



## Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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## March 2020 Progress Report

### Project Coordination

#### ***Mill Creek/Gardener Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project***

- EPCAMR was awarded a **\$6000** Coldwater Conservation Planning Grant from the PA Council of Trout Unlimited and the Coldwater Heritage Partnership for Mill Creek/Gardner Creek in Luzerne County; Informed the Staff of the recent award and made plans for when we can pursue field work on the project

#### ***Swoyersville PA AML Pilot Reclamation Project***

- Communicated with *Carol* on payments sent in the mail to Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management for the last Quarter of 2019; Filed the Pottsville District Mining Office Inspection Report after reviewing the month of February Report completed by *Joe McCarthy*; Submitted the January 2020 Request for Reimbursement to *Gerard Schmidt*, Project Manager; Held a conference call with partners and *Dean Baker*-PA DEP BAMR to give an update on the project and the status of the reclamation operation now that the COVID pandemic has hit

#### ***Mocanaqua AMD Tunnel Consumptive Use Feasibility Study Project with SRBC***

- Informed *Pierre MaCoy* and *Tom Clark*-SRBC that the monitoring devices are all still in the locations on the State Forest Lands and haven't been removed; EPCAMR released the report to AES for their review; EPCAMR asked if we should keep the data logger at the Mocanaqua Tunnel for the time being and it was decided that we should, however, it may be necessary to clean and calibrate the device; SRBC may pull the sondes from the monitoring boreholes at a later date; *Mike* scheduled a date to go down and clean the data logger at the Mocanaqua AMD Tunnel

#### ***Abraham Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project***

- Provided *John Levitsky*, Watershed Specialist for the Luzerne Conservation District a copy of the completed Plan at his request

#### ***ARIPPA AMD/AML Mini-Grant Project in the Mahanoy Creek Watershed***

- *Roseanne Weinrich*, Mahanoy Creek Watershed Association (MCWA) is interested in planting trees along Kehley Run in the Summer or early Fall of 2020 in partnership with EPCAMR

### ***NFWF Small Watershed Grant Technical Assistance for Watersheds Along the Eastern Flank of the Wyoming Valley (proposed)***

- Worked on obtaining letters of support for the application from local municipal official and legislative leaders; Worked with Staff to pull demographic statistics and natural resource GIS layers as well as RAMLIS abandoned mine land inventory statistics for the application; Convened a conference call with *Katie Ombalski* to discuss details of the grant application; Made phone calls and sent e-mails to stakeholders to obtain letters of support; We've already reached out to Wilkes-Barre City, Nanticoke City, Warrior Run Borough, Sugar Notch Borough, and Hanover Township. Earth Conservancy, Newport Township, Newport Township Community Organization, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, North Branch Land Trust, Luzerne Conservation District, Stanley Cooper Chapter Trout Unlimited, Nanticoke Conservation Club, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation; Obtained a joint letter of support from Congressman *Matt Cartwright* and Congressman *Dan Meuser* and a letter from Representative *Gerald Mullery* in support of our application for the **\$50,000**; Representative *Eddie Day Pashinski* was the only legislator who did not respond to our repeated requests for a letter of support

### ***Mill Creek Temperature Water Monitoring PA American Water Trust Grant Project (proposed)***

- EPCAMR proposed a **\$7500** grant to the PA American Water Trust for our Mill Creek Temperature Monitoring Project to determine where any changes in the stream flow occur that might indicate AMD discharges as well as transitional areas for native brook trout populations in the Cold Water Fishery sections and the zones where the Warm Water Fishery sections begin; Worked with *Steve Cornia* to discuss the implementation of the project, develop the budget, narrative, and full proposal for submission

### ***Chesapeake Bay Trust Meaningful Watershed Environmental Education Program with the Wilkes-Barre Area School District***

- EPCAMR was awarded a **\$5000** MWEE Mini-Grant to work with **30** 4th grade youth from the Wilkes-Barre Area School District to participate in a field experience at Solomon's Creek and complete an action project in their community; Sought advice from *Joe Toolan*-Program Assistant for the CBT on what to do now that schools aren't open and there will be a need for a possible extension of the grant; CBT is waiting on guidance from their Federal partners before communicating further with the grantees

### ***Reclaiming Our Backyards in the Coalfields Appalachian Tree Planting Project***

- Received permission from Pagnotti Enterprises, Inc. to plant apple trees on parcels in Centralia owned by them; *Kent Fuller* sent EPCAMR a map of parcel boundaries for the property that they own in the Borough to know where we can consider planting some of our apple trees; EPCAMR just needs to inform them of the areas that we decide to plant; Received some comments from PA DCED Legal Counsel *Joseph Iole*, to be sure that we spread out the apple trees and not place them in very close proximity to the SR 61 & 42 Intersection due to the potential for deer browsing and it was duly noted and will be considered in our planning and planting scheme; EPCAMR submitted a narrative of the tree planting effort and the locations of where the apple trees will be planted and submitted it to *Jack Rokavec*, PA DEP BAMR; Signed and submitted a Hold Harmless Agreement and sent it back to the PA DEP BAMR and provided *Laura* a copy for our

file; EPCAMR planned on heading down to Heller's Orchard's to load up the trees and coordinated with *Greg Heller*; Coordinated with *Joe Sapienza* who will be coming up to film the pickup of the trees for transporting down to Centralia; People began signing up to become volunteers for the tree planting using our [link](#) on our website; Convened a conference call with *Claudia Meglin*, ISI, Inc. and *Pieter Hoff-Groasis* to talk about the progress on the project before we head into planting the trees in Centralia; Provided *Laura* with information necessary for her to ask for donations towards the cleanup from area sponsors; Talked with *Claudia* about a possible extension of the Appalachian Tree Planting Grant with MIF for another year and a draft budget, Environmental Education activities, and scope of work was developed by the EPCAMR Executive Director and *Laura Rinehimer*; *Claudia* and *Pam Campbell*-ISI, Inc. viewed *Joe's Reclaiming PA!* trailer on EPCAMR and loved it; They are looking at ways to incorporate more video into the 2021-2023 MIF Project Proposal, including the planting in Centralia; *Joe* developed a budget for the filming and provided it to ISI, Inc.

- EPCAMR had to cancel the tree planting due to COVID pandemic and our Spring 2020 tree seedling orders from the [CBT 10M Trees Partnership](#); *Joe Sapienza* had to cancel the video shoot in Centralia due to COVID pandemic; EPCAMR asked *Andrew M. Hagenbuch* from [Centraliapa.org](#) to put up a postponement on their website; EPCAMR posted the postponement on our website as well; The Graffiti Highway was completely covered up with dirt within a week's time due to hundreds of people trespassing and entering the former highway in large crowds during the pandemic without regard to the President's or Governor's orders

## **Technical Assistance**

- Provided *Allison Lutz*, TU Field Technician for the NE Coldwater Habitat Program water quality data on the Loyalsock Creek for an AMD Technical Assistance grant they are applying for to conduct sampling above Forksville; Reached out to *Gloria Norcross*-Watershed Specialist from the Sullivan County Conservation District to see if we could release the Water Quality Report from April 2018-2019 that was completed by EPCAMR; Informed TU that we would be doing another year of sampling of the Connell A & B Tunnels and some areas upstream and downstream on the Loyalsock later this year once we got the green light from the Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association; [Loyalsock Creek EPCAMR Resources](#) and [Datashed](#) Information on 3 AMD Treatment Systems; EPCAMR received the green light in early March to begin sampling once we had an opportunity to get out to sample
- Submitted a letter from the Huber Breaker Preservation Society to *Melanie Kessler*, PA DCED regarding their progress on the reclamation of the Huber Park and the extension; She still needed a letter from Ashley Borough consenting to HBPS to continue construction on the project and a copy of the park transfer agreement between Ashley Borough and HBPS; EPCAMR communicated that to the HBPS Board in order for them to obtain those last two pieces of information; Sent along a copy of the Park deed to *Melanie* once it was received from *Patrick Kennedy*, HPBS and the letter from the Solicitor for Ashley Borough that was also forwarded to EPCAMR; The amendment for the extension was approved and additional paperwork had to be signed by the HBPS Board, which was, and was submitted back to PA DCED

- Provided a member of the public, *Phillip Bagley*, from Wales information on the [History of Glen Lyon](#), since he thought it may have had a connection to a place in Wales called **Glen Auldyn** in the Isle of Man
- Provided *Adam Hughes*-Save our Cumberland Mountain (SOCM) with copies of the Tennessee AML Inventory Maps by Congressional District
- Provided some technical assistance to [Little Leaf Farms](#) by providing historic mining information and an overview of a project area they are considering in Luzerne County
- Provided *Hank Zielinski*-Northampton Generating with documentation on the Newport Creek TMDL
- DCNR's [Small Communities grant program](#) aims to fix this problem through smaller grants with lower match requirements; Municipalities with populations less than 5,000 can apply; Priority projects include playground improvements, especially to make them compliant with safety and ADA standards; Forwarded this to the Huber Breaker Preservation Society to forward on to the new Mayor of Ashley
- Reviewed a website on the company [Arg](#) that deals with waste coal and coal combustion technologies in Lexington, KY
- Participated in a Zoom conference call with *Frederick Douglas* and *Rucha Ragalwar*-Cosmos Technologies to provide them with technical assistance on a grant application they are considering submitting to the PA DCED based on an innovative technology of theirs to treat AMD; EPCAMR Executive Director reviewed the AMDTAP Guidelines prior to the call and provided valuable insight and input to *Frederick's* draft proposal; Signed an NDA with Cosmos Technologies to further discuss the project and our partnership for the near future
- Provided *Greg Kanowicz*, Mt. Carmel, PA with some technical assistance in helping him get his non-profit organization started, called History of Centralia; He'd like to become an affiliate member of EPCAMR when his paperwork is completely filed and approved

## **Education & Outreach**

- EPCAMR signed on to the FY 2021 Appropriations Request letters to the House and Senate to support the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed (CDRW)'s collective priorities
- Reviewed a letter from the Congressional Coal Caucus asking for relief from the Administration during the COVID pandemic
- Reviewed the meeting notes from the February 28<sup>th</sup> PA AML Campaign call; Requested that *Jen Orr-Greene* be added to the PA AML Campaign calls to represent Trout Unlimited as the Mid-Atlantic Policy Director; Reviewed the March PA AML Campaign Conference call notes from March 13<sup>th</sup> provided by Andy McAllister-WPCAMR

- *Hannah Wolfe*, Youth Advisory Council for the Luzerne Foundation visited EPCAMR to learn about our work and our intentions to utilize the drone that we are requesting for STEM and Environmental Education and Community Outreach in the EPCAMR Region
- Reached out to *Justin Troutman*, owner of Centralia Merch, a website that is selling things related to Centralia; Informed him that it would be necessary for him to reword the language on his website that infers that he his company has a formal relationship with EPCAMR to sell his products, which he does not; He'd like to become a member of EPCAMR in the future; EPCAMR will send him our updated Membership Application
- Participated in a press phone conference on the RECLAIM Act and Reauthorization with Congressman *Matt Cartwright* and the media to discuss the language in the bill and what it could mean for PA's abandoned mine lands and communities impacted by past mining practices, as well as job creation in the Commonwealth and across the country; West Virginia State Delegate *Evan Hansen*, *Rebecca Shelton*-Appalachian Citizens' Law Center, and *Dean Vance*-Black Lung Association of Southwest Virginia were also on the press conference call with the National media outlets
- Agreed to assist with the PSU Extension Watershed Stewardship Program's Wonderful World of Water Day Camp on July 15<sup>th</sup> at Nescopeck State Park with *Liz Banos*; AMD Tie-Dyes with our EPCAMR iron oxide pigment are going to be created with youth and discussions on AMD and EPCAMR's work to cleanup our polluted watersheds
- *Susan Huey*, Event Coordinator-Library Express Bookstore and Library in Scranton, PA requested an EPCAMR AMD Education Program for youth later in the Summer 2020 as a part of a two day event that they are calling "A Catch of Knowledge" as we are trying to educate the community about fishing, the local waterways, and local environmental groups that deal with waterways and their environments
- *Leigh Ann Henry*, EPCAMR Board Member sent us a link to a small grant that has recently passed that we will keep in mind for 2021 from the [PA Plants Society](#)
- Completed our survey for participation in the Trout in the Classroom Program for 2019-2020 and registered for participation in the 2020-2021 Program year; Released our 140 rainbow trout fingerlings in Harvey's Creek, along the upstream side of Pavlick Road
- Reviewed the Climate Action Plan provided to EPCAMR by *Justin Dula*-Regional Coordinator for the Office of Environmental Justice's NE Region; Completed the survey and sent the information around to our EPCAMR partners, stakeholders, and social media outlets
- A Belgian TV station cancelled a trip to Centralia since it was an international flight due to COVID pandemic; EPCAMR was going to be interviewed and provide a tour to a correspondent, *Jelle Jacobs*, who was interested in the story of the mine fire history and the recent cleanup and reclamation efforts



