



## Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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## June 2023 Progress Report

### Project Coordination

#### **Swoyersville Harry E. AML Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project**

- Submitted two monthly Progress Reports and two invoices for Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management for April and May 2023 for excavation, hauling, and transportation of waste culm to the Panther Creek Co-Gen and Northampton Generating Station

#### **National Fish & Wildlife Foundation S. Wyoming Valley Small Watershed Assessment Project**

- Worked with *Emma Wigger*, Administrator to request a six-month extension through December 31, 2023 to complete the final plan report of the assessment completed for the American Black Duck and Eastern Brook Trout in the Solomon, Warrior, Nanticoke, and Newport Creeks as well as recommendations for watershed and stream and habitat improvements

#### **Hollywood AMD & Coal Refuse Reclamation into Rare Earth Elements (REE) with Tetra Tech**

- EPCAMR regrettably received an unsuccessful letter from *Joe Sassaman*, PG., and Assistant Director of the PA DEP BAMR in regard to our previously submitted proposal under the AMD/AML Grant Program; They commented that the concept was great, but the score was not very high, and it was not clear that the Department would not incur financial or environmental liability from the project; A number of comments were provided that could be addressed and further explained in a future resubmission of the grant; EPCAMR decided to convene a conference call with Tetra Tech to hash out additional details and further explanations to make our responses more clear in a future round and to ensure that we could address any outstanding issues that PA DEP BAMR had with the application; It has not been determined who has the rights to REE in AMD, AMD sludge, coal refuse, or underclay; It is also not clear if royalty payments would be required; There are also a number of questions relating to what statutes may or may not govern the extraction and processing of REE and there needs to be more discussion on how REE are or may be regulated; Participated in a Teams call with our partners with Tetra Tech to initially discuss the comments and develop a strategic path forward a resubmission; The extraction of REE from legacy coal mine sites has not yet been proven economic, and the regulatory requirements are still unknown at both the federal and state levels of government from the State's perspective; Tetra Tech had a separate meeting with PA DEP Secretary *Richard Negrin* to discuss the project with them while they were in Harrisburg

## **Just Transition Fund Rare Earth Elements Project**

- Spoke to *Rachel Young*, Just Transition Fund, about being able to utilize grant funds to continue to work on developing a database of information on AMD discharges that will include any available historical data on previously sampled rare earth elements and to continue to resubmit an application to the AMLER Program for a much larger state-wide effort to sample AMD for rare earth elements in partnership with Tetra Tech and the PA DEP BAMR; Our grant proposal previously submitted was not funded, however, comments were provided to improve on a resubmission of the application before the next grant funding round closes; Provided *Rachel* with the comments that we will be responding to in the resubmission and with details on the upcoming Solar Summit on Previously Mined Lands in July 2023 because she had requested a follow up on where the Commonwealth of PA might be heading in the realm of solar on abandoned mine lands

## **Carbondale/Mayfield AML Reclamation Industrial Development Project (*proposed*)**

- Communicated with *Andy Baldo* and *Bernie McGurl*, Lackawanna River Conservation Association, Reilly Associates, and Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, about getting together to take the additional time necessary to get more information prepared for a future resubmission of an AMD/AML grant for the Langen Development Economics, LLC property in Lackawanna County; There was not enough time, nor completed information available to be able to submit an administratively complete grant in the previous round; Over 2,000,000 cubic yards of refuse material need to be managed for the development to proceed; Private developers will invest over **\$150,000,000** across **3** projects

## **Technical Assistance**

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

- *Steve Cornia*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist worked on pulling some statistics together from the GIS Solar Site Suitability Model for Abandoned Mine Lands to provide to LaBella Associates for the draft Assessment Report; Registration numbers for the Summit on July 19 were at **75** for the month of June; Representatives from Tetra Tech confirmed their registration and lunch sponsorship; Provided *Cassidy Robinson*, LaBella Associates with a list of development resources and organizations across PA
- Prepared a Letter of Support for Stream Restoration Inc.'s Dashed grant application to PA DEP Growing Greener to help with data entry, uploading documents, and verifying data as well as any future workshops or trainings *Cliff Denholm*, Executive Director may convene
- Provided *LeighAnn Henry*, Borton Lawson with information that EPCAMR had passed along to *Mark Boris* a few weeks ago, that was provided to EPCAMR by *Pat Webb* on PA DEP BAMR contacts state-wide, AML Problems and Solutions, eFACTS, and refuse piles
- EPCAMR's partnership with Columbia University has led to Professor *Sean Kinney*, being awarded an **\$11,698** grant from their Climate Center proposal to purchase and set up pressure transducers at 3-4 AMD locations in the Wyoming Valley with interns from the University to gather data and to test these locations using lab equipment for rare earth elements; Currently there are no monitoring stations in these locations

