



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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March 2022 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Completed the January 2022 and February 2022 Reimbursement for submission along with the Summary Narrative Report to *Gerard Schmidt*, Project Officer for PA DEP BAMR; Checked with PA DEP BAMR on the status of previously submitted reimbursements

Healing the Scars: Reclaiming Northeastern PA! with ISI

- Added credits, partners, logos to the nearly final completed video of “Brookie Braves A Storm” and added them to the document for *Claudia* and *Joe* to review and include in the final edit; Sent along the **\$2500** invoice payment to Inquiring Systems Inc. for the post processing of the video from the Forever WILD grant

Bear Creek AMD Treatment Survey, Design, O & M Plan and Permitting Package Project

- *Robert Frank*, Dauphin County Conservation District Watershed Specialist sent EPCAMR historic water quality data from the Bear Creek watershed; Forwarded the data to *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR Program Manager and to *Tom Clark*-SRBC AMD Basin Coordinator for their review; Followed up with Dauphin County Commissioner *Chad Saylor* about getting partners together on-site in April to see how the progress is being made on the project and to discuss future funding opportunities from other State and Federal funds; Provided Commissioner *Saylor* with contacts at Harrisburg Area Community College and Harrisburg University of Science & Technology who were a part of the PA DEP Mine Subsidence Insurance Program Mine Mapping effort that EPCAMR is heavily involved with; Sent correspondence around to all project partners and *Mr. Teter*, the private landowner to give them all an update; Sent along information on the various funding opportunities to *Eric Naguski*-Dauphin County Conservation District Manager to pass along to the County Commissioners; Talked to *Tom Clark* about the anticipated deliverables and time frame to complete the SRBC portion of the work on the project; Field Tour and Meeting is scheduled for April 7th

Mine Subsidence Mine Mapping Project

- Coordinated with the EPCAMR Staff on monthly work progress on scanning, digitizing, georeferencing, cataloguing, and mosaicking of mine maps for February 2022

Mill Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Assessment Project

- Attended a Stanley Cooper Chapter TU Meeting and heard Wilkes University Professor *Matthew Finkenbinder's* presentation on the Laurel Run watershed on Geomorphology and Native Brook Trout of the Seven Tubs Nature Area, Luzerne County; Laurel Run is a major tributary to the Mill Creek that EPCAMR had completed another Coldwater Conservation Plan already on few years ago; Professor Finkenbinder would like to have EPCAMR take his students out later this year on a tour of some AMD discharges in the Wyoming Valley and the Askam AMD Treatment System in the Nanticoke Creek watershed; Completed the Final Budget and Year End Reports for the Mill and Gardner Creek CHP Conservation Plan and submitted it to *Rachel Kester*, PA TU to close out the grant

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

- Followed up with *Guy Sheets*, BSTI to provide him with an update on our recent interactions with solar developers at the Renewable Energy Summit, Camp Hill; Discussed hosting a potential future meeting with interested landowners as they show interest in pursuing solar development on their abandoned mine lands; *Steve Cornia*-EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist sent several screenshots of our GIS Site Suitability Model Tool to include in the EPCAMR presentation at the Renewable Energy Summit; Followed up with *Jay Kaminski*-Environmental Renewable Analyst for [LaBella Associates](#) to discuss solar on abandoned mine lands related to some work they are doing with the Earth Conservancy; Directed *Nikko Simons* to add LaBella to our growing database; Followed up with *Tina Carr*-AC Power on how the presentation went at the Summit and to connect with her about getting on a future call with SEEDS and Jack Barnett-with the Clean Energy Co-Op, to discuss community solar project ideas on abandoned mine lands and an interest that the STEM Program has at the Wilkes-Barre Area School District for a demonstration and educational project on school grounds; Provided the PA AML Campaign with a summary of the presentations at their request on our weekly PA AML Campaign call; Held a Zoom call with *Tyler Jones*-Director of Legislative Affairs and *Gentry Rouse* from [SGC Power](#) to provide them with more information on abandoned mine lands potential for solar and policy development needs in PA and had another meeting with their rooftop team to talk about how they might reach out to businesses that have already built large scale warehouses on former abandoned mine lands; Convened a Teams call with *Dennis Maurer* and *Jamie Boyd*- Director of Solar Business Development for [NJR Clean Energy Ventures](#) to discuss solar on abandoned mine lands projects; Directed *Frank Sindaco*-EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist to continue to add his new solar contacts to the growing database

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

- Passed along a link to the [QAPP webinar recording](#) that the Executive Director attended online to *Mike Hewitt*, EPCAMR Program Manager, although we are nearly finished with our completed QAPP that has already been submitted and provided back to us with comments and requests for changes to be made for final approval; Conducted a field investigation to begin assessing culverts from the headwaters of Newport Creek in Glen Lyon; Looked for potential watershed restoration, streambank stabilization projects, sediment and erosion projects, floodplain restoration projects, and aquatic fish passage projects; Noted 5 American Black Ducks flying from the drained reservoir on Reservoir Creek in the Newport Creek watershed in Wanamie, PA

ARIPPA Mini-Grant Awards Program

- Convened a conference call with ARIPPA and WPCAMR to discuss how to publicize the mini-grant program to our partners across PA for 2022 and the following year knowing that the pandemic has really slowed down some volunteer work by watershed groups and other partnering organizations; EPCAMR is applying for additional matching funds through the Foundation for PA Watersheds and submitted a **\$2000** convening grant; *Cristy Sweeney*, ARIPPA is working on adjusting eligible projects for the following year with some expansion of uses for the funds; Worked on edits to the existing application that will be due in May 2022 with *Anne Daymut, Andy McAllister, and Mike Hewitt*

Aquatic Informative Ripple Effect Software Water Quality Data Management Project

- Participated in a Teams call with *Randy Romero-AI* and *Doug Schmidt-AI*, and *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR Program Manager, to get an update on the migration of our water quality databases and the correct tables over to the AI Ripple Effect software

PA American Water Environmental Grant Program Mill/Gardner Creek Roadside/Streamside Cleanups, Luzerne County Project (*proposed*)

- Prepared a **\$3435** grant to conduct several roadside and streamside cleanups in the Mill/Gardner Creek watershed in Luzerne County that were recommended in the Mill/Gardner Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan and to install a water level data logger on the Packer AMD discharge that was discovered during the completion of the watershed assessment over the last two years; Submitted the proposal for consideration to PA American Water

Technical Assistance

- Provided *Mel Zimmerman*, Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association President with a summary of water quality that has been collected along our monitoring points in the Loyalsock Creek Watershed from the Summer through December 2021; Winter 2021 and early 2022 have been difficult to monitor due to lack of access to the roads on the White Ash Land Association property; Sampling picks back up this month in March 2022
- *Cody Whipple*, PA Fish & Boat Commission requested EPCAMR's technical assistance to help [Moniteau JSHS](#) in West Sunbury, PA in western PA, with their technology department to set-up a live feed like EPCAMR's for the Trout in the Classroom Program for their TIC Program; *Mike Hewitt*-Program Manager, provided them with information on the camera and equipment used for our setup and installation over the years
- Participated in a Zoom call with *Todd* and *Nate Eachus*, PureGreen BioAg to discuss a future potential collaboration; Provided *Todd* with contacts for the PUC to discuss Renewable Energy Credits (RECs)
- Provided PennFuture Staff with resources and links to mine maps and background information on the Newport Creek Watershed for their research on the Nacero Gas Plant proposal for Newport Township, Luzerne County; Forwarded the information along to the EPCAMR Staff for their review

- Provided *Ben Paul*, Northumberland County Conservation District Watershed Specialist with *Bob Hedin's* contact information for [Hedin Environmental, Inc.](#) in order for him to follow up and see the type of testing Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance could do on their AMD sediments at either one or more of their treatment systems if they wanted to consider using it for pigment or other uses; Suggested that he might call Hawk Mountain Labs locally to see if they have a suggested lab analyses or leachate test to run
- Convened a conference call with *Branden Diehl*, Foundation for PA Watersheds, *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR Program Manager, and *Matthew Lee*, US EPA Region III, to discuss EJ Screen 2.0 GIS Tool and EPCAMR's request for AMD and AML parameters and other thresholds be added to the Tool
- EPCAMR directed *Brian Bland* from National Gypsum, a top manufacturer of drywall in the US; They are sitting on 600-700 tons of a gypsum and lime plaster; The pH is 12.5 and the landfills won't take it; They are looking to dispose of the material and believe it may be a good product for alkaline addition at a mine site; They will deliver it; Mike contacted *Tom Clark*, SRBC to see if he knew of any locations or places that might be interested
- Provided *Brock Goodrich*, a student in a GIS Course at Tarleton State University, Texas, with links to information and publicly available GIS data resources on PA's abandoned mine lands and AMD; His hypothesis for his projects was that the presence of coal mines can contaminate any water that pass through them leading to increase clustering of water treatment centers; Provided him with some clarifications on active versus abandoned coal mines so he could refine his methods
- Participated in a Zoom call with *Phillip K. Hunter*, Commercial Processing Services II (CPS II) and *Wayne Curtis*, PSU, to learn more about his company's efforts to reclaim abandoned mine lands and provide a community development program that they have been working on for several years; They are a technology and compliance company; They have developed a project reclaim abandoned mine lands, plant industrial hemp, and process the hemp into several biodegradable products to support several new industries in PA and create new careers and jobs in the local communities through training and community development programs for veterans and local community members; Informed them of the current abandoned mine land situation in Northeastern PA and who the landowners were that will need to be reached out to in order to help facilitate talks on whether or not they are open to leasing property and acreage for these types of development projects; Provided *Phillip* with contacts that he may want to follow up with across PA that could assist him in his AML Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Project proposal
- Provided *Crystal A. Quintin*, MPA and Senior Director of Advancement for the [Geisinger Health Foundation](#), with information on abandoned mines and mine mapping related to a new facility that is being constructed in the Lackawanna Valley; She was interested in continuing discussions on ways that the Foundation can partner with EPCAMR in leveraging mutually beneficial programming to aid in reclamation activities in the NE
- Provided *Kitty Davis*, The BEG Group with resources and link on AMD at her request for both halves of the State

