



## Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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## June 2021 Progress Report

### Project Coordination

#### **OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Stewards Individual Placement Program (SIPP)**

- EPCAMR was informed that our Coalfield Community Gardening Initiative with the Growboxxes was successfully submitted for review and consideration by Clif Bar Family Foundation
- *Kyle* created a Fundraising Logistics document that will be added to the EPCAMR Strategic Plan Update for 2020-2025
- *Kyle* was able to secure a donation of rebar from [Driscoll's Home Center](#), West Pittston, PA, for the community garden construction in the Huber Miners' Memorial Park in Ashley, PA
- Submitted payment for the invoice for sponsoring *Kyle's* OSMRE VISTA Stewards Individual Placement to Conservation Legacy from March to April 2021; Informed *JM Aurednik*, Program Coordinator, that *Kyle* has been still working remotely for the most part and that we were coming upon the close of his completion of his term in mid-July 2021 and that he was looking for full-time positions after his first year of service; Received an updated COVID-19 Policy from Conservation Legacy and passed a copy of it along to *Kyle* for his records; Reviewed and approved of *Kyle's* 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report submission to Conservation Legacy
- *Kyle* helped assess the cleanup spots off Tunnel Road and State Game Lands in Dennison Township with the Executive Director by taking pictures of the locations that will be cleaned up and obtaining GPS locations to create a map of the cleanup areas for the PWEA volunteers
- Worked with *Kyle* and *Laura* to develop an environmental education grant proposal for **\$3500** from [Quadratec](#), a company that makes outdoor batteries
- Worked with *Kyle* on a [PPL Foundation Sustaining Grant](#) from the and was awarded a **\$2000** grant that will allow for Staff to further spend time on developing grants and utilizing some of the time to allow for time to be spent on educational events and activities that support our mission

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

- Requested that *Mike* send around the signature document to the Executive Board that is needed to be completed, signed, and mailed for EPCAMR's Mine Operator's License Renewal for 2021-2022

### **PA DEP Mine Subsidence Insurance Program Mine Map Grant**

- EPCAMR has received an extension on the Mine Map Grant from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023 with an additional **\$201,550** in funding

### **Southern Wyoming Valley NFWF Small Watershed Grant Program**

- EPCAMR finally received word that our grant agreement was approved and fully executed; A Staff person had left the organization and our application got lost in the shuffle for several months as the spot was vacant; Will Jackson sent along the fully executed agreement and gave us the green light to begin working this Summer; Coordinated with *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District to schedule our field training with him and *Aaron Fry*, Fisheries Biologist with the PA Fish & Boat Commission and *Molly Giles*, Waterfowl Biologist, PA Game Commission to begin our assessment work on the American Black Duck (ABD) habitat areas within the mining impacted patches of the project study area; John has already developed a KMZ file of existing data he's accumulated already for the ABD within the study area

### **Mill Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan**

- Provided *Rachel Kester*, Program Manager, PA TU with an update on the monitoring work that EPCAMR is doing in the Mill Creek watershed since the Spring and into the early Summer; We need to do the macro and water quality sampling now and continue to look for some potential projects or recommendations in the watershed when we are out doing field work. We have most of the culverts assessed already and need to do a few more; EPCAMR may end up doing a virtual Zoom Informational Meeting on the project due to COVID public meeting restrictions and don't anticipate not having the project completed by the end of the Fall 2021; Photographed high water events around the Mill Creek watershed following a storm event with *Steve Cornia*

### **Bear Creek AMD Treatment Survey/Design, O & M Plan and Permitting Package**

- Worked with *Robert Frank*, Watershed Specialist from the Dauphin County Conservation District to reach out to *Kerry Teter* to have him sign the landowner access and monitoring agreement

### **Appalachian Collaborative with ISI Project**

- EPCAMR Executive Director worked with *Denise* and submitted the final two invoices for **\$24,250** to close out the project; ISI will be sending the larger of the two invoices through an ACH transfer; Provided a final list of communities served and direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project to ISI to provide to the Mental Insight Foundation

### **PA American Water Mill Creek Temperature Logging Monitoring Project**

- EPCAMR Staff installed additional HOBO temperature sensors throughout the Mill Creek Watershed since our order was backlogged and shipped recently over a 2-day period

## Healing the Scars: Reclaiming Northeastern PA! with ISI

- Convened a Zoom call to review a draft budget for the documentary film series with ISI and Centone Productions and ideas for soliciting additional [funding sources](#) to support the post-production; Sent a link to ISI on some grant research for additional potential funding sources; Reviewed the proposal, deliverables, and outcomes of the new grant; Reviewed video shot locations and white board for the second documentary in the series with *Claudia Meglin-ISI, Laura, and Joe Sapienza*; Joe will eventually visit the sites; Provided comments on trout puppet designs

## STEAM in the STREAMS Day Camp PA DEP Environmental Education Grant

- *Mike Corcoran*, Wilkes-Barre Area School District informed EPCAMR that the School Board has decided that there will not be any in-person field trips or education programs/tours going in to the Fall 2021; EPCAMR had to shift gears and get approval from the PA DEP EE Program to conduct a 1-day AMD Watershed Field Camp with youth from the Wyoming Valley as opposed to the school group; Created a flyer and sent it around to local sports and youth athletic groups that EPCAMR was familiar with to help spread the word about the STEAM Camp; Provided *Denise* with *Peggy Nork's* contact information for the McGlynn Learning Center in Wilkes-Barre; She's the Executive Director for the Center; Drafted up our final photo release/liability waiver form for signatures by parents who had their children attend the Camp; EPCAMR held the Camp on June 25<sup>th</sup> and completed numerous STEM activities and had the campers conduct stream macro-invertebrate identification on Solomon Creek, how to take and calculate stream flows, an AMD tour, witness the use of EPCAMR's drone technology, learn how to identify a watershed boundary, and created their own version of a macro-invertebrate; Nature journals were provided to all the campers; A [highlight reel](#) of the camp is included

## Technical Assistance

- EPCAMR participated in a Northumberland Countywide Action Plan Government Stakeholder Meeting with Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA) after being invited by *Stephen Motyka*, Director from the watershed organization; the PA DEP and EPA and provided as much helpful information as possible on the call; EPCAMR wanted to ensure that the plan includes AMD remediation and assessment, in addition to more land reclamation throughout the Western Middle Anthracite Coalfields; EPCAMR will follow up with *Judy Becker* and *Ben Paul* at the Northumberland County Conservation District, with any additional information that we could provide in terms of resources at hand; Provided links to some important resources to the US EPA and other partners for the CAP; [SRBC Technical Report 279: Anthracite Mine Drainage Strategy Summary](#) ; <http://epcamr.org/home/current-initiatives/mine-pool-mapping-initiative/>; <http://pa.water.usgs.gov/projects/groundwater/westernmiddle/>; [http://www.epcamr.org/storage/projects/MinePoolMapping/Appendix\\_E\\_WesternMiddleBoreholes.pdf](http://www.epcamr.org/storage/projects/MinePoolMapping/Appendix_E_WesternMiddleBoreholes.pdf) ; [http://www.srbc.net/pubinfo/techdocs/Publication\\_279/techreport279.htm](http://www.srbc.net/pubinfo/techdocs/Publication_279/techreport279.htm); <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015078470781> (*Mine Water Stratification in the Mine Pools*)

- Provided *Cliff Denholm*, Stream Restoration Inc. with a quote for providing technical assistance for their Operation & Maintenance TAG grant that would allow EPCAMR to grab samples from AMD Treatment Systems that are in Datashed in the EPCAMR Region based on an estimated cost per site or cost per hour and travel
- Followed up with *Malcolm Fergusson*, of Somerset Environmental to further discuss the Maelstrom Oxidizer AMD Treatment System and to see if they would be interested in exhibiting at our virtual PA AMR Conference or becoming a sponsor
- [ARIPPA AML Reclamation Mini-Grant Awards Application for 2021](#) is open until the end of July 2021; EPCAMR will be distributing **\$2500** to one or more projects in the region once they are selected following submission; Posted the grant round availability on social media
- Informed *Carrie Richmond*, Sullivan County Conservation District, District Manager, that EPCAMR submitted our proposal for continued monitoring in the Loyalsock Creek watershed on a monthly basis for the Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association and SCCD for 2021-2022, as soon as we wrapped up the reporting on the previous and completed the additional two months of monitoring that could not be completed due to snow and access over the first quarter Winter of 2021; Sent along Invoices and the proposed continuing monitoring efforts with the addition of the Lewis Mine AMD Treatment System that leads to Birch Creek, outside of Bernice
- Provided assistance to *Amanda Schraeder*, Science Teacher at Greater Nanticoke Area High School, who is looking to get *Mike Stachowiak* and *Tony Fleury* involved in the Trout in the Classroom Program at the High School level and *Kirk Jones*, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at the Elementary Education Center; They may be asking Stanley Cooper Chapter TU for financial assistance to get the tanks up and running, especially the chiller
- Provided New Roots Resource Recovery Center and the Wilkes-Barre Blight Committee with suggestions for the implementation of a Block Captain Program for future cleanups throughout the City of Wilkes-Barre at their request that was forwarded on to the Mayor of Wilkes-Barre
- EPCAMR was informed that our grant proposal to the *Just Transition Fund* was not selected for a submission of a full proposal following the review of more than 50 competitive submissions from across the country
- Provided *Linda Nowak* contact information for Old Mille Impressions who engraves the pavers for the Huber Miners' Memorial Park walkways as a part of an annual fundraiser for the Huber Breaker Preservation Society
- Provided a letter of support to *John Levitsky*, Watershed Specialist, for the Luzerne Conservation District's Plainsville AMD Feasibility Study Growing Greener Grant that they are considering submitting for funding; Helped to secure an additional letter of support from *Tom Clark*, SRBC AMD Basin Coordinator

- Received a draft document from [MARG Energy](#) for review and comment on an AMD treatment technology
- *Steve Motyka*, President, Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA) informed partners that they were successful in winning a **\$11,932** grant from the Sierra Club's Huplits Wildlife Foundation, to fix some of Quaker Run's creek bed in Veteran Memorial Park in Kulpmont Borough, Northumberland County
- Talked with Mott McDonald, who are working with the DRBC to get underway on a Comprehensive Storage Study for the Delaware River Watershed and discussed mine pools in the Upper Lehigh and Upper Schuylkill River headwaters and the need for more feasibility studies to be completed and monitoring of those areas and mine discharges to help understand the volume of water for either potential storage or other uses to prevent flooding, mine water reuse, geothermal potential, or consumptive use
- Provided recommendations and ideas to *George Lehman*, President of the Huber Breaker Preservation Society on how the Society can move forward now that the Breaker has met its demise over the last several years since being torn down and scrapped for metal value in April 2014; EPCAMR's assistance in coming up with new projects and ideas, along with a brief Strategic Plan, were requested and provided to our long-time partner and associate member organization

#### **Luzerne/Lackawanna/Susquehanna County County Action Plan (CAP) with [LDG](#)**

- EPCAMR Staff participated in the Luzerne County Watershed Health Focus Group Meeting and provided technical assistance as well as an update on monitoring of AMD discharges found in Luzerne and Lackawanna County that will be included in the Plan; EPCAMR Staff sampled several AMD discharges (Upper Wilson Creek Simpson Drift, Lower Wilson Creek Simpson Shaft, Giombetti Drift, and the Jermyn Slope) in the Upper Lackawanna Valley; All the discharges were near-neutral pH and low metals and are serving as cold sinks to the river and feeder streams and nitrates and phosphates were found in the AMD; Provided the data collected thus far to *Josh Glace* and *Jen Demchak*, for their review; Forwarded photos of the areas to *Bernie McGurl*, Lackawanna River Conservation Association for his review

#### **ACPower Solar Power on Reclaimed AML Landowner Outreach**

- Reached out to Pagnotti Enterprises, *Alex Brush*, and *John Rich* to set up a conference call with them to introduce them to ACPower; Followed up with Bernie to see about contact information on D & L Realty and was able to obtain information for *John Cowley* for ACPower to follow up with; EPCAMR made an initial phone call, left a message and received a follow up call; Forwarded an article entitled, [Even WV Bows to Solar](#) from [The American Prospect](#) that EPCAMR was quoted in related to solar development on abandoned mine lands after being interviewed by *Gabrielle Gurley*, Editor a few months back; She did a great job on the story as it related to WV, VA, and PA too; Facilitated a conference call between ACPower and Gilberton Power Corporation to discuss the potential for solar development on legacy mine lands; Provided Alex Brush with *Joey James' contact* information from [Downstream Strategies](#)

## Education & Outreach

- EPCAMR Executive Director had a chance to speak with *Senator Bob Casey Jr.*, *Congressman Matt Cartwright*, and Secretary of the US Department of Labor and Industry, *Marty Walsh*, who were visiting Wilkes-Barre for a tour of a vaccination clinic with *Mayor George Brown*; Thanked them for their continued support and leadership on the bipartisan bills on Reauthorization and the RECLAIM Act; Interviewed by [Fox56](#) on how the vaccinations are bringing hope for people returning to work
- Communicated with *Matt Hepler*-Appalachian Voices who typically works on the AMLER Projects and is interested in thoughts on creating a sign-on letter to send to Senator *Toomey/Capito* asking them to sign on as a co-sponsor to the Machin RECLAIM Act and AML Reauthorization bills; Forwarded to *Matt* our recent sign-on to a letter with PennEnvironment that went to the PA Legislature in support of Reauthorization and the RECLAIM Act and we are encouraging community groups and other partners to sign on to it and add their names to the effort. [PennEnvironment and EPCAMR Sign On Support Letter](#); Discussed a solution to dealing with an AMD site in McCreary County, KY and provided him with EPCAMR's thoughts on how to approach the situation based on available data and the need for additional data collection
- EPCAMR was informed that *Louise Dunlap*, posthumously, will be receiving a ***PennFuture 2021 Woman of Lifetime Achievement in Conservation Award*** in the Fall 2021 on September 9<sup>th</sup> in Lackawanna County; The award celebrates the lifetime accomplishments of a remarkable woman who has made a difference by devoting significant parts of her life to protecting and enhancing Northeastern Pennsylvania's natural greatness and for her tireless dedication to environmental advocacy and justice and has dedicated at least 25 years of work to conservation in Pennsylvania
- EPCAMR provided public comment for the PA Science Standards and informed other environmental educators to do the same while the public comment period remained open through July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021; We encouraged the PA Department of Education to revise the proposed standards to explicitly include environment, ecology, and agriculture standards because our future student leaders of PA deserve to have rich, environmental and agricultural education opportunities; Encouraged other partners to use the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's [Action Alert](#) to submit comments
- Forwarded to *Laura* and *Denise* the Chesapeake Bay Trust's [Mini Pre-K-12 Environmental Education Grant Program](#); This grant opportunity is available, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to provide accessible funds (*up to \$5,000*) to schools/school systems, field providers, and non-profit organizations for Pre-K-12 and youth environmental education, as well as educator training, within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; Applications were due July 1, 2021
- EPCAMR loaned some kick nets and stream sampling supplies to *Rich Troscianecki*, PSU Master Watershed Stewards Program Coordinator for an Environmental Education Program he was conducting at the Lake-Noxen Elementary School in the Lake Lehman School District

- Signed EPCAMR on to a Choose Clean Water Coalition letter of support for Senator *John Gordner's* [SB 525](#) that establishes the framework for a Growing Greener III Grant Program; It has been referred to the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee for consideration; Submitted two Op-Ed letters from *R. John Dawes*, Foundation for PA Watersheds to the Citizens' Voice and the Times-Leader locally for consideration to be run in their Op-Ed section on the use of ARP Funds for Growing Greener and SB 525
- EPCAMR sent a letter to Representative *Eddie Day Pashinski* about the need to support and advocate for the establishment of an [Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program](#) to support agricultural landowners across PA to establish best management practices in Senate Bill 465; Spoke to Dave Palermo, Legislative Assistant on the phone about the program goals and examples of what can be accomplished in watershed restoration efforts on the ground with funds with the help of our volunteers; EPCAMR supports the use of the federal American Rescue Plan funds as seed money to help get the program started; EPCAMR is a partner with the [Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership](#) that is also in support of this effort; EPCAMR works with our Conservation Districts on projects such as tree plantings along riparian areas in the headwaters of many of our mining-impacted streams, which tend to have the legacy of pollution and past mining on the landscapes in the valleys and along the major river corridors and lower ends of the tributaries where the pollution is mixed with the sediments from the agricultural areas and stormwater runoff; EPCAMR has already assisted in many plantings with our partners to keep our headwaters clean and cold that have helped to restore streambanks and to prevent further sediment and erosion from agricultural areas; This is very similar to the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program in PA
- Provided *Reilly Manz*, Associate of Programs at Delta Institute with EPCAMR's testimony in support of the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#)
- Provided input to *Kelsey Forren*, Assistant Director, Global Energy Center, [Atlantic Council](#), and *Jeremy Weber*, Public Administration Program Director, of the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs on the "*State of Reclamation in PA*" and discussed the AML Trust fund, policy issues, and Reauthorization
- *Janie French*, Executive Director of the [Headwaters Charitable Trust](#) informed EPCAMR and *Todd Wood*, from PA DEP BAMR, that they are submitting a Growing Greener grant for 20% of the design costs with Signor Brothers to determine if the Arnot #5 Mine discharge, in Bloss Township, Tioga County, can be treated for potable water for Arnot
- EPCAMR requested that SRBC sign on to our joint letter with PennEnvironment for the support of Reauthorization and RECLAIM and submitted the information and [link](#) to *Gene Veno*, SRBC to see that *Andrew DeHoff* reviews it for consideration and sign-on; Choose Clean Water Coalition and PennFuture also sent the link around to community groups to consider signing on to the letter of advocacy and support for the need of funding Nationally for AML reclamation, AMD remediation, and economic development on abandoned mine lands

- *Renee Reber*, PennFuture, introduced virtually to EPCAMR, *Donna Kohut*, the new Campaign Manager for PennFuture in the Delaware River Basin; EPCAMR will continue to inform her on AMD and reclamation activities within the watershed
- EPCAMR read that the Appropriations Subcommittee approved Interior, Environment & Related Agencies fiscal year 2022 Appropriations funding [bill](#) and it included **\$165** million for Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund Grants to Appalachian States, a **\$50** million increase over fiscal year 2021's funding level; Congressman Matt Cartwright put out a [press release](#)
- Participated in the weekly PA AML Campaign conference calls with partners to hear updates and give updates on legislation

### **Community Volunteer Coordination**

- *Robert Nagle*, a previous EPCAMR volunteer for the Centralia Cleanup in 2019 from Ontario, CA, with the Central York Fire Services, inquired about a future Fall Cleanup in 2021; EPCAMR informed him that there may be a much smaller coordinated effort around town in the Fall along with a small tree planting event and that we'd let him know; EPCAMR will be returning the loaner cameras to *Rob Dubas* from the Keep PA Beautiful Camera Surveillance Loaner Program this Summer
- Reached out to *Cheryl Gnoinski*, who had a younger daughter who would like to work in iron oxide pigment to create some artwork since she is a budding artist; Requested her address to mail her some iron oxide pigment to test out; Another artist, *James Smith Jabee*, from Cranston, RI ordered some iron oxide pigment; Another artist sought some iron oxide as well to try out, named Nicole Maroni,
- Signed up *Sara Metz* and *Dominique Preate*, (student at Scranton University from Clarks Summit) to become Lead Observers through the NAACC Aquatic Organism Passage Protocol Training; Obtained all the necessary information to get them in to the database before they can take the online portion of the culvert assessment and aquatic passage training; Signed *Rich Trosciancki*, PSU Master Watershed Stewards Program Coordinator up for the NAACC AOP Protocol Training
- Followed up with *Tim FERENCE* and *Gary Leander*, Friends of the Nescopeck to seek assistance with the coordination of the roadside clean and State Game Lands Cleanup along Tunnel Road in Dennison Township, Luzerne County, just outside of Nescopeck State Park with *Chris Henry*, Principal Project Engineer for Mott MacDonald and **15** PEWA volunteers coordinated by EPCAMR; Trash was to be picked up by Luzerne County Road and Bridge Department since Tunnel Road is a county road

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

- EPCAMR received **\$5000** for the sponsorship of the 2021 PA AMR Conference from the Commonwealth of PA; Participated in the PA AMR Conference Planning call
- Provided *Tammy Linn*, Wanner Associates, with the Executive Director's bio, photo, and summary of the presentation on "**Co-Gens, Coalitions, and Reclamation**", that was pre-recorded for the upcoming 2021 Virtual PROP Conference



- *Kelsey Forren*, Atlantic Council, reached out to EPCAMR to request the Executive Director's participation in a roundtable on the state of reclamation of PA's abandoned mine lands; The session, organized by the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs and the Atlantic Council Global Energy Center, aims to gather perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in reclaiming and repurposing Pennsylvania's mine lands; They are interested in how PA might best use additional funds for reclamation if they become available; The Zoom session was held on June 24<sup>th</sup>
- Participated in the USGLC State Leaders Capitol Hill Day and first ever [Global Impact Forum](#) on June 14-15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, virtually and spoke with many of EPCAMR's regional members of Congress and the Senate and their Staffers on advocating for abandoned mine land reclamation for economic development, locating manufacturing job warehouse centers on reclaimed abandoned mine lands, creating job opportunities, workforce development training, growing food on abandoned mine lands for agricultural and food production, and the reuse of mine pool water; EPCAMR Executive Director has been appointed to the PA Non-Profit Organizations Advisory Committee for USGLC; [Fact sheet](#) on the US's global economic engagement
- *Ana Singh*, Research Associate, The University of Western Australia, an attendee at our PA AMR Conference in 2020, provided EPCAMR with a copy of the Book of Proceedings from the AMD multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder, collaborative dialogues from workshops in May 2020 that was full of diverse and rich topics around AMD; The document has a lot of "take home points" that were highlighted as opposed to the format of a research document or abstract
- Viewed the [House Natural Resources Environmental Justice EJ Coalfield Communities Hearing](#) on YouTube

## **EPCAMR Program Administration**

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for June 2021 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Provided *Denise* with the June 2021 Statement for reconciliations; Made a deposit to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables
- *Matthew Philistine*, Mentor with NEPA SCORE, reached out to EPCAMR to see if we would like to remain in the SBA/Northeastern PA SCORE Contact database for free business mentoring services; EPCAMR was happy to stay in the database
- Worked on trying to help facilitate the planning for the meeting of the Environmental Education Subcommittee to add another element to the 2021-2025 EPCAMR Strategic Plan by following up with *Dr. Ken Klemow (Chair)*; Sent out a reminder about the July 14<sup>th</sup> monthly call from 8-10AM to finalize the work of the major skeletal structure of the Strategic Plan with the Strategic Planning Committee