- Provided *Eric Bella*, Surface Mining Engineer for Lehigh Engineering with information on the Potts Mine Pool borehole; A PA DEP BAMR spreadsheet had coordinates for the borehole and elevation data from 1982 through 2007
- Forwarded off a [link](#) to *Christine Haldeman*, Alfred Benesch & Company to help her try and convert coordinate systems in her Microstation software program to a CAD format from the PA DEP Mine Map Atlas map coordinate system that is in GIS
- *Meg Cole*, Researcher from the Chesapeake Bay Research Consortium and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee ([STAC](#)) requested a technical review of nutrient load reductions in acid mine drainage (AMD) impacted watersheds for restored stream segments; The Chesapeake Bay Program and STAC is seeking a review of existing research and any data to aid in the development of nutrient load reduction efficiencies for AMD treatment projects in the Bay Watershed; EPCAMR will provide comments in July

## **Education & Outreach**

### **ISI Healing the Scars EE Project**

- Submitted an invoice for our Education Specialist's time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the year through the end of June 2023

### **Luzerne Foundation Iron Oxide AMD and Mine Mapping Videos with Centone Productions**

- *Mrs. Gubitose's* CAPP High School Art Class from the Wilkes-Barre Area School District CAPP Program made hexagon shaped art pieces using EPCAMR's iron oxide packets; EPCAMR will now take them as a collage to create a calendar with the finished art pieces

### **Askam AMD in Wonderland 3D VR EE Project**

- EPCAMR Staff were able to coordinate getting into **3** Wilkes-Barre Area School District's Heights Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes before school let out for the year to allow around **45** students experience the virtual reality demonstration of the Askam AMD Treatment System in the Nanticoke Creek watershed on the Oculus headsets and an iPad; Worked with *Mike Corcoran* and Principal *McKenna*, to schedule getting in to the school on June 8; They received a presentation on EPCAMR's work in the region and in the local Solomon Creek and Mill Creek watersheds that are both within their school district and impacted by AMD; The students participated in a pre-test and post-test on their knowledge of AMD and abandoned mines, after instruction, and EPCAMR provided each of them with an activity book on AMD donated to us from St. Vincent College, entitled "[Nature Interrupted: The Journey of AMD](#)"; Worked with *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR Environmental Education Specialist, to prioritize finishing up the final report and reimbursement of expenses for the grant with the PA DEP EE Program at the end of the month; Provided her with the Excel form for the final reimbursement request
- Informed *Cody Whipple*, PA Fish & Boat Commission that EPCAMR released our rainbow trout at the end of the month; EPCAMR will complete the end of the year survey in early July 2023
- *Cristy Sweeney*, ARIPPA sent EPCAMR an updated Excel file of the list of PA DEP AML Coal Refuse Piles in PA

- Prepared a Letter of recommendation and support for Earth Conservancy's Espy Run Watershed Restoration Project for a Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) Environmental Partnership Award and provided it to *Elizabeth Hughes*, Director of Communications; EPCAMR has assisted on this project to bring the stream back to the surface as a restored stream channel as opposed to going into the underground mine workings and discharging at the Askam AMD Borehole Treatment System; All reclamation work done to restore the channel has resulted in **260** gpm or **137** MGD of clean water from entering the underground mine pool and is now serving as baseflow to the Espy Run tributary of Nanticoke Creek and it's only been a few months' time since the tributary has been restored to the surface
- Provided *Maggie McConnell*, AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer for the City of Shamokin and Bucknell University with information and [instructions](#) on how to tie-dye t-shirts with AMD for a future late August, early September 2023 activity at an environmental art workshop/event with funding from a grant they were awarded
- Participated in the weekly PA AML Campaign conference calls; Provided groups on the conference call with a Federal update on a legislative roundup from the Choose Clean Water Coalition
- Scheduled a visit to the EPCAMR Office with [Rachel Bacon](#) and *Meredith Davenport* on July 5 to discuss a previously submitted grant proposal EPCAMR worked on with them months ago and the [Diepenheim Drawing Centre](#) in the Netherlands who would like to utilize our iron oxide pigment in some art education programs and learn how it's processed and recycled for educational purposes
- Confirmed the Executive Director's attendance at the August 15 PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) Advisory Board (EJAB) Meeting in Scranton, PA at a location to be determined since EPCAMR is represented on the EJAB; Provided contact information for ARIPPA, Lackawanna County Conservation District, and *Todd Wood* from PA DEP BAMR to *Amani Reid*, PA DEP OEJ; Suggested that EPCAMR could meet any members of the EJAB at the Old Forge Borehole prior to the meeting if they are interested in a brief tour of the site
- EPCAMR Staff made a trip to Girardville to drop off the Girard Estate Mine Maps to *Bobby Burns'* Office at Keystone Anthracite; Provided *Bobby* with directions on how to search for a particular map that he's looking for on the Mine Map Atlas on the PSU server as he was seeking information on some reservoirs on the property
- Attended a press event on June 21, with the Earth Conservancy, our partner in Luzerne County, who we provided some technical assistance and continued support for their reclamation work on abandoned mine lands; EC was awarded a **\$1.96 million** Brownfields Cleanup grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency to start a new phase of restoration on the Nanticoke Creek watershed; *Adam Ortiz*, USEPA Region III Administrator, attended and toured the area where the restoration of the Nanticoke Creek and reclamation effort will occur in Hanover Township on the Truesdale Colliery Culm Bank site; A large number of regional partners, legislative officials and Staff, State agencies, municipal leaders, and regional non-profits attended
- *Andy McGavin*, SRBC requested that EPCAMR assist with spreading the word around about a very important opening within the SRBC for the [AMD Coordinator position](#) working within the Basin; EPCAMR used its social media presence to start spreading the word on the job opening

- EPCAMR signed on to a comment letter on OSMRE's draft rule regarding the ten-day notice procedure; Citizens Coal Council, Appalachian Voices and the Sierra Club have organized a response in support of the new rule
- EPCAMR was informed by Foundation for PA Watersheds that Senator Casey's Office had a call with OSMRE to discuss issues around 2 CFR 200, STREAM Act set-aside, reimbursements of grants to subrecipients, and amendment backlogs
- EPCAMR read an editorial from *Mike Korb*, who was asking the question about where all the funding that has recently become available for AMD work in the Commonwealth has been allocated or awarded in recent grants and what is happening with the PA DEP BAMR Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program, in terms of communications with OSMRE, staffing up to administer, vet, review, and award grants; The PA Anthracite Council would like to have a meeting with EPCAMR to discuss if there is anything that the watershed and anthracite coal community can do to move things forward
- Conference call with *Angela Miles*, Senior Analyst, Natural Resources and Environment U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to discuss the AMLER Program for abandoned mine land reclamation projects; EPCAMR will participate in a follow up phone call with WPCAMR on July 13, while the GAO is touring some AMLER Projects with the PA DEP BAMR and OSMRE; Provided *Celia Rosario Mendive*, Senior Analyst, Natural Resources and Environment U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) with contact information for the Local Development District in NE PA at her request and a list of LDD's across PA and *Kurt Bauman's* contact information at the NEPA Alliance
- Conference call with *Peter Thomas*, [Earth Care, LLC](#), about his availability of an Ecochar™ product for AMD treatment; His two gasifiers that are under construction will be producing nearly 120 Tons of Ecochar™ a week; He provided EPCAMR with a spec sheet for the product; EPCAMR provided him with contacts within the PA DEP BAMR, District Mining Offices, ARIPPA, and with Anthracite Coal Operators through the PA Anthracite Council, to see if they can utilize the product since they are looking for long-term applications; They are also looking for a lab that can conduct lab studies that will demonstrate Ecochar's liming effect, as well as its cation exchange capacity (CEC) and its ability to adsorb iron, aluminum, lead, arsenic, manganese, and hydrogen sulfide gas (H<sub>2</sub>S) so EPCAMR provided him with a [list](#) of PA DEP Accredited Labs across PA
- Provided *Tom Clark-Kleinfelder* AMD Project Manager with contact information for the Schuylkill Headwaters Association

## **Community Volunteers**

- *Bridget Dowd*, a student at the University of Miami, and a graduate of Wyoming Seminary connected with EPCAMR and mentioned she'd be home for the Summer; She was the Student Coordinator for the Youth Advisory Committee of the Luzerne Foundation a few years ago; While we didn't have any internship positions open, she offered to volunteer with us on any future cleanups we might be coordinating over the Summer and completed our volunteer registration form

