



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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March 2023 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Shickshinny Creek Watershed Coldwater Conservation Plan (*proposed for future grant*)

- Although EPCAMR wasn't able to fully complete an application for the most recent grant round, we started to pull together letters of support and local contacts within the watershed to be able to gather additional support for a later application; Received a letter of support from the *Andrew Mickey*-Chair of the Native Fish Coalition-PA Chapter; Need to follow up with State Game Lands 261 Wildlife Conservation Officers to learn more about SGL 261; EPCAMR still will propose to complete an assessment, water quality monitoring, macro ID, and culvert assessments at publicly accessible roads, bridges, and culverts using the NAACC aquatic organism passage (AOP) survey sheets; We will end up requesting from TU to conduct an electroshocking survey at several locations to be determined; We would make recommendations for future implementation projects; We would sample any AMD we find that might be discharging from the former Stackhouse Colliery; If we find native trout areas (*we have heard there are both native brooks and reproducing brown populations in the watershed*)

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Informed *Denise Hernandez*, EPCAMR Bookkeeper that Invoice 29 would be sent to EPCAMR via ACH on February 6th to cover Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management costs for hauling and excavation of waste culm from the site to the Co-Gen Plants; Submitted the December 2022 Invoice from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management to PA DEP BAMR with the appropriate paperwork for processing and approval; Received the January 2023 and February 2023 Invoices from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management that will need processing upon review; January's Invoice had not been previously submitted and was an oversight by Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management; Submitted the January 2023 Invoice and paperwork for processing, approval, and reimbursement to PA DEP BAMR; Cleared up a previous Invoice 14 that was outstanding and hadn't been reimbursed yet with *Riyad Barkawi*-PA DEP BAMR Project Officer; Invoices 27, 30, and 31 were also being processed to pay Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management costs for hauling and excavation

Bear Creek Mine Pool Study and Conceptual Design Project

- Submitted a revised Reimbursement 8 and our Progress Narrative Report to the PA DEP 319 Program on the project to provide an update on activities made; Provided *Essie Karnes*, President of the Wiconisco Creek Restoration Alliance an update on the project

MSI Mine Mapping

- Mike and the Executive Director travelled to Girardville in two vehicles to return the private collection of historic mine maps that were scanned from the Girard Estate collection to Keystone Anthracite's Office after coordinating with *Bobby Burns*

ARIPPA Mini-Grant Program

- Current mini-grant round is open until May 31st, 2023; WPCAMR informed EPCAMR that an anonymous donor would like to contribute matching funds to the amount of funding we have in the mini-grant program that gets awarded to one or more projects each year; EPCAMR and WPCAMR will have to apply for the funds through the Foundation for PA Watersheds; The National Mining Association published a little [blog](#) on the mini-grant program; Forwarded *Mike* a copy of the wooden signs that were created by students for the jumping weir installed by the Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance

Hazleton Center Beltway East AML Reclamation & Economic Development Project (*proposed*)

- Provided *Bernie Hanson*, Teichos with a copy of the recently submitted EPCAMR grant application that requested funds for reclamation of a site in the Hazleton Area on abandoned mine lands

Technical Assistance

Shamokin Creek Watershed Assessment Office of Community & Economic Development Project with Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA) and Tetra Tech

- Stream Restoration Incorporated would like to work with SCRA to sample additional AMD treatment systems through their annual Dashed Snapshot monitoring event that is outside the scope of monitoring discharges and upstream and downstream points in the watershed; EPCAMR suggested students from Bucknell University if they have the proper field equipment to perform the monitoring; Provided Steve Moytka, SRCA with comments for a SABER news article he was preparing to submit on updates in the Shamokin Creek watershed; SCRA participated in a Bucknell Environmental Ethnography student project which examined the socioeconomic and environmental restoration of Shamokin and how AMD and the Shamokin Creek impacts the community; The students pulled this report together and created a [StoryMap](#) to share their findings; EPCAMR provided Tetra Tech with our Experience Modification Rating from our State Workers Insurance policy, Supplier Safety Pre-Qualification Form, QAPP, and health and safety policies at their request; Tetra Tech provided PA DEP BAMR and EPCAMR a location map of the 9 AMD sampling sites in the watershed
- Provided *Peter Marx*, Choose Clean Water Coalition with some updates on some projects that are on the Congressional boundary line between GT Thompson's and Dan Meuser's Districts that are both impacted by AMD and abandoned mine lands; Along State Route 14 and to the west of it is in GT's District; McIntyre Mountain Road and Rock Run Road are areas that we had previously looked at that have AMD issues; There are other locations that have discharges and it looks like they all fall in the Lycoming Creek watershed area and it looks like the majority if not all of the watershed is in his District; East of the boundary is Meuser's and some other watersheds like the Loyalsock Creek where EPCAMR has some involvement and are currently monitoring several AMD treatment systems and upstream and downstream points in the watershed

- Prepared a letter of support and recommendation for the Choose Clean Water Coalition who is looking to hire a Communications Intern through the Chesapeake Bay Trust on a capacity building grant and sent it along to *Drew Robinson*
- Prepared a letter of support to Martin Barry, Dallas Township Manager, from EPCAMR, for Dallas Township's Phase III construction of the Southside Avenue Nature Park through PA DCNR; EPCAMR assessed the area during our Upper Toby Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan a few years ago
- Provided *Kevin Welsh*, Senior at Keystone College, LaPlume, PA with resources and links on information related to the Old Forge Borehole and work that is ongoing in the Lackawanna River Watershed related to abandoned mine land reclamation, watershed restoration, and AMD monitoring for his Capstone Project
- Provided *June Spence*, [Common Defense Foundation](#), a progressive veteran organization and the Mayor of West Newton in Westmoreland County information and contacts on how to obtain additional details on an abandoned mine land site they'd like to see redeveloped and even potentially get a solar project on; The Old Banning Mine project in Rostraver Township was taken over by eminent domain in 2019 with the intent to convert it to a solar field, but it seems to have stalled
- Assisted *Don Kane Jr.* with adding a video post to the Huber Breaker Preservation Society Social Media page on Facebook on [Jack Palance: A Miner's Story](#)
- Assisted *Dana Kuhnline*, AppVoices, with comments on a draft ARRI Funding FY24 Appropriations Letter of Support that EPCAMR signed on to with numerous partners
- EPCAMR followed up with the Penn-State Libraries System to inform them that we noticed that they may be missing some 2nd Geologic Survey Maps and that EPCAMR has original copies that we are scanning for the Commonwealth of PA that we can provide to them for their digital archives; EPCAMR Staff are in communication with a few librarians that are cross-referencing the list that we provided to them to see if they would like our copies of our scans
- Provided *Walt Nicholson*, Susquehanna County Chapter of Trout Unlimited with updated contact information for *Tom Clark*, Project Manager for AMD/AML-Kleinfelder to see if he can provide him an update on his findings on sampling in McIntyre and Dutchman's Run in the Lycoming Creek watershed
- EPCAMR requested assistance from *Patti Monahan*, in Senator Casey's Office to see if she knew of anyone in the office that could guide us in trying to organize a regional team of partners to try and develop a proposal for some of the funding that is available through OCED for mine lands reclamation; We are interested since pursuing a grant for a working group to build some capacity in the region for this type of idea; Gathering stakeholders and landowners on a project that connects renewable energy production to industrial and mine lands will be critical in the next few years as land becomes a premium for development

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

- Coordinated with *Steven Infanti* at Harrisburg University of Science & Technology to confirm logistics and with *Angela Belli* at St. Vincent College; Followed up with Staff to see if they had completed their initial outreach via phone calls and emails to targeted stakeholders previously identified; Invited members of the Choose Clean Water Energy Workgroup, PA League of Women Conservation Voters, Kleinfelder, Foundation for PA Watersheds, WPCAMR, Ed Wytovich, and AC Power to attend the focus group meetings; LaBella was going to follow up with *Robin Shustack*, PA DEP Mining Office to see if he could provide additional input; Reviewed focus group questions and topics sent by *Cassidy Robinson* from LaBella to be discussed at the meetings and sent them around to Staff and to *Patt Webb* from PA DEP BAMR; EPCAMR co-hosted and facilitated focus group meetings at Harrisburg University of Science & Technology Center on March 15th and at St. Vincent College, Latrobe, March 29th at the Fred Rogers Center; Stakeholders provided input and feedback to LaBella Associates that will be placed into a Summary Document and Report to be presented at a one-day Solar Summit on Mined Lands in State College on July 19th at the Ramada Inn; Provided *Emma Azadan*, Development Director for [SunShare](#) with information on abandoned mine lands and the status of community and grid-scale solar project development efforts in PA; Introduced EPCAMR and our work to *Elowyn Corby* and *Elena Weissman*-Regional Director, with [VoteSolar](#) and *Karla Brawner* from [Leeward Energy](#), who is a developer interested in siting solar projects on abandoned mine lands; Talked with *Joe Rosenberg*, with [Turning Point Energy](#), who is a solar developer also working on abandoned mine sites in in other states
- Provided LCCC with some business information and a Certificate of Liability Insurance adding LCCC as an “additionally insured” for EPCAMR to hold the third facility location on April 5th at their Education Center Auditorium; Communicated with [ARM Group](#) that has experience with solar projects on abandoned mine lands who was interested in attending and provided them with *Robert Young’s* contact information from PA DEP at the request of *Tim Williams*, Director of Growth in order for him to learn how to apply for future solicitation of bids through the State system; Provided LaBella Associates with several versions of the EPCAMR Logo for the Save the Date flyer and QR Code for the Solar Summit on Previously Mined Lands that will be on July 19th in State College, PA; The agenda for the day is still being planned; Forwarded a [NADO Solar Report](#) to *Robert Young* and *Cassidy Robinson*
- Provided *Jason Tarnowski*, Earth Conservancy, with contact information for Clauser Environmental that had completed stream sealing work in the Shamokin Creek watershed and stream restoration work in Schuylkill County

Education & Outreach

PA Trout in the Classroom EE Project

- EPCAMR continues to provide a livestream of the rainbow trout that we are raising and feeding through the TIC program and are planning on their release in May or June 2023

ISI Healing the Scars EE Project

- Participated in a Zoom call with *Claudia Meglin*, ISI Project Officer to discuss the FY 23 grant scope and budget that supports *Laura Rinehimer’s* and some of *Denise Hernandez’s* part-time EE positions in the Office and to discuss ways to get the two videos in to schools and online as well to look at new grant opportunities

Askam AMD in Wonderland 3D Virtual Reality Tour EE Project

- EPCAMR purchased the [3DVista](#) software to allow us to create virtual environments of AMD treatment systems and locations in the field that can be viewed by students with an Oculus in an interactive 3D environment which will be the first of its kind that will incorporate context and video links and photos focusing on the Askam AMD Maelstrom Oxidizer Treatment System owned by Earth Conservancy in the Nanticoke Creek watershed

Iron Oxide AMD and Mine Mapping Videos with Centone Productions

- Coordinated with *Joe Sapienza* and [Jason Sauer](#), Artist and owner of America's Most Wanted Fine Art, to schedule two days in mid-May to film footage at the Solomon Creek AMD Boreholes and at the EPCAMR office on iron oxide usage with two local artists, *Sue Hand* and *Diane Czajkowski*; EPCAMR will discuss a second short video on mine mapping and stream channel restoration with funding we have available from the Luzerne Foundation

Keep PA Beautiful-Open Your Eyes to Litter Educational Booklets and Interactive Online Activities Project

- Reviewed one of *Laura Rinehimer's* interactive online activities that will be provided to KPB in addition to the updating of 5 Open Your Eyes to Litter Educational Booklets; The first book is nearly completed in both English and Spanish along with all graphics and new artwork
- Registered and set up our virtual online booth with the help of Junior Achievement for an upcoming STEM outreach and education event to over 2000 high school students in the Northeast Region on April 18th at the Mohegan Sun, Wilkes-Barre on our work in the region to provide examples of the type of career opportunities that are available in the field of abandoned mine land reclamation and AMD cleanup; Provided an outline to Junior Achievement of resources and materials that will be at the EPCAMR Exhibit at the event including field monitoring equipment and post cards that outline the type of work we do in the region
- Participated in four weekly PA Abandoned Mine Land Campaign conference calls to hear updates on legislation, funding, updates from regional partners around the state, STREAM Act, OSMRE communications, NAAML and IMCC communications, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill funding as it relates to abandoned mine land reclamation and AMD; Informed the group about the [Choose Clean Water Coalition's Annual](#) Conference in Harrisburg on May 22-24th; Forwarded to the group the President's FY24 Budget Request to Congress for their review
- Met with EPCAMR Region Congressional and Senatorial Staff and legislators in Washington DC to provide them with updates on EPCAMR work in the region and to inform them that we are working on updating statistics for AMD impacts and AML acreage that are within their respective legislative districts; District boundaries have been redrawn so PA's leadership have new numbers that can be provided to them as some have picked up areas with AMD/AML impacts while others have lost some due to the lines having been redrawn; There are also many new staffers to introduce ourselves to and the work we do in the region
- EPCAMR signed on to the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed's FY24 Appropriations Sign-on letter following a request from *A. High Garst*, State Policy Advocate for the [Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed](#) and New Jersey Audubon
- Provided *Kent Jackson*, News Correspondent for the Hazleton Standard Speaker with information on the Jeddo Mine Tunnel and Nescopeck Creek watershed for an article he was preparing on the influx of infrastructure funding for reclamation and AMD remediation efforts;

