



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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May 2020 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Mill Creek/Gardener Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- *Susan Turcmanovich*-External Affairs Manager, PA American Water informed EPCAMR that when we were ready to request any information with regards to the public water supplies to let her know once we were able to begin working in the field and return to work

Huntsville Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Worked with *Levi* and *Kyle* to focus in on the culverts that we will need to assess within the watershed following a former intern's lead, *Sean Banul* from Penn-State Wilkes-Barre; Reached out to *Steve* to discuss getting the Story Map started for the Huntsville Creek watershed

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

- Newport Township Community Organization (NFWF) provided EPCAMR with a letter of support for our recently submitted application; Sent it along to NFWF

Reclaiming Our Backyards in the Coalfields Appalachian Tree Planting Project

- EPCAMR provided a dozen Growboxxes to the *Restore Church Community Garden* in Wilkes-Barre and another dozen to the *Our Community Garden* volunteer group in Wilkes-Barre's North End under the direction of *Renee Dantone* and *Rose Yanko*; *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR's Environmental Education Coordinator and the Executive Director assisted with the planting of the Growboxxes with vegetables with youth from the Church under the direction of *Mandy Artmont*; Participated in a Zoom call with *Claudia* to give her an update on the projects

Mine Mapping Grant Project with the Mine Subsidence Insurance Program

- Provided *Frank Sindaco*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Specialist with a copy of the story and link to the [Mine Map Symbology Poster](#) created by a former EPCAMR Staff person, *Samantha Schafer*

Just Transition Fund 2020 Community Economic and Workforce Development Program (proposed)

- EPCAMR was informed by *Amanda Bridenhagen*-Just Transition Fund Partnerships Director, that the submission may be better suited for the Cycle 2 Funding round later in the early Fall 2020

Reclaiming Appalachian Coalition Innovative Mine Land Reclamation and Economic Development Projects Mini-Grant Program (proposed)

- Conducted a Zoom call and kick-off meeting with *Joey James* and *Evan Fedorko*, Downstream Strategies to discuss the project further in detail and outline AC Power's role

Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) Meaningful Watershed Environmental Education Program with the Wilkes-Barre Area School District

- Informed *Laura* that an official *Final Report Award Revision Request* needed to be submitted to extend the project deadline to September 2021 due to COVID-19, if we were not able to get into the School District by the end of September 2020

Swoyersville/Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area PA AML Pilot Project

- Communicated with *Gerard Schmidt*-PA DEP BAMR Project Manager about thinking about the Fall 2020 at the end of October of the 7.5 acres of land to the Borough of Swoyersville; Market conditions are slow right now for fuel and electricity generation at the Co-Gen plants and COVID-19 has made the movement and reclamation of the material even a slower process; Let *Gerard* know that EPCAMR would follow up directly with Hank and Matt to see where things are with the movement of the material and the discussion on the transfer of the acreage to the Borough; Reviewed and filed the May 2020 Inspection Report from the Pottsville District Mining Office sent by *Joe McCarthy*

OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Stewards Individual Placement Program (SIPP)

- The Foundation for PA Watersheds funded EPCAMR in the amount of **\$13,000** to support the administrative costs of an OSMRE/AmeriCorps VISTA Stewards volunteer for a full year and provided additional funds to continue to perform outreach and education on SMCRA Reauthorization within the Susquehanna and West Branch Susquehanna watersheds

Technical Assistance

- Offered technical grant writing assistance to the City of Wilkes-Barre and encouraged them to apply for the [Keep PA Beautiful Camera Loaner Surveillance Program](#) to curb some of the illegal dumping throughout the City that EPCAMR participates in cleaning up with the Wilkes-Barre City Citizens Blight Committee under the leadership of *Greg Griffin*
- Provided *John Walliser*-PEC information on ARIPPA and how much the waste coal industry has cleaned up and reclaimed across PA
- Offered EPCAMR's professional services and an introduction of our work to Teichos Energy, a utility scale solar company that is working in the region and may be in need of our services and expertise; Convened an introductory conference call

- Provided *Frederick Douglas-Cosmos Technologies*, with a draft MOU for his review and consideration, after having had further discussions with him about a potential Pilot Scale Project, Scope and Work Plan for an AMDTAP grant submission through PA DCED
- *Dr. Steve Kerlin*, Ph. D., Director of Education-Stroud Water Research Center, informed EPCAMR that we were one of the first 100 requests for the *Water Quality Mobile App* they developed and were going to be receiving a free version of the App to use in our work
- *Mike Hewitt* suggested that the Staff take a walk in the Fall in Mocanaqua to the end of Nicely Street to see if we can access the Turtle Creek culvert to see if there is any indication of an AMD discharge from the abandoned Priscilla No. 3 Tunnel; If there is, we should discuss it further with the SRBC
- Exchanged contact information with Lyndon Nance and Aaron Wheeler, [Aperion Energy Group](#) following a phone call to become more familiar with the company and what EPCAMR does in the region
- Reviewed a request from a private property owner in Frackville to help try and determine if runoff was coming from an area where an abandoned coal breaker was dismantled causing stormwater runoff on his property; Mike reviewed an aerial map, but didn't have much to go on and his complaint has been sent around to various agencies looking for support and a resolution to the problem; Being under quarantine doesn't allow us to visit the site and it may be better resolved at the County or Municipal level, along with the USDA funding agency or PEMA/FEMA that had worked on the project
- Completed a survey for the Natural Resources and Conservation Protection Focus Group who are completing the Lackawanna/Luzerne Conservation Plan Update through Michael Baker International

Education & Outreach

- Conference call with members of PATU, National TU, EPCAMR, on the Waste Coal Tax Credit Incentive Bill that ARIPPA is requesting support for from PATU; EPCAMR is already supportive of the effort; Requested the most up to date information from ARIPPA to provide to TU National and the Mid-Atlantic Policy Director, *Jen Orr-Greene*
- Requested *Mike Hewitt*, Program Manager-EPCAMR edit and update our EPCAMR Brochure
- Informed by *Liz Rosser*, PSU Extension, that the PA American Water/PSU Extension/Wilkes-Barre Riverfront Parks Committee *Water Camp* scheduled for July 2020 has been cancelled due to COVID-19
- Requested that *Kyle Argenziano*, EPCAMR Summer Watershed Outreach Intern create a social media account to assist with publishing content to our pages

- Sent around a review and overview [PowerPoint](#) to Staff on the *NEPA Gives* Fundraising Opportunity for EPCAMR from NEPA Grantmakers set for June 5th, 2020; EPCAMR is already registered by the Executive Director; Encouraged the Staff to start spreading the word to their peers and friends through their social media networks
- Interviewed by *Justin Dula*-PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice Regional Coordinator, for their EJ Newsletter
- Participated in a call with the US ACE to discuss potential AMD, remediation, reclamation, assessment, and habitat and ecological restoration projects within the Chesapeake Bay portion of their jurisdiction
- Encouraged EPCAMR Staff to review and read PennFuture's Director of Government Affairs-Ezra *Thrush's* [blog](#) on PA House Leaders push bills to thwart environmental protections and attack conservation funding
- Provided *Jacqui Bonomo*, CEO-PennFuture, with references and citations on jobs that could be created in the reclamation field should the RECLAIM Act be passed and enacted into law
- Provided *Allison Acevedo*, Director of the PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice with a copy of EPCAMR's testimony from back in February 2020 at a hearing related to RGGI and Waste Culm Co-Gens and the carve out for the industry that supports, finances, and funds the reclamation of our abandoned mine lands and streams impacted by AMD throughout PA
- Shipped out an order of iron oxide pigment to *Sarah Sutton*, New York
- Helped to spread the word about the May 16th Cleanup in Wilkes-Barre's North End with the Wilkes-Barre Citizen's Blight Committee, EPCAMR, and Our Community Garden; A+ Enterprise and Junk Removal donated Staff and equipment for the day to help
- EPCAMR signed on to a Coalition Letter Opposing HBs 1822, 2004, 2426 & SB 327
- A virtual reveal of The Luzerne Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) on May 17th informed EPCAMR that we were only 1/3 to receive the **\$5000** for the drone grant and STEM environmental education efforts that we will be proposing to perform with it
- Reached out to *Andy Loza*, Executive Director of [WeConservePA](#), to see if he can help the PA AML Campaign reach several other outdoors and conservation groups support the SMCRA Reauthorization bill
- *Dylan Brown*, E & E News, published an article entitled, "*COAL: Meet the Man Trying to Plug PA's Mining's Toxic Gushers*" on EPCAMR's Executive Director, Bobby Hughes, and the work of EPCAMR to give people a perspective on the problems that he and his Staff and communities face throughout coal country to this day

- Introduced EPCAMR to *Emily Best*, Director of Advocacy for PA Association of Land Trusts ([PALTA](#)); She is also working on the Growing Greener Coalition campaign; Forwarded her a lot of resources, links, and some videos of AMD and work that EPCAMR does in the region and supports across the State
- Participated in the monthly Choose Clean Water Coalition, PA AMR Conference Committee, National RECLAIM Working Group, and PA AML Campaign conference calls
- Provided EPCAMR's feedback on changes that we'd like to see in the RECLAIM Act to the National RECLAIM Working Group through *Dana Kuhnline*, Appalachian Voices
- Introduced to *Shavon Ferguson*, with PennFuture's Democracy for All Campaign by *Emily Baldauff*; Filled her in on EPCAMR's work in the region and connected her with some community groups that we work with in the City of Wilkes-Barre and City of Scranton

Community Volunteer Coordination

- Signed *Jon YonKondy* up for the NAACC AOP Certification
- Followed up with a former Intern from 2019, *Jason Zubris*, from Penn-State, who is interested in helping out this Summer with our *Huntsville Creek CHP* work in the field; Informed him that I would follow up with him once we get the approval to work in the field
- Requested that *Marissa Loftus*, EPCAMR intern, do some research on microscopes for EPCAMR a comparison between several models of microscopes that we might be able to use in our office to support some of our STEM teaching that may end up being more virtual than in person as we go forward; We are going to need a brand and model that will be able to have pictures taken of what we place on the trays or slides or petri dishes as live samples or iron-laden water, macro-invertebrates and to develop a cost comparison Excel Sheet for review; She provided EPCAMR with a great cost comparison sheet and an excellent choice that was under **\$600**; Provided her with maps of the watershed area for the Mill/Gardner Creek drainage so that she can research some historical information on towns and significant areas of importance throughout the watershed for inclusion in the Mill/Gardner Creek CHP; Requested that she come up with a creative way to recycle some small items to create iron oxide and hydroxide molecules and aluminum oxide and hydroxide molecules for our EPCAMR exhibit, future environmental fair, or to use as a hands-on learning tool; