



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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July 2022 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Worked on documentation to send down May and June's Progress Narrative Reports on the project and requests for reimbursement after receiving invoices from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management; Worked with Denise to prepare Quickbooks Invoices to send along to *Gerard Schmidt*, PA DEP BAMR Project Officer; Informed that *Gerard* retired this month and EPCAMR is do direct our documentation, invoices, reports, to *Riyad Barkawi*-PA DEP BAMR and to copy *TJ Matinas*-PA DEP BAMR going forward

Mine Subsidence Mine Mapping Project

- Communicated with *Shawnese Taylor* on georeferencing of mine maps and provided her with some trouble shooting bullet points to help with streamlining the process to ensure control points are saved; Reviewed dozens of AUX files to ensure they were the proper size and had control points in the MSI Folder for Mike to be able to submit once the QA/QC was completed

NFWF Southern Wyoming Valley Watershed Assessment of American Black Duck Habitat and Trout Stream Habitat for Aquatic Passage

- Continued American Black Duck habitat and wetlands assessment with *Steve Cornia* and *Levi Sunday-Lefkowitz*, in the Southern Wyoming Valley; Updated the new Executive Director and long-time colleague of EPCAMR's, *Ellen Ferretti*, for the North Branch Land Trust on our work for this assessment that includes some areas of land under conservation easements by the Land Trust that we will be evaluating including the Hanover Marsh along Spencer Lane and possibly some other areas in the Southern Wyoming Valley; Participated in a conference call with *Arjeta Bajramaj*, new Project Officer for EPCAMR's grant to give her an update on our work and to review the project to catch her up to speed; Sent her information that had been previously forwarded to *Blake Gardiner*, our previous Project Officer, in case it had not been forwarded to her; Resubmitted an invoice in the e-grants system with a further explanation of the delay in obtaining the temperature sensors due to supply chain issues during the pandemic; Field reconnaissance with Mike to look for candidate locations for electroshocking to determine the absence or presence of native brook trout and other fish species throughout the project area that will be conducted by the PA Fish & Boat Commission, accompanied by the Luzerne Conservation District Watershed Specialist, John Levitsky; Fishery survey was completed on July 28th

Rare Earth Elements Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Project with TetraTech (*proposed*)

- Scheduled Tetra Tech to make a 20-minute presentation (virtually) on the AMLER proposal resubmission that we are working on at the upcoming August 18th EPCAMR Board Meeting under New Business; Working with *Eric Cavazza* and *Mike* to connect up the speaker through a Microsoft Teams presentation to be displayed on the television in the Conference Room

Just Transition Fund Cycle 2 Planning Grant for Capacity Building Expansion of EPCAMR Solar Project Development

- Requested the Blair County tax parcel GIS shapefile from *Tremayne Thomas-Smith*; Worked on obtaining the Westmoreland County tax parcel layer, Butler County tax parcel layer, and worked on writing a letter to the Clarion County Commissioner's Office to request a fee waiver to obtain their tax parcel layer with our reason for the request as a regional non-profit; Schuylkill County GIS Department and Mercer County also have a fee for the layers; EPCAMR isn't considering purchasing data at this time without future funding and are performing a gap analysis of the counties to see which ones have the data freely available in comparison to those that are charging a fee; Conference call with *Robert Young* from the PA DEP Energy Office to discuss PA's future strategy to promote solar development on abandoned mine lands in the near future as a follow up to the presentation that he gave at the PA AMR Conference in June 2022 EPCAMR may be able to provide some professional services through a procurement agreement; Provided comments on draft initial message created by *Levi Sunday-Lefkowitz*, EPCAMR Intern that will go out to colleges and universities across PA that might have programs related to solar development that might want to partner with EPCAMR in the future on advocating for projects on abandoned mine lands; Worked with *Levi* to create a list of dozens of colleges and universities across the Commonwealth to add to our database, that have programs that potentially could become partners and definitely stakeholders in future solar development and outreach on abandoned mine lands

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

- Reached out to a few regional artists (*Sue Hand*, *Mark Chuck*, and *Alana Mauger*) who have partnered with EPCAMR in the past that have utilized iron oxide pigment in their artwork including paintings, jewelry, and pottery glazes to see if they would be interested in being featured in our educational video in the Fall on October 1, 2022 that will be filmed at the EPCAMR Office; Reached out to *Chris Murley*, from Underground Miners to see if EPCAMR can utilize some of their underground mine video footage as a background greenscreen for a portion of the film; Provided *Laura* with a few bullet points for my explanation of how some wetland plants like cattails naturally play a role in cleaning up AMD as a part of treatment systems for the film

Pure Green BioAg Industrial Hemp Production on Abandoned Mine Lands (*proposed*)

- Working with several regional community partners to propose funding and pull together several grant applications and build additional collaborations in Northeastern PA to identify AML sites that could potentially be converted to agricultural farming areas for hemp production; Updated partners on funding opportunities through the Infrastructure bill and AML funding programs; Conference call with legislative staff of Congressman Cartwright's Office who deal with economic development efforts to update them on proposed project submissions and to discuss the need for landowner outreach once sites are identified

Technical Assistance

- Provided [Natasha Gilbert](#), Journalist with contact information for groups in the Schuylkill County region who might be able to provide additional insight in to her questions related to manganese pollution in the West Branch of the Schuylkill River; Suggested she reach out to [the Schuylkill Action Network](#) for more information since they are working much closer to that particular subwatershed of the Schuylkill River in the headwaters of the Schuylkill Basin; They are partners with the USGS and PA DEP Pottsville District Mining Office, [Schuylkill Headwaters Association](#), and the Schuylkill Conservation District; They have a dedicated group of partners that are focused on AMD; Suggested she reach out to the Penn-State Extension's [Penn-State Master Well Owner Network](#) and as well; Informed her that Drinking water laws like the Safe Drinking Water Act are regulated very differently from the Surface Mining Control & Reclamation Act of 1977 (and there are two programs that fall under it, the Title IV Abandoned Mine Land Program and the Title V Regulatory Program); Suggested that she also follow up with the PA Fish & Boat Commission to see if they have any information on manganese impacts to aquatic resources in PA
- *Mike* informed *Steve* and the Executive Director that the OSMRE TIPS Program has a Pix4D Mapper software available for download and license checkout that EPCAMR may be able to utilize in the future for our drone; Suggested that *Steve* download it and give it a trial run
- Provided *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District Watershed Specialist, with a copy of the Bowman's Creek Preliminary Watershed Assessment report from 2002, for his review to look at the recommendations in it as he considers some sites for aquatic passage restoration funding from the US Fish & Wildlife Service; Aquatic Organism Passage is the planned improvement, and he is looking for the most likely candidate to be funded; Focal points to increase funding probability:
 - Wild Brook trout and migratory fish waters are a high priority
 - Open to public access & fishing
 - Habitat improvement for Federal Species of Concern recommended
 - Environmental Justice areas increases possible funding
 - Fish Passage must be permanent that will not be altered
- Coordinated with *Tom Clark*, AMD Basin Coordinator for the SRBC to provide a copy of the Mocanaqua Consumptive Use Mine Pool Study Report and Feasibility to PA DCNR, who is considering some reclamation work in the Teasdale Area in the Black Creek Watershed outside of Glen Lyon; EPCAMR reached out to *Nick Lylo*-District Forester to see if he wants to get together this Summer on-site with SRBC to discuss our findings and show them around
- Provided *AJ Magnotta*, LaBella Associates with some information on AML and AMD funding; LaBella has an in interest in AMD treatment with a CO2 technology and is looking for a potential pilot site
- Provided Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance with information on boreholes in the Western Middle Coalfields and suggested that they contact PA DEP BAMR or PA DEP Pottsville District Mining Office for geographic locations of them; EPCAMR to check to see if we have the GPS locations that we can provide to them

Education & Outreach

- Participated in a conference call on the NEPA Common Environmental Agenda community event being proposed for the Scranton area; Provided an EPCAMR quote for a planned press release to *Michelle Giles*, Policy Analyst from Conservation Voters of PA
- *Cristy Sweeney*, ARIPPA, dropped off 5 bags of donated hydrated lime in bags from Knouse Foods that EPCAMR is going to make available to any partners or watershed groups in the region interested in trying to utilize them on small, acid AMD seeps to see if they would help to improve the water quality
- Participated in a weekly PA AML Campaign conference call to get updates on the AMLER, AML, and Bipartisan Infrastructure Guidance and future PA DEP Grant Program rollout that is to be anticipated to be open at some point in the Fall of 2022
- Began reviewing the Biden Administration's \$500 Million Program document to transform mines into new Clean Energy Hubs; Corresponded with PSU Hazleton colleagues and PENNTAP to let them know we are reviewing the document
- Agreed to a podcast interview on July 14th with *Mark Fraley*, a Wilkes-Barre native, living in Nashville, Tennessee to talk about EPCAMR's work in the region on AMD and abandoned mine lands for his [show](#) that aired on July 15th and has over a 100 listeners within a week's time
- Talked with *Joe Sapienza*, Centone Productions about filming an iron oxide processing video as a part of his Reclaiming PA series with EPCAMR that he would like to continue to produce; Will work with Mike to schedule some time in the Fall to film the footage and plan out the sequencing and film shots
- Presented virtually to the Wildlife Leadership Academy Brookies Field School students on EPCAMR's work in the region and to educate them on AMD/AML issues as well as watershed restoration efforts by our organization and our partners across the Commonwealth
- Talked with *Mariah Davis*-Choose Clean Water Coalition to update her on the PA AML Campaign's support of the STREAM Act; Choose Clean Water Coalition will be preparing a support letter for additional sign-ons by other groups within the Chesapeake Bay watershed to send around to legislators within the watershed
- Provided comments to *Crystal Quintin*, MPA, Senior Director of Advancement of the Geisinger Health Foundation who is supportive of EPCAMR's work in the region and is drafting a letter that highlights the importance and benefits of reclamation and AMD remediation in PA and the relationship between the cleanup work, economic development, and community health benefits
- *Corey Hindin*-AC Power was interested in putting together a joint letter to address the Department of Energy's [request](#) for information on current and former mining sites; Scheduling a call in early August to see what we can pull together
- Provided EPCAMR Staff with an update from PA American Water Company on the August 3 Water Camp in Peckville where EPCAMR will teach **21** campers macroinvertebrate identification sampled from the Lackawanna River and do an AMD Tie Dye T-shirt workshop in the afternoon in partnership with the Lackawanna River Conservation Association

- Conducted an AMD Tie-Dye Workshop for youth at the Cara Park, Catawissa, PA and set up an exhibit for EPCAMR, at a Watershed Festival with partners, including the Columbia County Conservation District, Catawissa Creek Restoration Association, and a number of watershed organizations in Columbia County, on July 30th

Keep PA Beautiful Anti-Litter Campaign Update on Materials and Curriculum

- Received signed professional services agreement for graphics design from *Brady Mock* and his W-9 who will be working on the 5 OYEL books with EPCAMR; Worked with Laura and Denise to have them pull together a quarterly progress report through the end of July 2022 for us to send along to KPB along with an invoice for payment for the last quarter

Askam in Wonderland: A Virtual Reality AMD Watershed Experience Environmental Education Project

- Worked with the EPCAMR Executive Board to obtain the necessary signatures to fully execute the grant through their online e-grant signature process

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

- *Lauren Sauder* and *Jenny McGarvey*, with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay informed EPCAMR of the Fall [2022 Chesapeake Watershed Forum](#) being held in Shepherdstown, WV on November 4-6, 2022 at the [National Conservation Training Center](#); They are seeking 3-6 community watershed representatives from around the EPCAMR Region who might be interested in applying for travel and stipend scholarships to attend before deadline in September
- Provided a full day tour to **15** visiting students and professors from the Overlook Field Study Architectural School of Landscape Design from the University of Oregon that come to Northeastern PA each year and look forward to visiting EPCAMR and learning about our work and the legacy past mining impacts and reclamation and restoration efforts of our partners in our coalition throughout the region; EPCAMR hosted them for the day and took served as a tour guide basically throughout the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valleys to see abandoned mine sites, the underground mine at the Lackawanna Coal Mine Museum, and a number of AMD discharges throughout the region, including Earth Conservancy's Askam AMD Maelstrom Oxidizer Treatment System
- Conducted an AMD/AML Education Program for the Middle Susquehanna Riverkeepers along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River in Lycoming County on the famous Hiawatha Paddle Boat along with a great colleague and friend, *Van Wagner*
- Coordinated our 2022 PA AMR Conference Wrap-Up and Evaluation Call with the PA AMR Conference Committee members to talk about how well the conference went, review the evaluations, to discuss the great job the Ramada venue did with a short staff, the great work of the Committee members, and the Staff of EPCAMR and WPCAMR who filled in as IT Staff and helped to run registration and set up the exhibits
- Provided a brief tour of the Southern Wyoming Valley to *Aaron Franz*, *Vice President*, with [CDM Smith](#), who is interested in partnering with EPCAMR on future projects and seeing if there can be future collaborations or areas where EPCAMR may be able to provide services to their company

- Participated in the PA DEP EJ Advisory Board WebEx Webinar and the Microsoft Teams PA DEP Mining and Reclamation Advisory Board Meeting
- Provided an AMD/AML Tour of the Lackawanna Valley AMD from the Old Forge Borehole and areas south into the Wyoming Valley for a documentary video being produced by Bloomsburg University Professor *Dr. David Heineman* as an education video that will be mostly visuals and maps with no narration; Suggested that he reach back out to ARIPPA and Gilberton Power Company to provide more background on the direction and theme of the documentary should he want to include the reclamation side of the great work that the CO-Gen plants do and not confuse their work with active mining
- EPCAMR hosted *Dr. Richard Crane* from the University of Exeter, United Kingdom, in Northeastern PA for a day long tour of AMD, AML, reclamation sites, and coordinated with *Hank Zielinski*-who is running the operation over at the Harry E. AMLER Reclamation site to give him an overview of the reclamation process of taking the waste coal and converting it to energy for the grid at the Co-Gen plants in the region
- *Krista Schneider*-PENNTAP, PSU Hazleton is interested in co-hosting some sort of forum regarding topics related to abandoned mine land reclamation and related PSU technologies in development to advance partnerships, funding, research, and economic development; Topics could include:
 - Hemp/phytoremediation (Sairam)
 - Rare Earth Elements (Sarma)
 - Solar considerations (Joe Ranalli and others)
 - Microbial remediation (faculty mentioned in [article](#))
 - Funding availability from the State and Federal government and what it could mean for municipalities and landowners (PA DEP BAMR representative, potentially)

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for June 2022 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Made deposits to FNB for incoming reimbursements, checks, and accounts receivables; Submitted payments of quarterly IRA Contributions for EPCAMR Staff to FNB; Provided *Denise* with a copy of the June 2022 FNB Statement
- Completed the June and July 2022 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike*
- Convened a Staff Meeting on July 6, 2022 to talk with Staff about transitioning back into the Office, Projects, Grants, Office/Staff Communications, Field Work, and Schedules
- Coordinated with EPCAMR's State Workers' Insurance Fund (SWIF) Auditor Doug James, who will review our 2021-2021 Unemployment Compensation reports and payroll for the year in early August 2022; Provided Doug with the appropriate copies requested from OneSource, that handles our payroll service and filing of our quarterlies and UC forms
- Prepared draft agenda and notice for August 18th EPCAMR Board Meeting to be sent out