- Convened a conference call with *Peter Thomas*, [EarthCare, LLC](#), to discuss their need to find some large markets for a highly alkaline Ecochar™ (biochar) that could be potentially used for AMD remediation and could eliminate the land-application of manures and the resulting nitrogen and phosphorus runoff into creeks, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware Bay watersheds; They are about to begin installing their 11th and 12th gasification systems in the northeast corner of Berks County, PA
- Informed *Andy Reilly*-Executive Director for the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority, and members of the Luzerne County Council, that EPCAMR would provide a letter of support for any of the grants or potential funding that may be pursued to encourage efforts to work with real estate companies and developers of subdivisions for affordable housing on abandoned mine lands; EPCAMR encouraged them to have any developer look into the historic repository of surface and underground mine maps that are now readily available to the public through the Penn-State server of the Mine Map Atlas where prospective homebuyers can review the maps that are in the PA Historic Underground Mine Map Inventory (PHUMMIS) on the [Mine Maps GIS](#) site hosted by Penn-State University and reach out to the PA DEP Mine Subsidence Insurance Program to see how they can obtain mine subsidence insurance at a really affordable rate in the community pool that is state-wide; EPCAMR has scanned and cataloged nearly 20,000 mine maps for Northeastern PA and is still under a grant agreement to continue to digitize, georeference, and create mine map mosaics of the maps now that the majority of the scanning of existing collections for the State and some private collections have been completed. Only the [PA DEP Mine Subsidence Insurance Program](#) can issue the insurance; [MSI Site-Specific Request Form Opens In A New Window](#) can be filled out to request information about underground mining across PA

PEC Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority Clean Water Advisory Committee Coordination

- Worked with *Janet Sweeney*-PEC NE Office President to see if it was possible to secure the EC Conference Room in Ashley, for a meeting in April 2022 for around 20 members to participate in the first meeting of the WVSA Clean Water Advisory Committee; The meeting may very well still end up as a virtual meeting, however, she was looking for a central location in the Wyoming Valley

Community Volunteer Coordination

- Followed up with *Jacob Smith*, Native Fish Coalition, PA Chapter, and Wilkes University Fly Fishing Club President, who compiled a list of Wilkes University students who are interested in becoming certified in the Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) online training to become certified as Lead Observers to assist with culvert assessments when EPCAMR does watershed assessments of our mining impacted watersheds throughout the year; Received a list of 7 students (*Tyler Mendoza, Morgan Romanowski, Colleen McDonald, Michael Baker, Ian Allison, Trevor Welsh, Kathleen Mooney*) and entered them in to the NAACC database for them to take the online training; The students should be able to begin taking the online portion of the test as soon as the University of Massachusetts administration approves their accounts; *Nikko Simons* completed his training and submitted his certificate to EPCAMR
- Put the word out on EPCAMR's social media to see if we can help the Luzerne Conservation District Watershed, *John Levitsky*, recruit some of our volunteers to plant trees from April 6-12th in the E. Fork of the Harvey's Creek watershed in the Wyoming Valley; Assisted *John* with dropping off tree tubes bundles and stakes of various sizes for the future plantings in April

