

Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation



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March 2024 Progress Report

EPCAMR Conservation District Mining East Project

Project Coordination

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

- Completed Progress Report on the new Project Narrative Forms and submitted to PA DEP BAMR along with documentation from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management LLC for hauling and excavation of the waste culm for February 2024; *Hank Zielinski*, Northampton Generating, provided EPCAMR and PA DEP BAMR an update on the property transfer of the reclaimed acreage to Swoyersville Borough that looks like it's going to happen in July 2024

Penn State University National Science Foundation: A Socio-ecological Framework for Strengthening Local Infrastructure to Repurpose Fossil Fuel Assets for a Just Energy Transition Grant (*proposed*)

- EPCAMR Executive Director worked with Professors Dr. *Arash Taleghani* and *Zhen Lei* of Engineering, *Jennifer Billett*, and *Stephanie Buechler*, at PSU to develop a proposal that would be carried out in the previously coal mine-dependent areas of Frackville, Morea and New Boston in Schuylkill County; EPCAMR would help PSU to identify participants in a community needs assessment and then economic plan related to what to do with energy from a to-be-proposed concentrated solar collector system over the mine pits which would generate energy from hot water during the nighttime to complement the new solar field over the rest of the mine area that is in the pipeline to be developed; One option might be, pending community input and acceptance, greenhouses that would provide income and food access in this economically depressed area and to especially generate an income for women in the area who have even fewer employment opportunities leading to unequal numbers of female compared to male populations; This would be a new partnership collaboration with PSU's newly established Center for Repurposing Fossil Energy Assets for Energy Transition (ReCET); EPCAMR prepared a Letter of Collaboration for the NSF Grant and provided a Staff Qualifications document for the grant

Datashed 5 with SRI

- *Cliff Denholm*, Executive Director for Stream Restoration Inc. asked if EPCAMR would like to put some time into helping with updating Datashed over the year with project information and funding sources

NFWF Southern Wyoming Valley Small Watersheds Assessment Plan

- Worked on writing the final report for the NFWF Southern Wyoming Valley Small Watersheds Assessment for the areas of Sugar Notch Run, Warrior Creek, Nanticoke Creek, and Newport Creek

EPCAMR/WPCAMR/ARIPPA Mini-Grant Program

- EPCAMR received an application from the Earth Conservancy to construct a better access walkway to the Askam Maelstrom Oxidizer to properly clean, operate, and maintain it along the Nanticoke Creek

Tetra Tech/ SCRA AMD Sampling

- Provided *Mike Hewitt*-Program Manager, with copies of the lab results of February 2024 sampling data sent to EPCAMR from the PA DEP Labs for the sampling of several discharges and upstream and downstream monitoring points in the Shamokin Creek watershed for Tetra Tech (TT) and Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA); Sampled AMD in Shamokin Creek and dropped off the samples with *Brenna* from the Northumberland County Conservation District; SCRA sent EPCAMR some water quality data that was collected from Site 15 AMD Treatment System from last November 2023, for our reference that was collected by Bucknell University students and their Professor *Molly McGuire*

Loyalsock Creek AMD Sampling and Tour for Sullivan County Conservation District

- Sampled several AMD treatment systems and upstream and downstream locations within the Loyalsock Creek watershed

EPCAMR/WPCAMR/SRI Survey of Community Watershed Organizations on AMD/AML

- Reviewed *Cliff Denholm's* PowerPoint presentation overview for the April 10th Webinar; He informed EPCAMR and WPCAMR that he had cleaned up the survey questions to make them more clear and concise; SRI provided *Tali MacArthur* and *Patrick Starr* from POWR/PEC with our final survey questions that will target community watershed organizations and Conservation Districts; Commented on some of the finishing touches for the survey organization to SRI and WPCAMR; *Natalie* finished up the Webinar flyer poster and registration link to the Eventbrite Survey and SurveyMonkey; EPCAMR, SRI, and WPCAMR sent the flyer off to our mailing lists of Conservation Districts and community watershed organizations across the Commonwealth inviting them to participate; *Frank Sindaco*, EPCAMR, worked on adding logos and certain links within the survey prior to pushing it out in April

Technical Assistance

- Provided *Carli Tabone*, a Misericordia University student in Environmental Studies, with some ideas and comments on her research project to conduct AMD and sediment transport sampling in Solomon Creek, Hanover Township with *Dr. Cosima Wiese* below the Solomon Creek AMD Boreholes; Reminded her to stake her flags for the monitoring locations well above high water since the creek rises often during storm events
- Participated in a Microsoft Teams call with [Teichos Energy](#) to discuss future collaboration on abandoned mine land projects related to solar development on March 21st
- Participated in a call with Denny Strickland, [RES](#), to answer questions about abandoned mine lands and AMD; RES is looking to take on large abandoned mine land reclamation projects in PA

- Prepared and provided [Dallas Township Board of Supervisors](#), Luzerne County, a letter of support at their request from *Martin Barry*, Dallas Township Manager, for a PA DCNR grant for the Phase III Southside Nature-based Playground, located in the Toby Creek watershed
- Provided some technical assistance on mosquitos around AMD sites to *Andy McAllister-WPCAMR*, to forward along to *Carla Ruddock*, [Mountain Watershed Association](#), who seems to be having a recent issue with an infestation of mosquitos around their AMD Treatment Systems; Mosquitos do like being around AMD; It's the carbon dioxide that is given off when AMD is aerated; Mosquitos seek out high carbon dioxide because it usually means that living breathing mammals are there for them to feed on; If MWA measures carbon acidity, it would confirm it due to the aeration that occurs that gives off the carbon dioxide gas; The Askam AMD Maelstrom Oxidizer in the Nanticoke Creek watershed has the same issue
- Participated in two conference call meetings with other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders including the Lackawanna County Conservation District, Lackawanna River Conservation Association, and the Lackawanna Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in the Lackawanna Valley to receive updates on the silt spill at the #7 Dam on Roaring Brook in the Lackawanna River watershed while PA American Water was conducting repairs to the Dam valves, that has seemed to have impacted water quality from Dunmore to the North Branch of the Susquehanna River

Education & Outreach

- Participated in 3 weekly PA AML Campaign calls
- EPCAMR Executive Director participated in the March Pocono NE RC & DC Meeting and was reintroduced to the other Board members from across the region
- Received a talking points sheet following the CCWC webinar for review prior to attending the All Bay Day event in Washington DC and provided a copy to *Frank Sindaco*, EPCAMR; Attended the All Bay event on March 5th and 6th, and met with Staff from the Congressional and Senatorial Leadership across PA to inform them of projects in the region that has utilized federal funding for the overall improvement of water quality in the Chesapeake Bay
- Filled out a survey for the PEC Clean Water Advisory Committee and indicated that there would be a number of community cleanups, streamside cleanups and tire removal projects in 2024 that EPCAMR is expecting to coordinate and lead
- Attended the Earth Conservancy's Glen Alden Industrial Archives Signing Ceremony on March 13th with the Industrial Archives & Library who are scanning, digitizing, and cataloging the historic Glen Alden Coal Company collections to preserve them; EPCAMR has done this for the surface and underground mine maps for the Earth Conservancy already under the Mine Subsidence Insurance Program and was invited to attend
- Provided *Duane Feagley*, PA Anthracite Council email addresses of our EPCAMR Board members to be able to receive the Council's monthly newsletter; PA Anthracite Council is a member of EPCAMR

- WVIA aired a short documentary presentation produced by *Kelly Dessoie* and *Kat Bolus*, entitled, "[To Save the River, Save the Mountain](#)" on *Bernie McGurl*, former EPCAMR President and Executive Director of the Lackawanna River Conservation Association on his 35 years of work on the Lackawanna River; EPCAMR Executive Director was interviewed for the segment because of the mentorship provided by Bernie over his entire career; It features *Tara Jones* as well, who is the incoming Executive Director, since *Bernie's* retirement as Executive Director
- *Stephanie Golden*, a graduate student and Adjunct Professor of Interior Architecture at [Marywood University](#) in Scranton has been studying anthracite mining heritage in Northeastern PA for a few years now and has reviewed EPCAMR's work; She is interested in learning more and asked for the Executive Director's thoughts on her thesis project; She has been working on a hypothetical proposal for the revitalization of a 36-acre abandoned mining site in Dickson City; creating a building and outdoor space for organizations like EPCAMR and LRCA, who educate others on the environment and beyond; She's interested in collaboration; She would like to present her work at our State-wide Conference on Abandoned Mine Reclamation since she believes it could be helpful to many other groups as well as a bridge between environmental studies and architecture; EPCAMR will provide her with a form to submit her presentation for consideration by the PA AMR Conference Committee
- Reviewed the PA EnviroThon [current issues](#) documentation provided by *Keith George*, CPESC [Luzerne Conservation District](#) Special Projects Coordinator; EPCAMR Executive Director was invited to be a guest speaker and expert on sustainable renewable energy topics for the students from the various schools taking part in the County [Envirothon](#) competition at [YMCA Camp Kresge](#) in White Haven, on April 23rd; Provided Keith with a copy of EPCAMR's logo for placement on the t-shirts that they are having printed for the students, Staff, and volunteers
- *Michael Mehrazar*, PennFuture sent EPCAMR several hard copies of the [2024-2025 Legislative Briefing Booklet](#) for the EPCAMR Office at the request of the EPCAMR Executive Director
- Reached out to *Wayne Lehman*, Schuylkill Conservation District Watershed Specialist after receiving a report of a fish kill in the Catawissa Creek watershed on Tomhicken Creek; Wayne went and checked on the Oneida #1 and Oneida #3 AMD Treatment Systems to ensure that there was no malfunctions in the treatment systems; The fish kill was followed up with an investigation by the PA Fish & Boat Commission and the PA DEP; The source many have come from the Humboldt Industrial Park; *Ed Wytovich*, CCRA President informed EPCAMR of the situation; Provided Ed with the PFBC Pollution Hotline number and Waterways Conservation Officer for the region to follow up with them
- Coordinated with *Mayra Rocha*, a journalist from Miami, FL; Annie Regan from PennFuture put her in touch with EPCAMR; She reached out because she is working on a story on how climate change is affecting the health and employment/economy of the Latino community in coalfield communities in Pennsylvania; They are interested in conducting interviews with workers in the region who are concerned about their future amidst the transition to a more constrained economy and/or training programs for a greener economy; Annie mentioned EPCAMR is involved with the abandoned mine reclamation work and that an interview with the Executive Director would align immensely with their our story; This is part of a video series profiling various Climate Change stories, which will be published in *El Tiempo Latino* in video format; As part of this project, they are also covering other cities across the United States; EPCAMR set up a date to host her crew from Washington DC and a local journalist and drone operator from Northeast PA that EPCAMR has previously worked with on other projects for a tour in the Wyoming Valley of AMD, abandoned mine land reclamation, stream loss and stream restoration; Provided Mayra with

contacts in the greater Hazleton area that are partners of ours including the Hazleton Integration Project and the La Casa Dominica, and our colleague *Fermin Diaz*

- Talked to *Carissa Longo*, PA DCNR about the MWEE Ambassador Training; This [site](#) is the main hub for MWEEs in PA; It was created by the NOAA/B-WET grant leadership team and funded (partially) by the NOAA/B-WET grant; *Tammie Peffer* uses this to track MWEEs in PA; The EPCAMR Executive Director has already completed the MWEE 101 Online Course and needs to complete a 6-hour workshop led by a PA MWEE Facilitator to become an MWEE Ambassador with an expertise in AMD and watershed restoration
- Reached out to *Todd Watne*, Sales Director for [Drone Legends](#) that has a grant program to get drones in the hands of youth in schools through STEM activities and lessons; EPCAMR inquired for a quote so that we can include it in a future grant round; Held a Zoom meeting with Todd to see what he could offer EPCAMR
- Reached out to [Penns Valley Conservation Association](#) to see if they have a digital link of their *2003 Guidebook on Wetlands and Wildlife Habitat*, along with the curricula they developed under a previous PA Growing Greener Grant
- Participated on a Zoom call with PEC to learn more about the 2024 Pocono Forests & Water Conservation Landscapes grant program

Keep PA Beautiful Open Your Eyes to Litter Educational Booklets

- Communicated with *Stephanie Larson*, Program Coordinator for Keep PA Beautiful, on the status of the second Watershed activity booklet completion and translation to Spanish as well as our recent bookkeeping transition; Informed her that EPCAMR would break down the past due invoices through the end of 2023 last two quarters and then complete another one for the 1st quarter of 2024 through March 2024 for *Laura, Denise, and Brady Mock's* time working on the project; She mentioned the 1st set of books came out amazing; Communicated with *Laura* about several Wilkes University students who were referred to EPCAMR who are going to help translate the remaining booklets for us as a community service project

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

26th PA AMR Conference Planning for 2024

- Sent a message to *Dave Porzi*, [AOAA](#) to see if he would be interested in making a presentation at the Conference on the recreational opportunities, economic development happening around Shamokin, and reclamation work on the Northumberland County-owned abandoned mine lands that is utilizing State and Federal funding; Created a blog post for the Conference on our social media sites to encourage exhibitors and sponsors to join us in 2024 while Mike updated the [webpage](#) for the conference with an updated [Sponsor](#) and [Exhibitor](#) page

2024 PA Fish & Wildlife Diversity Forum with the PA Fish & Boat Commission and PA Game Commission

- EPCAMR participated in the Forum on March 7 & 8th, to provide input to update the PA Wildlife Action Management Plan; EPCAMR provided valuable input and ideas related to watershed restoration and reclamation of abandoned mines, the potential for restoration and reclamation projects that could involve wildlife habitat and stream improvement projects, and

recommendations or environmental education and outreach efforts with partners across the Commonwealth; EPCAMR sponsored a door prize with a large bag of birdseed; The PA Fish & Boat Commission and PA Game Commission offered their sentiments and appreciation for EPCAMR's unwavering determination to clean up abandoned mine lands; They mentioned that the PA conservation community is enhanced by our energy and enthusiasm and the resources are improved thanks to the incredible work of our dedicated team and they look forward to our continued engagement in the State Wildlife Action Plan update

[2024 International Mine Water Association Congress Organizing Committee Conference and W. VA AMD Task Force Symposium on April 21st -26th 2024](#)

- *Christian Wolkersdorfer*, President of the IMWA, invited EPCAMR to participate in the Conference in Morgantown, WV to learn about mine pool water research, critical earth elements, and mine pool modeling for alternative energy projects internationally and to talk about work that EPCAMR has been doing in the Anthracite and Northern Bituminous Coalfields for the last few decades in this space

US EPA Davis-Bacon Act Webinar

- EPCAMR viewed a webinar on the Davis-Bacon Act at it relates to construction projects and suggested that it might be a future presentation for the upcoming Fall PA AMR Conference; Forwarded the presentation to the PA AMR Conference Committee for consideration

Stanley Cooper Chapter of Trout Unlimited Banquet

- EPCAMR Executive Director attended the annual Stanley Cooper Chapter TU Banquet in Wilkes-Barre on March 23rd; SCTU is our conservation partner that has financially supported the chiller that keeps our Trout in the Classroom tank running smoothly and at the right temperatures for the trout eggs and fingerlings

North Branch Land Trust (NBLT) NAI Outdoor Educator Bootcamp: *March 9, 10, & 23rd*

- EPCAMR Executive Director participated in the North Branch Land Trust's [2024 Outdoor Educator Bootcamp](#) sponsored by [DiscoverNEPA](#); Received the Certified Interpretive Host (CIH) certification from the National Association of Interpretation (NAI) upon completion of the Bootcamp after attending all three days

PA DCNR Community Connections Watershed Forum for HS Students in Luzerne/Lackawanna Valleys

- EPCAMR Staff provided an educational presentation on AMD Treatment, land reclamation, solar development on previously mined lands, videos on our trout puppets and AMD, and the history of Anthracite Mining, along with *Dr. Elizabeth Hughes*, Earth Conservancy on March 19th before taking the students on an AMD Tour around the Southern Wyoming Valley

Kutztown University Field Geology Camp Tour of the Anthracite Region (proposed)

- *Vince Carbone* informed EPCAMR that a Professor at Kutztown U. is interested in an Anthracite Region field geology tour in the Summer of 2024; EPCAMR to follow up through Vince and get a call together with the KU Professor

Wyoming Valley AMD Tour with Staff from Senator John Fetterman's Wilkes-Barre and Washington DC Office

- EPCAMR and the Earth Conservancy provided *Cody Forgach* (NE Regional Wilkes-Barre Office Representative) and *Madeleine Marr* (DC Office) with an AMD and stream restoration tour on March 27th of the Wyoming Valley at their request in the Nanticoke and Newport Creek watersheds

Environmental Literacy Partnership (ELP) with PA DCNR the Luzerne Intermediate Unit #18 (LIU#18) Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) Workshop to include AMD

- *Rich Mackrell*, Luzerne Intermediate Unit #18, PA DCNR Nescopeck State Park, and EPCAMR created a 3 Day Teacher Training Workshop to occur in May 2024 geared towards Elementary Teachers in the LIU's coverage area in Luzerne County and surrounding areas; EPCAMR to provide a full-day of field activities, videos, water testing, and an AMD Tour in the Wyoming Valley on May 28th

Community Volunteers

- *Kyle Romanchik*, a student at Wyoming Seminary from the Marketing Club created an infographic on Canva for EPCAMR as a volunteer class project to use in our social media
- EPCAMR coordinated the planning of the PA Game Commission [State Game Lands 224](#) Tire and Trash removal cleanup in Glen Lyon Borough in the headwaters of the Newport Creek watershed on abandoned mine lands, with our partners, the [Nanticoke Conservation Club](#) and the [BackCountry Hunters & Anglers Eastern PA Chapter](#) scheduled for May 5th; Several hundred tires are expected to be removed and recycled; Created an [event page](#) on Facebook and shared on our EPCAMR social media to seek volunteers
- Coordinated with *Megan Boone Valkenburg*, [United Way of the Wyoming Valley](#) on the 31st Annual [Day of Caring](#) Streamside Cleanup Event on May 23rd from 9-12 to be hosted by EPCAMR along the Solomon Creek in Hanover Township for a stretch of creek that flows behind the CWS Plaza down to the bottom of St. Mary's Road in Hanover Township; It's registered with [Keep PA Beautiful's Pick It Up PA!](#)
- Helped to promote the [Wilkes University's Fly Fishing Club](#) Annual Cleanup on Solomon Creek on April 21st from 9-12 led by *Jacob Smith*, President of the Club, along the PA Game Commission's State Game Lands 207 in Ashley, Luzerne County; It's a site that during the pandemic was trashed and EPCAMR had come along and coordinated a very large cleanup effort to remove trash and debris along the creek that is often utilized by local residents as a swimming hole

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts in QuickBooks; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for March 2024 with Highmark and United Concordia; Paid EC the rent; Made EPCAMR deposits to FNB
- Followed up with *Cristy Sweeney*, EPCAMR VP and Treasurer to let her know about the progress being made with Ignite Business Services and *Marianne Beane*, who has been reconciling the accounts and helping to categorize expenses and revenue as we have recently transitioned from Quickbooks for Non-Profits Desktop to Quickbooks Online since the service for Desktop was being discontinued in May 2024
- EPCAMR Executive Director passed his US Department of Transportation (PA DOT) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airmen Knowledge Test to obtain his Unmanned Aircraft General-Small (UAG) Pilot License on March 22nd that is good for 2 years

- *Jay Conroy*, Senior Director of Development, [CEP Renewables](#), joined EPCAMR as an Industry member for 2024
- Followed up with *Shane Kleiner*-PA DEP 319 Program about the completed Single Audit for 2022
- EPCAMR has to transition from ESRI ArcGIS Desktop Subscription to GIS Professional User Type under our Non-Profit Program; ArcGIS Desktop will no longer be sold nor supported; Our annual subscription will continue with ArcGIS Pro on July 1, 2024; A number of migration resources have been made available through the [Migrate from ArcMap to ArcGIS Pro](#)
- Followed up with *Scott Thompsen* from [Frontier Communications](#) to see if they have a competitive quote for fiber internet for the EPCAMR Office
- Completed the March 2024 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike* to upload to the website