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

### 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary PA AMR Conference

- *Robert Young*, PA DEP Office of Energy & Technology confirmed he is willing to speak at the PA AMR Conference in the Fall to give an overview of the completed Assessment Report for Grid-Scale Solar Development on Previously Mine Lands; *Jim Keene*, Director of Business Development for AMD, from EnviroGen Technologies informed EPCAMR that they would like to become a sponsor for the Conference in the Fall and plan to attend; EPCAMR sent him the link to the registration and sponsorship page; Participated in the PA AMR Conference Planning Committee meeting on June 7 to continue planning for the conference and tour; Asked *Arielle Avishai*-OSMRE, if she can follow up with *Jeff Ream* to see who will actually be presenting on AMD Treat at the Conference; *Shaina McNally*-Altoona Grand Hotel is waiting on quotes for AV equipment rental to provide to us for a price comparison; EPCAMR followed up with *Shaina* about whether or not a cornhole tournament can be played outside on the Hotel grounds in a grassy area or patio and she confirmed that it would be allowed; The Conference Committee reviewed the updated contract agreement and suggested that EPCAMR follow up with *Shaina* and let her know that we will bring our own screens and two projectors to help reduce some costs; Provided *Andy* with EPCAMR's contact information for *Jay Russell* at Graymont limestone company and also copied *Branden Diehl*-Earthwise Consulting, to introduce them to one another; *Jay's* email bounced and it's quite possible that he has retired since we last communicated before the pandemic so EPCAMR provided *Branden* and *Andy* with the number for the Pleasant Gap Plant; Reminded *Tom Clark* (Kleinfelder) and *Andrew King* (SRBC) who are submitting a co-presentation on the Tioga River AMD Treatment Plant to send in their abstract and Kleinfelder's and SRBC's sponsorship to *Anne Daymut*-WPCAMR; [Mitigation Pro](#) registered as an attendee and exhibitor; Registration will be open and starting to come in; Provided *Laura Rinehimer* a fillable PDF to submit an abstract on the Askam AMD VR EE Project
- Reviewed and forwarded to *Anne Daymut*, WPCAMR, all the registrations that were coming in for the NTPP OSMRE/PA DEP AMD Treat 3-Day Training in September 2023; **23** have registered and the Class is full; All attendees were sent instructions on how to register for the hotel reservations at the Ramada and provided a code to give to registration staff
- Participated in the webinar by the **Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Webinar** on various funding opportunities and sources related to abandoned mines and disadvantaged coalfield communities throughout Appalachia on June 28
- EPCAMR Executive Director was requested to sit on a panel at the **PA Chapter of American Planning Association 2023 Annual Conference** at the Hilton Scranton on October 15-1, 2023 in a session on Environmental Justice to talk about our work in disadvantaged and underserved coalfield communities that are designated Environmental Justice Areas on AMD and AML issues and our work on the Environmental Justice Advisory Board; Confirmed attendance and willingness to speak; Followed up with *Justin Dula* and *Juan Serrat* from the PA DEP OEJ Office to get together at some point on the talking points that would complement one another's presentation on the panel
- The **Overlook Field School of Landscape Architecture, University of Oregon**, requested an AMD/AML Tour with EPCAMR on July 7 when they are in the region for their week-long field studies course in PA; They have made the trip annually from the West coast to Eastern Appalachia to study AMD, AML, the use of iron oxides in pigment and artwork, and social and economic as well as environmental issues that EPCAMR and our communities deal with in the Anthracite Region of Northern Appalachia; EPCAMR is trying to double up the tour with the

University of Columbia interns from Professor *Kinney's* Class from New York on the same day; A special tour to the Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour has been coordinated with our partners at the PA Anthracite Heritage & Historical Museum Commission at McDade Park, Lackawanna County

## **EPCAMR Program Administration**

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts; Provided Denise with a copy of the monthly bank statement for Quickbooks; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for the June 2023 renewal with Highmark; Received the reports for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter IRA payments to be deposited for EPCAMR Staff from OneSource; Paid EC the rent; Made deposits to FNB for incoming checks
- Forwarded to *Maria Tomassoni*, from SWIF, a copy of an Executive Officer's Declaration that had the proper signature on it, since a previous copy was mistakenly sent without the signature for our renewal policy
- Worked with OneSource to pull information together for the State Workers Insurance Fund (SWIF) Premium Audit for July 1, 2022 through July 1, 2023 scheduled for an office visit and review on July 5, 2023
- Worked with OneSource to send a letter to the IRS stating that EPCAMR was exempt from paying the Federal Unemployment Tax (940 Form) due our non-profit status
- Submitted to the PA Department of Revenue, Bureau of Registration and Taxpayer Management, EPCAMR's completed renewal application and forms (REV-72 and the notarized REV-956), along with a previous year's 990 Form for review and approval of our Sales Tax Exemption Form; Within a few weeks' time, we had received our approved Sales Tax Exemption Certificate in the mail from the PA Department of Revenue that is valid for 5 years until 2028
- Renewed EPCAMR's Annual activation in the federal Government's System for Awards Management ([SAM](#)) online system and received acknowledgement that the updates were approved
- Completed the June 2023 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike*