



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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July 2020 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Upper Toby Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Requested a final copy of the Fishery Electroshocking survey from TU to upload to our Story Map on the EPCAMR website from *Kathleen Lavelle-TU*; *Allison Lutz*, TU provided EPCAMR with the final copy

Huntsville Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Continued some culvert assessments in the Lower Toby Creek watershed with the EPCAMR Interns and DAMA Stormwater Coordinator, *Tom Mayka* over several days; Reviewed and approved crossings in the NAACC database
- Picked up a GPS Booster for our iPad since the EPCAMR Staff were getting a weak signal in the field
- Directed Staff to continue working on culvert assessments in the watershed
- Completed our macroinvertebrate study on the Huntsville Creek monitoring sites with EPCAMR Staff and Interns on July 16 and 21st
- Sent postcards to some landowners that EPCAMR was trying to reach in the watershed to access culverts for assessments of aquatic passage

PA AML Economic & Community Development Pilot Rare Earth Elements and Critical Minerals Development Project (proposed)

- Submitted a grant to the PA DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) in partnership with Tetra Tech for **\$4,909,279** to test samples of AMD all across PA and to construct and demonstrate a modular plant to treat AMD and sample, collect, and analyze dozens of discharges for rare earth elements and critical minerals across the Commonwealth

Mine Subsidence Insurance Program Mine Mapping Grant

- Sorted the 2nd Geological Survey Mine Map Books from the 1860s with *Mike* to get them more organized

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

- Communicated with *Keith George*-Environmental Coordinator with FirstEnergy, Reading, PA to discuss EPCAMR's recent work on our GIS Site Selection Criteria Tool
- Reviewed the GIS Site Selection Criteria layers and framework created by *Steve Cornia*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist

Swoyersville/Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area PA AML Pilot Project

- Requested an updated Certificate of Liability Insurance from Keystone Fuels Reclamation to give to our Worker's Compensation Auditor from 11-15-19 to 11-15-20

RECLAIM Field Fund Mini-Grant Project from the Just Transition Fund

- EPCAMR Executive Director was [interviewed](#) by *Mark Hillar*, WBRE News on 7-2-20 to talk about Reauthorization and HR2 and RECLAIM at our Swoyersville/Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area Pilot Project; HR2, the Moving Forward Act moved forward this month and passed the House by a vote of 233-188; EPCAMR created a [press release](#) on the announcement and great news; Requested a Letter of Support from PA Council of Trout Unlimited for HR2

OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Stewards Individual Placement Program (SIPP)

- Participated in the mandatory Supervisor Training with the Stewards Program before *Kyle Argenziano* officially started with EPCAMR; Submitted all necessary documents required by the Stewards Program to *JM Aurednik*-Program Manager
- Completed the On-Site Orientation Plan and the Telework Plan and submitted to *JM Aurednik*-Program Manager at Stewards Legacy
- Reviewed the monthly VISTA Newsletter of funding sources and forwarded it to *Kyle* to review and research for potential funding opportunities for EPCAMR
- Directed *Kyle* to sign up for the PA Environmental Digest to keep up with everything environmental across the Commonwealth
- Created a [press release](#) about *Kyle's* yearlong community service opportunity as a VISTA volunteer with EPCAMR and posted it to our social media outlets and sent it along to *JM Aurednik*-Program Manager at Stewards Legacy
- Provided *Kyle* with a list of Hazleton Industrial Park Corporate Companies with possible Corporate Giving/Foundations to research and review

Loyalsock Creek Watershed Monitoring/Sullivan County Conservation District/Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association/White Ash Land Association

- Talked with *Dr. Shawn Rummel-TU* about conducting a coordinated watershed-wide sampling event in the Loyalsock Creek watershed in the late Summer, or early Fall 2020

Technical Assistance

- Participated in the PA Department of Education Content Committee Updates and Next Steps Zoom call with *Beth Ratway*-Senior Technical Assistant consultant for the American Institute for Research; Provided *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR Environmental Education Coordinator with a link to several of the current State Standards that were provided

- The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee marked up the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) 2020, which is typically taken up every 2 years by Congress, and authorizes a bulk of the water infrastructure activities conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; EPCAMR submitted proposed and ongoing projects in June to the US ACE that are in need of funding; Provided contact information for EPCAMR's contacts with the US ACE to *Branden Diehl*-Grant and Project Consultant for the Foundation for PA Watersheds
- Provided *Jarrett Gibbons*, ARIPPA Executive Director with Mike's detailed analysis and the Executive Director's comments in rebuttal to the Sierra Club's *Economic Analysis of Alternative Programs for Managing Waste Coal in Central Appalachia* completed by ECONorthwest from 2009 in preparation for a conference call with Senator Casey's Office Staff to let them know the benefits to the beneficial use of coal ash from ARIPPA plants in PA for reclamation and AMD remediation; EPCAMR provided Senator Casey's Staff with EPCAMR's points in support for waste coal to electrical generation and the Co-Generation Industry Tax Credit bill that is being considered; EPCAMR offered to shoot a 360 video of a Co-Gen Plant with permission of the Plant Manager to ARIPPA to help educate people on the operations of the plant and their benefits to the community
- Assisted *Joe Simons*, Stanley Cooper Chapter TU, with preparing a **\$1500** Forever WILD Grant Application for a modified limestone diversion well water treatment system installation on Hightower Run in the Bowman's Creek; Measured some field distances in the watershed along the tributary and looked for a suitable location for the limestone system; Prepared a Letter of Support for the application on behalf of EPCAMR; Provided Joe with an online [calculator](#) to help with determining the size and prize estimation of limestone provided by Tussey Mountain as an example to determine costs; *Kyle Argenziano*-OSMRE VISTA Steward created 2 maps of the watershed and High Tower Run tributary to assist Joe with his application submission
- Reviewed a new 3D software program *Mike* mentioned, called [Golden Surfer](#) and a model for a [Royce Model 711 TSS Meter](#) that Mike put in a quote to YSI for in order for us to determine a cost that we might be able to incorporate in to a future grant or consider purchasing to obtain additional monitoring parameters; The TSS probes are expensive and it seems most researchers will use it to set up Turbidity/TSS curves at multiple sites instead of reading TSS directly at each site to keep costs and maintenance down
- Signed up for [Drone Boss](#) FAA 107 Study Guide Materials/Videos to be able to study and sit for the License Certificate to be able to fly our recently purchased drone through a grant provided to EPCAMR by the Luzerne Foundation's Youth Allocation Committee; Paid the drone vendor for our ordered drone and supplies/equipment
- Provided *John Pippy*, American Energy Systems, with a final copy of the Mocanaqua AMD Tunnel Consumptive Use Feasibility Study, EPCAMR's Staff bios, and our latest [brochure](#) following our meeting on July 30th; Discussed ways that EPCAMR can partner with AES on future projects

- Began scanning maps for Lehigh Natural Resources of historic Anthracite engineering drawings of equipment, components, and parts

Piedmont Land Holdings Service Agreement

- Reviewed a draft professional services agreement with Piedmont Land Holdings and Non-Disclosure Agreement with Mike and submitted it back with comments to *Carolyn Bersch*, Teichos Energy LLC

Education & Outreach

- Talked with *Justin Dula*, PA DEP OEJ about the potential partners that his office could reach out to in order to invite them to the Scranton Environmental Justice Roundtable; Provided him with contact names, numbers, e-mails, and websites for follow up; Sent an e-mail around to EPCAMR's contacts in Lackawanna County to introduce them to *Justin* for him to follow up with them
- Spoke with *Senator Casey's* Staff to discuss the Coal Refuse Tax Credit bill and explain how reclamation occurs on abandoned mine lands once the waste culm is removed from the sites
- Forwarded some Environmental Education resources on trout, macroinvertebrates, watershed monitoring, freshwater ecology to *Laura Rinehimer* and *Shawnese Taylor*, EPCAMR Staff for consideration in referencing when developing programs
- EPCAMR forwarded a few images of fly ash cores from the Huber Bank reclamation in Hanover Township, Luzerne County to ARIPPA to show them how solid they were and in case they needed a few pictures of what the cores look like
- Looked into a Chesapeake Bay Foundation Professional Development opportunity on tree planting with students being provided by *Liz Glaston*, Environmental Educator
- Picked up donated artwork from *Sue Hand* at Sue Hand Imagery created with iron oxide pigment from EPCAMR
- *John Welsh* provided EPCAMR with a link to [3D VISTA](#) 360 degree Software Program and *Laura Rinehimer* provided John with the Executive Director's sketch of the Askam AMD Treatment System components and areas that we can build content around as we build our 3D Virtual environments for teaching; Reviewed several [tutorials](#) that John provided on the benefits of using the software; Visited the Askam site with John and Laura and began filming and shooting the entire site in 360 degree stitching
- Reached out to the Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association to see if they would be willing to write a letter of support for the HR 4735 (*Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act*); This bill allows a new tax credit for the production of electricity from a coal refuse facility. A "coal refuse facility" means any facility (1) that was originally placed in service prior to January 1, 2019 and combusts coal refuse or fuel composed of at least 75 percent coal refuse by BTU energy value; and (2) uses at a minimum, a circulating

fluidized bed combustion unit or a pressurized fluidized bed combustion unit, equipped with a limestone injection system for control of acid gases, and a fabric filter particulate emission control system; There are still remaining piles in Sullivan County that are semi-anthracite that haven't been reclaimed yet that could potentially be hauled to a Co-Gen Plant for energy generation that would allow for the future reclamation of the local sites throughout the watersheds in Sullivan County; *Jarrett Gibbons*-ARIPPA provided *Marc Lewis*-President, with additional resources and an update on the status of the bill in preparation for the LCWA to provide a letter in support of HR 4735

- *Lorelle Steach*, Executive Director, of the PA Envirothon asked for permission to use a photo of an abandoned mine land landscape in the Soils and Land Use Envirothon Study Guide, with full credit being given to EPCAMR; EPCAMR Executive Director, who is a long-time colleague of Lorelle's positively gave her permission to use the photo
- Participated in a conference call with the Choose Clean Water Coalition to review the draft PA Legislative Briefing Book; EPCAMR has provided valuable input and photos for the book on AMD/AML issues facing PA
- *John Curley*, PA DEP BAMR in Western PA is working with a producer through PBS about one of their reclamation projects; They were looking for pictures of youth or students working around AMD or near AMD; PA DEP BAMR doesn't have any good images so they requested some from EPCAMR; EPCAMR Executive Director sent off a dozen images that they might be able to utilize and give proper photo credits
- *Phoebe Lind*-Policy Intern, ([ACORE](#)), Washington DC, interviewed the EPCAMR Executive Director about our work in supporting coal mining impacted communities; She was interested in our general observations as the U.S. energy industry transitions away from coal; She's a student at George Washington University; A major component of her internship experience is an independent research project, which she is undertaking; For her research, she's looking into how local governments and communities are approaching a just transition as the U.S. moves to a clean energy economy and is interested in strategies that address coal communities experiencing economic decline; EPCAMR Executive Director provided her with insight on the topic to aid her in her research and provided her with photos and documents that might be helpful for her to reference and cite
- Reviewed the National RECLAIM Working Group's public relations strategy draft and participated in a Zoom call to discuss
- Cleaned up EPCAMR's iron oxide processing station in the warehouse of the building

- *Gautham Nandakumar*, a student at Rutgers University and a member of Project Appalachia at [Rutgers Enactus](#), reached out to the EPCAMR Executive Director to inform us of their team at Project Appalachia who believes that their values match to EPCAMR's - specifically for Luzerne County; They wanted to learn more about our work our experiences, and to talk about their work; They would like to learn more details about different sources of funding for this project because restoring and redeveloping abandoned mining lands is quite expensive, and they need resources to make this process as cost-effective as possible; In addition, they would like to acquire more knowledge about watershed management, as this will play a pivotal role in water conservation and agricultural sustainability for their regenerative model; Their project focuses on implementing a regenerative agricultural system through the restoration of abandoned mining lands. With this process, they would like to use a watershed for protection of water quality through filtration and conservation of water. This system, in turn, functions as a means of food and water security, economic growth, sustainable employment, land conservation, and education outreach in the rural Appalachian communities: Set up a Zoom call for August 7th with the students

Community Volunteer Coordination

- EPCAMR Executive Director was interviewed by *Tom Venesky*-[PA Outdoor News](#) for a front-page article on PA's Illegal Dumping problem during the pandemic
- Assisted the Wilkes-Barre Blight Committee, PA DEP, and Larksville Borough in cleaning up along Toby Creek along SR 11 before continuing with our culvert assessments on the Lower Toby Creek
- Submitted EPCAMR's June 2020 Reimbursement to the SLIP Program through EDSI for our Interns; Submitted a nomination for Intern of the Year for *Levi Sunday-Leftkowitz* through the Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce's 2020 Young Professional Awards Program

PA American Water Charitable Trust Cleanup Program

- Organized a large cleanup following discussions with a private landowner and the PA Game Commission along Solomon's Creek and "The Sandy" in Hanover Township, Luzerne County, behind the former Bentley's Restaurant

Conferences, Training, Tours, Exhibits, & Workshops

- Participated in a monthly PA AMR Conference Planning Committee call; Requested an extension from *Paolo Cruz*-Manager and Senior Event Consultant-WHOVA, of the WHOVA App demonstration for other members of the Planning Committee to experiment with and become familiar with

- Followed up with *Adam Wells*, Regional Director of Economic Development at Appalachian Voices about the Community Benefits Agreements [webinar](#) on Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) that are powerful negotiating tools that provide local communities with a platform to advocate for their needs and hold developers accountable to their well-intended promises for potential applications of CBAs to mine reclamation and redevelopment projects; During this webinar, speakers introduced and defined CBAs, explored how CBAs have been applied to rural development projects, and considered the potential future of CBAs in Appalachia; The RAC will also be publishing a report on Community Benefits Agreements later in the year; A second [webinar](#) was on mission oriented investments and impact investments for site cleanup and redevelopment projects
- *Terry Ostrowski*, EC CEO was supportive of keeping their sponsorship towards the PA AMR Virtual Conference in 2020
- Presented to the PA Wildlife Leadership Virtual Brookies Field School Academy student body at the request of former colleague and friend *Dr. Gary Alt*, PhD on EPCAMR's work in PA
- Attended a Partnership for the Delaware Estuary Freshwater Mussels Webinar to find out how they are filtering polluted water; Speakers were *Kurt Cheng*, PDE's Shellfish Coordinator, and *Matt Gentry*, PDE's Shellfish Specialist; EPCAMR has had an interest in researching whether or not certain species in the Susquehanna River can actually filter out AMD and clean water naturally and what the biological impacts are on the species; Forwarded the information along to the Lackawanna River Conservation Association

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for July 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; Received the 2nd Quarter IRA Report from OneSource for depositing; Provided Denise with the June 2020 Statement for reconciliations
- Contacted United Concordia to have a named removed from our account that was mistakenly added somehow by our vendor and not EPCAMR; Our account was credited
- Provided the PA DEP 319 Program with monthly program reports from Mike and the Executive Director for their semi-annual report; Submitted our Request for Exception to 90% Payment Limit Prior to Final Report to *Trish Attardo*-PA DEP 319 Program and received an approval letter for future reimbursements
- Worked with OneSource to obtain the necessary documents to submit with our Worker's Compensation Audit for 2019-2020 and submitted them to our State Worker's Insurance auditor

- Directed that OneSource end *Kyle Argenziano's* Internship seasonal employment as of July 20th in order for him to begin his volunteer year of service through the OSMRE/VISTA AmeriCorps Stewards Individual Placement Program
- Received a letter of certifications for the 80 hours of professional development and time spent on developing, writing, and updating the draft Science & Technology and Environment & Ecology Standards for PA for the PA Department of Education from the Berks County Intermediate Unit
- Registered for a [PA Keystone](#) Login ID Username and Password
- Completed the Highmark Small Group Average Number of Employees Form and submitted it to Highmark
- Posted about the soft Office re-opening on July 6th and the need to make appointments via e-mail and Zoom as opposed to in-person meetings temporarily to our social media
- Filed COVID-19 EPCAMR Protocols; Cleaned the Office with disinfectant
- Filed our State Workers Insurance Fund paid premium for 2020-2021
- Completed the July 2020 Board Report