- Provided some suggestions to the Luzerne County Council on ways to improve the county-wide coordination of illegal dumping along roadways, streams, blighted areas, railroad tracks, and abandoned mine lands including seeking a bid for multiple dumpsters of various sizes to be placed around the County strategically when communities organize to conduct local cleanups, reach out to Keep PA Beautiful to become a part of any [Keep PA Programs](#), outreach, education, anti-littering campaigns, and to follow up with the Luzerne County Tourism & Promotion Bureau on a previous anti-littering campaign that was started up in 2019 with many County partners and community non-profits

Education & Outreach

- Participated in a Zoom interview with *Phil Navarette* and *Luc Fox*, Wilkes University students who were interviewing environmental professionals for one of their classes at the university
- Provided *Chelsea Barnes*, [AppVoices](#) Legislative Director with a quote for a press release highlighting the appreciation we had for Senator *Robert Casey's* commitment to trying to find a solution for the inclusion of AMD funds for the Set-Aside Program to be able to be utilized from the Infrastructure bill to treat additional AMD discharges impacting our nation's waterways and for his support of the AML Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program; Participated in a National RECLAIM Coalition conference call to discuss the status of Federal legislation and bills related to abandoned mine lands, AMD, economic development, workforce training, and job creation
- Researched mercury in coal and AMD after *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR Program Manager reviewed the 2022 Integrated Waters Report from the PA DEP that showed that in the Clarion River watershed over 1700 stream miles were being added to the impaired waters list due to the presence of mercury or methylmercury that had been found in fatty tissues of fish; EPCAMR is taking a closer look at the data because it isn't being documented in any other AMD locations state-wide with discharges although historically it has been found in some AMD samples at very low levels; It is suspected that it is in the air and can drop into waterways and on the landscape as acid deposition; Trout Unlimited is looking at mercury in benthic macro-invertebrates around AMD treatment systems; *Brian Wagner*, PA TU Conservation Committee Chairman informed EPCAMR that the Bushkill Creek and Little Bushkill Creek (Northampton County) have been listed as impaired for mercury from atmospheric deposition yet there is no similar impairment in any of the adjacent streams
- Participated in a call for a follow-up call with Staff from Governor Wolf's Office related to Environmental Justice and abandoned mines; Participated in a Teams call with *Matthew Lee* from the US EPA to discuss the abandoned mine land and AMD datasets that we'd like to see included in some of the GIS Tools at both the Federal level and State level to make more informed decisions on priorities for funding and dedicating resources to the most underserved communities in PA, including our coalfield communities; Provided *Justin Dula*, Director of the Office of Environmental Justice (EJ) with an update in regards to EPCAMR's comments to EJ Screen 2.0 Tool from the US EPA and The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the beta version of the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#); Reviewed the PA DEP Office of EJ Briefing powerpoint; Informed Justin that EPCAMR pushed out to our social media the [link](#) for the public to comment on the EJ draft Policy Revisions;

- Informed *Dana Kuhnline*, AppVoices, that EPCAMR would like to add *Frank Sindaco* to the National RECLAIM Coalition monthly conference calls as an additional Staff person who can attend if there are conflicts with the Executive Director; Provided *Dana* and *Trey Pollard* with a quote for a news release on EPCAMR's support and desire to see that the Infrastructure funds would be utilized for Set-Aside funding for AMD treatment; Working on a draft OpEd piece for the media in the EPCAMR region
- EPCAMR shared an Explainer [post](#) on cleaning up AMD from the Appalachian Citizens Law Center to our social media and PA AML Campaign; Participated in 4 PA AML Campaign calls throughout the month to get updates from partners on legislation, funding, and guidance on new grants that will shortly become available through the Infrastructure bill
- Worked with *John Dawes*, Foundation for PA Watersheds and scheduled a time with *Karl Brown*, State Conservation Commission and the Secretary *Redding* with the Department of Agriculture to describe the potential stakeholder interests in abandoned mine land reclamation, reforestation, agriculture, and Chesapeake Bay nutrient reduction goals, in light of the Infrastructure bill funding coming to PA---\$245 M per year for the next 15 years; This is separate from the well utilized AMLER program from which we have received \$25 M per year since 2016; This is also separate from the regular funding from the Abandoned Mine Land Trust Fund, from collected fees from the industry, which was reauthorized with the passage of Infrastructure bill; Reviewed a draft white paper on AMD and Abandoned Mine Lands and provided comments to *Joe Pizarchik*; EPCAMR participated in a conference call with all the partners to discuss potential future collaborations and ideas for projects; Old mill dams and the Conowingo Dam are areas of concern on the Lower Susquehanna River that have tons of legacy sediments that groups are looking to remove from behind the dams and use as a possible topsoil amendment on abandoned mine land reclamation projects
- Reached out to *Joe Greco*-President, [BEG Group, LLC](#), and vendor for The Big Switch filter sock; Followed up with a conference call to answer his questions about membership in EPCAMR; He provided me with another company that is a partner of theirs that is working on AMD in western PA, [Filtrsystems](#); Provided him with some contact information for WPCAMR
- Biden Administration Announced Nearly **\$725** Million to Create Good-Paying Union Jobs, Catalyze Economic Revitalization in Coal Communities in a [press release](#)
- Participated in a phone interview with [Christopher Mele](#), a freelance writer and editor for the nonprofit online news magazine [Delaware Currents](#), which is the only news outlet that covers the entire Delaware River and its watershed; Provided him with information on the state of PA streams as presented in the DEP's recent [water quality report](#) and more specifically drilling down into each of the river's basins in PA, exploring their assessments and what causes and sources of impairment they face; Focused on the Schuylkill and Upper Lehigh River Basins with comments and provided him with contacts with other watershed leaders in those areas for details
- Made a request for a quote for 100 plain white youth t-shirts with a one-color logo placement on the back of the shirt to the Dallas Field House, on behalf of the Catawissa Creek Restoration Association (CCRA) for a Summer Watershed Festival in Catawissa, PA along the River and Creek to highlight watershed work and restoration work going on in the surrounding watersheds in Columbia, Schuylkill, and Luzerne Counties

- Participated in several calls as a part of the Choose Clean Water Coalition's efforts to educate PA legislators (Senator Toomey, Congressman Cartwright, Congressman Meuser, Congressman GT Thompson, Senator Casey) and their Staff on environmental issues and funding programs that are important to our efforts within the Chesapeake Bay watershed; Provided examples of how funding from the various programs have been successfully implemented throughout the watershed and are currently being implemented

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

- Participated in a Zoom call training with *Cecily Harwitt*-PennFuture on what authority the PA Governor has on environmental justice issues; Environmental Justice groups across PA are developing a Common Agenda of suggested policies and outreach, education, and priorities for PA's environment; Helped to facilitate a Common Agenda Zoom call with community groups and environmental justice groups across PA to gather values and priorities for PA's future environmental initiatives in air, land, and water
- Provided EPCAMR Executive Director biography and headshot for the program page for the 8th Annual Renewables Summit; Submitted EPCAMR's presentation ahead of the Summit for the session; Attended and presented at the 8th Annual Renewables Summit and Advocacy Day Summit, Camp Hill, PA on March 14-15th as an invited Panel Speaker to talk about solar on abandoned mine lands and other renewable energy ideas for mine lands and mine water; The Summit was hosted by the [Renewables Work for PA](#) (RW4PA) coalition, the PA Solar & Storage Industries Association (PASSIA), and the Mid-Atlantic Renewables Energy Coalition (MAREC Action); Met with the ARM Group and AC Power representatives over dinner to talk about future project development potential
- Confirmed becoming a Guest Speaker with *Sara Mueller*, Curriculum Coordinator for the Brookies Field School in-person at Camp Krislund during the week of July 19-23, 2022 on Wednesday, July 20th, for the [Wildlife Leadership Academy](#) to highlight EPCAMR's work in PA on Impacts of AMD and other projects
- EPCAMR Staff attended the Stanley Cooper Chapter Trout Unlimited Banquet as one of their Conservation partners in the region on March 26th, East Mountain Inn, Wilkes-Barre
- Made follow up phone calls and emails to potential speakers for the PA AMR Conference in June 2022 following our State-wide Planning Committee conference call
- EPCAMR Staff trained **8** members of the Earth Conservancy Environmental Workforce Training Program on AMD and water quality monitoring in Solomon and Nanticoke Creeks; Demonstrated the use of several pieces of our field equipment and the standard operating procedures in AMD impacted waterways and a clean stream section of Solomon Creek; Demonstrated how we take flow measurements with a flow meter in-stream

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for February and March 2022 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Made deposits to FNB for incoming reimbursements, checks, and accounts receivables; Provided *Denise* with a copy of the February FNB Statement
- Completed the March 2022 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike*; Worked on submission of January and February 319 Reimbursement with *Denise*
- Worked on a small **\$2000** convening grant to the Foundation for PA Watersheds for an organizational capacity grant to research and look into IRA options for EPCAMR Staff
- Completed the POWR General Liability Insurance Renewal documentation and sent along our 2022 membership and policy renewal fee
- Provided *Mike Mehrazar*, [PennFuture](#), with a copy of EPCAMR's W-9 to receive funds a stipend for participation in the Common Agenda environmental policy outline