- *Frank Dombrowski*, EPCAMR Intern, spoke to a friend of his who was interested in doing some AMD art when he returns to the States from France; He reached out to Toyota of Scranton and spoke to a Manager there about donations towards a truck and were wondering if we were willing to trade our GMC; Lastly, he reached out to Crayola; They have a program that brands an organization's name on a crayon box; It may be cool to sell chalk or crayons or to give to kids at educational events; Frank received word that his internship needed to be moved completely to an online format and they directed him to write a report instead of finishing off the volunteer internship with EPCAMR since we were going to be working remotely, but didn't have the specific criteria that we could meet for him to meet his internship objectives for Marywood U.
- [Time to Help the Coal Region](#) Op-Ed written by the EPCAMR Executive Director was printed in the Citizens Voice newspaper locally; "[Activists rally for bills to help mining communities, workers](#)" was the headline written by Dylan Brown-E & E News Reporter, published on March 10, 2020; [Over 100 Groups Sign Letter Urging Passage of the RECLAIM Act and Reauthorization of the AML Trust Fund](#) was published in the PA Environmental Digest
- EC cancelled the Career Fair for the Environmental Workforce Training Program due to COVID pandemic
- Participated in a Choose Clean Water Coalition Conference call with the Energy Work Group to discuss the RECLAIM Act and Alternative Energy Projects on abandoned mine lands (AML); Provided CCWC a Legislative Roundup of bills in PA and Nationally that are related to abandoned mines; Participated in the CCWC Monthly call to obtain updates on environmental legislation and initiatives across PA
- Talked with *Brenda Seiglitz*, *Harry Campbell*, and *Trishia Salvia* from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation about the issue of stormwater fees being a hot topic in the Wyoming Valley and increasingly elsewhere; The rhetoric opponents of the fees have been using is in most cases outrightly incorrect; CBF reached out to EPCAMR to talk about how we can work together to help correct these misrepresentations and balance out the negative with some of the positives of reducing stormwater pollution
- Talked with *Sue Hand*, renowned artist and colleague of EPCAMR's from Sue Hand Imagery, that works with our iron oxide; She was going through some of her paintings that she has in storage and wondered if we would like some for our walls in our Office; We said yes and would coordinate with picking them up when the time was appropriate over the Summer; She has the large original acrylic of the Solomon Creek AMD Borehole "fountain", plus another of the orange, water-filled stripping pit in Newport Township that she painted on an *EPCAMR En Plain Air AMD Tour* many years ago; She also has a framed print of 12 of the Hexagons from the Anthracite Miner's and Their Hallowed Ground Series

## Community Volunteer Coordination

- Introduced to *Robert Vierk*, Spring Creek Chapter TU President Emeritus, at the CCWC Education Bay Day Event in Washington DC and put him in touch with *Peter Marx*, CCWC to assist him with scheduling appointments with his legislative contacts to discuss Bay Issues, Clean Water Issues, and AML
- All community cleanups that were a part of the Keep PA Beautiful Program have been cancelled for the Spring due to COVID pandemic

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

Followed up with *Jay Russell*, at Graymont to see if they were interested in becoming a sponsor again for our annual PA AMR Conference in 2020 and to see if he'd like to speak on a panel about the economics of partnering with reclamation groups working on AMD treatment or land reclamation; *Jay* informed EPCAMR that he would be retiring in April, but would put forward the request for Graymont to continue to be a sponsor as they have in the past; A **\$750** sponsorship check was received; Received additional information on a candidate for the 2020 Mayfly Award and submitted it to the Committee for review and consideration; Gannett Fleming signed up to become an Exhibitor; *Mike* worked on the [website](#) for the Conference; COVID pandemic seems to be hitting us on all fronts; Discussions during the PA AMR Conference Planning Committee call led to a decision to postpone the Conference in June to October 28-29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with the possibility of going virtual or postponing until 2021 once we renew the contract agreement with the Ramada Conference Center, State College; Informed the Ramada Conference Center of our group's decision to postpone until October 2020 tentatively; *Tom Clark*-SRBC, and the Executive Director have been talking with an interesting fellow from PA, [Michael Garrigan](#) that may be a great addition to the Conference in the Fall, should we not be able to secure with confidence a few of the other speakers that we had been working on; His background, bio, and information on a recent publication called "*Robbing the Pillars*", a collection of poetry from around the Susquehanna River watershed might be a real treat

- Participated in an online seminar after receiving an scholarship to cover the registration costs to attend the Scranton Area Foundation's Center for Community Leadership and Non-Profit Excellence *Building Organizational Sustainability through Foundations, Endowment Funds, and Gift Planning Tools: A Seminar for Nonprofit Organizations*
- Participated in a Scranton Area Foundation/Moses Taylor Foundation Emergency Planning Webinar related to COVID
- Registered to attend the 2020 PEC Harrisburg Dinner to Honor the Recipients of the Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence and celebrate PEC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- PAEE/PRPS Conference was cancelled due to COVID pandemic

## EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for March 2020 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Made a deposit to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables; Wrote checks for the IRA Contributions for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2020 for EPCAMR Staff to be deposited; OneSource, our payroll company remained open and deemed essential employment to continue with payroll services for area businesses during the COVID pandemic; EPCAMR could not even apply for a business exemption to stay open because there was a backlog of over 32,000 applications for a waiver and the website was shutdown within a week's time
- Provided an updated Corona Virus Response to all EPCAMR Staff in light of the COVID pandemic-March 13<sup>th</sup>; EPCAMR had to vacate the EC Building on March 17<sup>th</sup> and begin working from home remotely as non-essential employees and were not allowed to return to the building for the entire month
- Provided *Mike* and *Denise* with an updated 2020 Appeal Letter for our Membership Renewals and to post on the EPCAMR website for those interested in becoming members
- Interviewed *Levi Sunday-Lefkowitz*, University of Rochester student, from Trucksville, PA for a Summer Internship and hired him; Added *Levi* to the NAACC Lead Observer database so that he can take the online portion certification for Aquatic Organism Passage Protocol Training before assessing culverts in the field supervised
- EPCAMR officially signed up to become a partner by completing the **Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership** Application with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Requested that ArkRentals be added to our Certificate of Liability Insurance to POWR for our planned Tree Planting event in Centralia on April 4<sup>th</sup>; Filled out the form provided by Angela Vitkoski, PEC and returned it to her
- Provided *Denise* with our February First National Bank Statement so that she can assist with reconciliation of the monthly account balance ledger
- Communicated with OneSource to have Jessica Barbose make Salary Adjustments for *Mike Hewitt* and *Robert Hughes* retroactive back to January 1, 2020 that was approved by the EPCAMR Board
- *Leigh Ann Henry*, EPCAMR Board Member provided EPCAMR with a [link](#) to remote planning software tools for us to consider due to COVID pandemic keeping us out of the Office and working remotely



- EPCAMR was offered an additional year of funding from the PA DEP 319 Program from the US EPA Region III in the amount of **\$130,000**; EPCAMR Executive Director revised the Work Plan, Deliverables, and Budget and submitted it back to *Trish Attardo*, Watershed Program Specialist, PA DEP; We will have additional funding remaining from the most recent 319 funding round, and we would like to offer both EPCAMR and EPCAMR an additional year of funding on the recent proposal and changed all of the June 30, 2023 End Dates to June 30, 2024
- EPCAMR Executive Director looked into applying for a PPP Loan from our bank, First National Bank; EPCAMR was not able to apply in the first round, but was able to apply in the second round of funding and will wait to see if we're approved for a low-interest loan that could possibly be converted into a grant since we will be keeping our Staff employed during the COVID pandemic
- *Jennifer Kase*-OneSource provided EPCAMR with a poster entitled the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. The Act requires leave to those affected by the virus. It is their understanding that this will need to be posted along with any other posters EPCAMR has along the inside of our door; Forwarded it around to all Staff; *Shawnese* provided the Executive Director with a great [article](#) outlining how the HR 6201 applies to businesses with under 50 employees and how it can provide sick leave to anyone who may test positive for the COVID virus.
- Completed the March 2020 Board Report