Provided him with a link to the resources on our webpage on [Nescopeck Creek](#) that we've prepared; Referred them to the Friends of the Nescopeck Creek watershed association and also to the PA DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation; He attended the Friends of the Nescopeck Meeting in March and talked with Gary Leander and Tim Ference; Provided him with a link to the newly installed [USGS Gauging station](#) at the Tunnel that will help with obtaining future flow data; Reviewed *Jim LaRegina's* thoughts on how to approach the remediation of the mine water tunnel

- Provided *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR Environmental Education Specialist for EPCAMR with a test link to a Facebook Watch video of the Espy Run Treatment System in the Nanticoke Creek watershed
- Provided *Jason Nark*, [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), with an update on the apple tree plantings in Centralia and our efforts to remove illegally dump tires throughout the EPCAMR Region that are becoming a nuisance and are being dumped in tributaries and on abandoned mine lands that we've been working to assess and clean up over the years; *Jason* was wondering if EPCAMR had heard of any bootleg coal mining going on in the region due to the prices of coal going up and we informed him that we have not heard any stories in regards to this topic
- *April Niver*, Economic Development Director for Congressman Cartwright's Office reconnected EPCAMR with Dr. *Sairam V. Rudrabhatla*, Penn-State University to discuss preparing a Community Project proposal for FY24; EPCAMR spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies guidelines before assisting with developing an application as a partner with PureGreen BioAg, Penn-State Harrisburg, and [Guardian Manufacturing](#) for a water testing project at the Jeddo Mine Tunnel; Participated in several Zoom calls to discuss the proposal idea; Provided feedback to partners on the guidance document and reasons why it might not be the appropriate guidance or funding avenue for the project based on the guidelines and matching requirements; It was more targeted Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act projects; EPCAMR was then informed the project may better fall under the Bureau of Land Reclamation-Implementation guidance; EPCAMR decided to review that document and provided technical assistance following the review; *Dr. Sairam V. Rudrabhatla* provided additional links to a number of other funding programs forwarded to him by *April Niver* that were in need of further review; It was decided that Penn-State would go ahead and pursue the grant opportunity with another organization; EPCAMR did not receive the required information, letters of support, and detailed budget information, that would allow for submission by our organization as a fiscal sponsor from the partners in time
- Planned the AMD and AML Reclamation Tour route for *Diane Madl*-PA DCNR Environmental Education Specialist, in the Wyoming Valley with the Earth Conservancy and PA DCNR Bureau of State Park-Nescopeck State Park/Lackawanna State Park for the March 21st Community Connections to our Watershed Educational Program where nearly **45** high school students from **8** schools throughout Luzerne and Lackawanna participated; Conducted the watershed field tour and allowed students to sample the AMD and participate in some educational activities in our conference room prior to the trip after they were given presentations by Earth Conservancy and EPCAMR Staff; The Askam AMD Treatment System was visited and the Espy Run Stream Channel and Riparian Corridor Restoration project in the Nanticoke Creek watershed at the former Bliss Banks location was also toured
- Participated in a quarterly Environmental Justice Advisory Board Meeting virtually through Microsoft Teams

