boat Commission
- Spoke with *Caleigh Sturgeon*, [Apex Clean Energy](#) about applying for a conservation grant through their corporate foundation, [Swiftwater Solar Foundation Grant Program](#) after she had reached out EPCAMR; EPCAMR tied it to the NFWF grant since there was a need for matching funds; There was a very short turnaround time on the submission of the grant, yet EPCAMR was able to have a Zoom call with *Caleigh* and Senior Project Developer-*Madeline Ray*; *Caleigh* is also interested in talking to us about our Solar Site Selection Criteria GIS Tool for Abandoned Mine Lands in PA separately from their grant program; Submitted a **\$50,000** grant with a Letter of Interest (*proposed*)

OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Stewards Individual Placement Program (SIPP)

- Worked with *Kyle* to create some awareness and outreach for Conservation Legacy, who hosted a showcase of its programs and open opportunities in a virtual meeting on January 7th; Anyone interested join and heard about the different programs, asked questions and inquired about opportunities available all across the nation; Published a flyer to our EPCAMR Social Media outlets
- Reviewed and edited an educational flyer *Kyle* is working on drafting for EPCAMR
- *Judy England*, Administrative Assistant for Conservation Legacy, informed EPCAMR that their financial department will be mailing the next invoice for the OSMRE/VISTA Program at the end of the 1st Quarter 2021; Talked with *Josh Jones*, VISTA Development Coordinator to have a discussion about determining whether or not EPCAMR would be able to sponsor a second year OSMRE/VISTA in the Fall 2021, which will be dependent on funding and the status of COVID-19 after the Summer 2021

Bear Creek Lykens Tunnels AMD Mine Pool Mapping & Conceptual Design for AMD Treatment

- Continued to follow up to secure *Kerry Teter's* signature on the landowner access agreement form for the PA DEP in order to continue ahead with the grant agreement process to finalize the 319 Grant; Going to send a copy to the Dauphin County Conservation District's Watershed Specialist, *Robert Frank* to see if he can stop up to Kerry's shop up the road from the District and see if he can sign it more quickly

PA DEP Environmental Education Grant-From STEAM to STREAMS

- Worked with *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR Environmental Education Watershed Outreach Specialist to submit the final reimbursement and report to the PA DEP to close out the grant; See [post](#) for some of the educational materials in the Nature Boxes Staff created

Technical Assistance

- *Frank Sindaco*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist provided EPCAMR with several tract level indicators for the EPCAMR Region; Requested that he add in Wayne County to complete the entire county coverage area; The indicators include economic (poverty, unemployment, per capita income) and at risk (minority, limited English) and rankings for each, plus an overall "stability" ranking; The data is from the 2018 American Community Data Survey
- Followed up with *Regan Fink*-Development Associate for [Pinegate Renewables](#), a utility-scale solar developer based in North Carolina with projects across the country, including a portfolio in the pipeline in PA; They read our article online about our Solar Site Selection Criteria GIS Tool
- Provided contact information that EPCAMR has for the Mahanoy Creek Watershed Association at the request of *Mike Korb*, TetraTech
- Provided *Ann Foster*, Brodhead Chapter of Trout Unlimited member and colleague, with contact information for *Dr. Shawn Rummel and Phil Thomas*-Trout Unlimited, in regards to the NAACC Aquatic Passage Training for a presentation they are looking to have during the year with their Chapter and due to interest members becoming certified as Lead Observers; EPCAMR Executive Director offered up a presentation as a backup, if needed
- Provided *Hannah Clemenson*, Program Coordinator-PEC with contact information for some landowners in Lackawanna County, Luzerne County with mine lands for them to consider following up with about a large tract reforestation project they are considering and contact information for the PA Anthracite Council and PA Coal Association
- Talked with *Bill Reichert*-Schuylkill Headwaters Association and Brad Domitrovich, CEO-American Energy Partners, Inc., about discussion points for an upcoming Zoom call with the Delaware River Basin Commission to discuss mine pool mapping in the Delaware River Basin similar to the efforts EPCAMR has with the SRBC; There is the potential for flooding reduction, MS4 implementation, consumptive use, low flow augmentation, and mine pool storage in the Upper Lehigh and Schuylkill Headwaters; Participated in the Watershed-wide Planning Call with DRBC and partners on January 22nd
- *Shawnese Taylor*-EPCAMR GIS Outreach Specialist, created additional study material for several of the EPCAMR Staff who are studying for the FAA License Certification to take in the Spring 2021 to fly our drone and utilize it commercially for EPCAMR as well as to use it to provide educational programs for students in the coming year

- Worked with *Mike Hewitt*, EPCAMR Program Manager to update our [AMD Stream Monitoring Field Binder](#) with our protocols and methods; Developed a QAPP draft that we'll be submitting to NFWF for our other grant for the Southern Wyoming Valley that will utilize this Binder, plus additional information on how we'll be assessing and collecting data for American Black Duck habitat areas in mining impacted watersheds
- Submitted a detailed response to *John Clune*, USGS on priority research science questions and comments EPCAMR would like to see addressed that would help us meet Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and other water quality goals in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the mining impacted watersheds that we work in with our partners
- Participated in a Zoom meeting with *Malcolm Ferguson*, and *Paul Poljak*- Somerset Environmental to learn more about their Maelstrom Oxidizer AMD Treatment System technology and provided them with links to information on some of the Anthracite Region AMD discharges and related water quality for their review; Suggested they become an Exhibitor or Sponsor of the 2021 Fall PA AMR Conference in October to get to know partners in the AMR Community across PA
- Provided *Thom Kay*-Legislative Director for Appalachian Voices, with information on mine fires in PA at his request
- Convened a conference call with *Britton Burnworth*, PWS, for [Keller Engineering](#), Hollidaysburg, PA to learn more about his company and their interest in working with EPCAMR in the future on seeking funding for implementation projects recommended in our completed Coldwater Conservation Plans, culvert repairs and replacements, MS4 related projects, and AMD work
- Received a copy of the Friends of the Nescopeck Creek's 2020 Water Quality Sampling around the entire watershed from *Tim Ferrence*
- Conference call with *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District to discuss ways to move forward with the Plainsville AMD Borehole in the Wyoming Valley

Old Forge Borehole Monitoring for Tetra Tech

- Worked with *Denise*, EPCAMR Bookkeeper to create the remaining invoices to submit to Tetra Tech for the monitoring and sampling that was conducted for the Old Forge AMD Borehole and signed a Tetra Tech document to increase our purchase order to cover the additional lab costs that were approved; Currently, the project is on hold by the client

Education & Outreach

- The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office released details of the FY21 Chesapeake Bay-Watershed and Training (B-WET) program funding opportunity and it was forwarded to Laura Rinehimer, EPCAMR Environmental Education Specialist; Applications are due by March 1, 2021; New grants will focus on one of the following two priorities: increasing local school district capacity to plan for and deliver curriculum-embedded environmental

education, and implementing system-wide MWEEs in school districts; NOAA recognizes that educators are facing challenges due to shifts between in-person and virtual learning this year and because of this aim to provide maximum flexibility in how B-WET programs are delivered; These grants are intended to help school districts develop long-lasting MWEE programs that exist well beyond the grant funding; This year the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office has also included an optional Special Interest Area of Community Partnerships where specific community organizations are run by and/or serve marginalized groups, particularly minority communities

- Followed up with *Colleen Burns*, Coordinator for the [Green Amendments for the Generations](#) group in PA for any additional information needed to provide to municipalities and legislators on the Green Amendment for PA; They are planning an educational event in the Spring 2021 with PA partners to commemorate the 50th anniversary of PA's Green Amendment to help PA residents embrace and utilize the power of their environmental rights
- Provided *Gene G. Veno*, SRBC Director of Governmental Affairs & Public Advocacy, with a quote on behalf of EPCAMR for SRBC's press release on the celebration of their 50th Anniversary the week of January 18th
- Participated in a monthly National RECLAIM Workgroup conference call on January 14th
- Mechanical Engineering Professor *Alex Szatmary*, King's College has students in his Senior class who are interested in designing a table top device that would process EPCAMR's Iron oxide in a more controlled environment that is less messy than our current one in the warehouse side of the Earth Conservancy Building where our solar kiln and soil oven are located; Mike Hewitt-EPCAMR Program Manager came up with a summary diagram for what we are looking for and submitted it to the Professor and his Senior Class for consideration
- Provided comments on yearly priorities for the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed related to AMD and mine pool mapping and monitoring during a Zoom call on January 22nd as partners develop their work plans within the watershed
- Forwarded *Laura Rinehimer*-EPCAMR Environmental Education Specialist the 360 degree still photos that *John Welsh* sent to EPCAMR for our use to begin to develop content for virtual learning programs we intend to develop with additional grant funding that we're pursuing
- *Ed Wytovich*, EPCAMR Board Member, informed EPCAMR that *Andy Welker*, may be giving us a call to discuss doing a documentary on our efforts to restore streams and reclaim abandoned mine lands; He has contacts with film makers, including the guy who made "[Unbranded](#)" and also "[The River and the Wall](#)"

- *Erin Savage*, Senior Program Manager-Appalachian Voices, asked if EPCAMR could direct her to some of the PA AML Campaign resolutions for use in meetings by Thom Kay as they begin to reach out to Congressional Staffers; Directed *Erin* to *Andy McAllister-WPCAMR* and *Amy Wolfe-TU*, who are the CO-Chairs for the PA AML Campaign to determine how to release them
- *Aimee Erickson*, Citizens Coal Council, requested to be involved with future social media outreach on the PA AML Campaign; Participated in an PA AML Campaign conference call to discuss status of the Reauthorization of the Federal AML Trust Fund
- Talked with *Rebecca Hayden Kennedy* from the [Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley](#) about AMD and Quality/Quantity Related to the Flex Flow Management PG in the Upper Delaware River Basin and introduced her to EPCAMR's work briefly in the Upper Lehigh River Watershed
- Provided some background information to American Energy Partners on the possibility for the Plainsville AMD Borehole treatment that EPCAMR and the Luzerne Conservation District are looking to secure funding for as opportunities arise; They inquired following *John Levitsky's* great article and [interview](#) with the Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper; Provide *John Pippy* with EPCAMR's list of potential Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Project Recommendations that were previously submitted to the US ACE for their review
- Rep. Peter Welch D-VT introduced the [American Renewable Energy and Efficiency Act](#) which includes both a national renewable energy standard (55 percent by 2030) and a national energy efficiency savings goal (22 percent savings for electricity and 14 percent for natural gas by 2035); As concerns project economics, the bill proposes to double renewable energy credits (RECs) for renewable energy projects in environmental justice communities including those adversely impacted by environmental pollution, or "economically distressed areas affected by high unemployment due to a decline in coal mining or the closure of a coal-fired power plant."; If signed into law, this approach incentivizes new renewable energy projects in, and would direct more funding toward, communities transitioning from fossil fuels and those historically impacted by local pollution; EPCAMR is following this piece of legislation
- Participated in the PA DEP Environmental Justice Roundtable follow-up discussions Microsoft Teams call to provide further EPCAMR input on January 29th

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
- Signed *Matt Myers*, Lehman, and *John Sankey*, Harvey's Lake, up to become an EPCAMR Volunteers through the NAACC AOP Culvert Assessment Protocol Training

Conferences, Training, Tours, Exhibits, & Workshops

- Participated in a monthly PA AMR Conference Planning Committee call; Decided to move the Conference to October 27-29th ; Paid WHOVA for the 2021 platform service fee and applications for the Fall 2021 Conference
- An abstract paper, co-authored by *Beth Berkhauser*, Hexagon Project and *Dr. Andrea Nerozzi*, Wyoming Seminary/EPCAMR Board Member submitted to the Pictures of Practice Committee with [INSEA](#) on our *STEM & Art: Changing the Perspective of Waterways Environmental Education and Connecting Art-Creating Solutions AMD Iron Oxide Curriculum Program* was accepted for publication
- Assisted *Michele Kittell Connolly*, Executive Director for the [Wildlife Leadership Academy](#), with pushing out some publicity to get students interested in applying for a [scholarship](#); The EPCAMR Executive Director made a presentation to the Brookies Camp portion for the Academy in the Fall of 2020 and was asked to make another presentation in 2021
- Signed up for the virtual [PA American Fishery Society](#) 2021 Spring Technical Meeting on February 11th
- Signed EPCAMR up to be a virtual Exhibitor for the March 22-23rd [2021 PAEE Conference](#)
- Invited by *Sara Ramotnik*,-Chesapeake Conservation Corps member, to the Chesapeake WILD Stakeholder Engagement Session on February 23rd to get broad input and share diverse perspectives on new legislation authorizing the US Fish & Wildlife Service (US FWS) to lead a collaborative effort focused on enhancing habitat for fish and wildlife, and recreational opportunities for people; The Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense ([Chesapeake WILD](#)) Act, signed into law in October 2020, directs the Secretary of the Interior, through US FWS, to develop and implement the non-regulatory Chesapeake WILD Program
- Attended the PSU MWS-Luzerne/Lackawanna County Virtual Meeting to introduce EPCAMR to the new volunteers

- Attended a POWR webinar on Linking Stream Hydrology & Geomorphology to Watershed Restoration Planning on January 15th

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for January 2021 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Provided *Denise* with the January 2021 Statement for reconciliations; Made a deposit to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables
- Received the mud flaps, plexiglass window, and roof, for our Polaris Side by Side through funds raised through an online fundraising campaign set up by *Kyle Argenziano*, OSMRE AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteer and will assemble them in the Spring 2021
- EPCAMR was informed that *Rosalyn Walker*, OneSource will be handling EPCAMR's payroll services since Jessica Barbose has taken another position with the company
- EPCAMR Membership Renewal Dues were sent out to partners and members for 2021
- Conducted meetings with all Staff before the end of the year to discuss with them hopes and expectations going into 2021 and a review of the challenges that we had to face in 2020 and the ones that we had overcome; Met with each of the Staff independently due to COVID restrictions to wrap up end of the year discussions on workload, office use, working remotely, concerns, looking to 2021, EC protocols and the Governor's Restrictions
- Filled an iron oxide pigment order for *Emily Zebel*, Dauphin County Conservation District and mailed it
- Worked with OneSource to adjust payroll for 2021 for all Staff; Informed OneSource that *Katie VanOrden* would be moving on to look for full-time work and her seasonal work with our internship would end on her last day she could work on January 15th
- Completed the December 2020 and January 2021 Board and 319 Reports; Submitted a Quarterly Progress Report to *Trish Attardo*, PA DEP 319 Program for their Semi-Annual Report to the EPA Region 3
- Received EPCAMR Staff 2020 W-2s and mailed them or hand-delivered them to Staff
- EPCAMR renewed our membership with the NCAC for 2 years and were provide with an updated list of potential funders and foundations that we could do research on for future funding opportunities; Followed up with *Athena Aardweg*-Community Services Manager-NCAC and thanked her for their continued support

- *Ed Wytovich*, EPCAMR Board Member provided an interesting article on Human Resources related to an Interview Question that should be a must have when considering hiring a new employee; The [question](#) was developed by *Elon Musk*
- *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; Requested if the students would be interested in putting together a presentation based on copious notes that were taken by the Executive Director awhile ago while attending The Deming Institute's *Systems Approach* that EPCAMR follows; They would have to be transferred over to a presentation format or PowerPoint format; This information would then be then be provided to all of the EPCAMR Staff and other Board Members as reference materials and as a reminder as to why we have decided to take this approach to our operations as a leading regional non-profit environmental organization in PA; They would be learning about Deming in the process; It wouldn't be just about business management, they would be learning about people and human resources as well
- *Leigh Ann Henry*, EPCAMR Board Member asked to be placed on the volunteer Education Committee
- *Paul Goblet* talked with the Executive Director about the Google Ads Grant on a Zoom call