- Thanked *Brian Arata*, from *Congressman GT Thompson's Office*, *Matthew Perricone*, from *Congressman Dan Meuser's Office*, and *Laura Bell* from *Congresswoman Wild's Office*, for their co-lead sponsorship on the FY2024 State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program that fund our partners in the PA Game Commission and PA Fish & Boat Commission Programs and to *Aliza Oppenheim* from *Congressman Cartwright's Office*, to let her know the letters will be coming to the Appropriations Committee for consideration; Followed up with *Diana Day*-PA Fish & Boat Commission and *Catherine Haffner*-PA Game Commission on EPCAMR's outreach efforts
- *Todd Eachus*-PureGreen BioAg sent EPCAMR a link to the array of programs and funding sources available through the Federal [Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities & Economic Development](#), including a newsletter; Reviewed the newsletter
- EPCAMR Staff attended the Stanley Cooper Chapter Trout Unlimited Annual Banquet and highlighted our two trout puppets that were on display for photos; Stanley Cooper Chapter TU are active partners in our coldwater conservation planning and watershed assessment projects and our Trout in the Classroom program
- EPCAMR Executive Director was interviewed by a Wilkes University student, *Ryan Russman* on our work and examples of the type of projects and career paths taken by Staff in our office to work on the activities, projects, and programs EPCAMR is involved in around the region
- *Amanda Powell*, Patagonia Action Works reached out to EPCAMR to provide us with some social media amplification stats on a previous event that we posted on social media that they had also shared for us with paid advertising through our partnership with them at no cost to EPCAMR because of us being a previous grantee of Patagonia; EPCAMR will be creating a event for the July 19th Solar Summit on Previously Mine Lands and for our October 23-25th PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference later in the year as well as adding any potential cleanups in some of the watersheds that we are working in
- Talked with *Meredith Davenport* and *Rachel Bacon*, who received some of our iron oxide in the Netherlands recently; They are working on a grant proposal for an organization for women that sponsors projects that engage environmental issues and the community through creative practices; They were brainstorming ideas for workshops that gather stories from anthracite regions, especially related to places around polluted waterways; They are going to propose using the iron oxide to create additional awareness of the pollution problem; EPCAMR's ability to produce large quantities is limited and they want to include some funding for supplies in their grant for EPCAMR to donate to EPCAMR; They are thinking about ways to support EPCAMR's efforts to support businesses that could focus on the recovery of the iron oxides from the AMD; EPCAMR Executive Director prepared a Letter of Support for their proposal
- Followed up with *Leigh Ann Henry*, EPCAMR Board member, to give her some background on [Coalfield Development](#); They do some great work; They tend to own property as well; They are an economic development corporation that is able to seek out small business loans to do the work they are doing related to mine lands, in addition to grants; Some other states have these EDC's that are very entrepreneurial; As a 501 (c)(3), we are not eligible to apply for the small business loans
- *Mike Hewitt*, EPCAMR Program Manager, completed the draft AMD/AML Statistics Map/Poster Updates for PA Congressional Districts 7, 8, & 9 with the new District Boundaries from the previous legislative session because the numeric values have changed based on those

boundaries where the Problem Areas and AMD streams impacted as well as where the AMD discharges are located geographically; He'll be working on others after he send a draft around to the PA AML Campaign partners

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

- Participated in a PA AMR Conference Planning Committee call to work through logistics and the food choices for the menu; Reviewed the Conference Planning Committee minutes; Reviewed the fourth iteration of the draft contract agreement with the Grand Hotel, Altoona with members of the PA AMR Conference Committee and made several comments to submit to *Shaina McNally*- Director of Sales, for changes that need to be made; Submitted the comments and revisions after reviewing with *Mike* and *Anne Daymut*-WPCAMR, on March 3rd; The National Association of State Land Reclamationists ([NASLR](#)) will run their conference congruently with ours on the same days, so the Planning Committee participated in a meeting at the Grand Hotel, Altoona on March 22nd, to go over combined logistics and rework the contract agreement; Reviewed 5th draft contract from Altoona Grand Hotel following the meeting and made additional comments; Kleinfelder became a Gold Sponsor of the Conference; EPCAMR is looking to apply for scholarship funding support for community volunteers and Conservation District Watershed Specialists through a convening grant to the Foundation for PA Watersheds
- Reviewed several EPA [Webinars](#) on grants that were provided to EPCAMR by *April Niver*, Economic Development Director for Congressman *Matt Cartwright's* Office
- *Juan Serrat*, Regional Coordinator for the PA DEP Environmental Justice Office reached out to EPCAMR to see if the EPCAMR could be a co-presenter along with him for the [Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association conference](#) October 15 – 17th, 2023 in Scranton to talk about our EJ work in the coalfields; EPCAMR Executive Director agreed to be a co-presenter
- EPCAMR let *Abby Seig*-Watershed Specialist for the Columbia County Conservation District know that we will be represented along with the other watershed organizations in Columbia County in collaboration with the Columbia County Conservation District (CCCD) at the 2nd Annual Susquehanna Valley Watershed Festival this summer at Briar Creek Lake Park in Berwick on Saturday July 29, 2023 from 10:30am to 3:30pm; EPCAMR will exhibit and conduct an AMD Tie Dye Workshop for youth and families as well as bring out trout puppets for pictures with youth

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for the March 2023 renewal with Highmark; Paid EC the rent; Made deposits to FNB for incoming checks
- Worked with Verizon Wireless to close our phone line account since we ported over the two phone lines to Ooma because the technology for our older phones was discontinued; Requested a rebate that was due to EPCAMR
- Continued to review the OSMRE Guidance Document on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law AML Grant Implementation

- ADP, our payroll service provider informed EPCAMR that ADP received notice from the state that our unemployment rate was recalculated; The 2023 rate increased from 1.8175% to 1.8558%; The new rate was applied to all earnings paid since January 1, 2023. The calculation yielded a \$17.33 tax difference on earnings paid in 2023
- Completed the March 2023 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike*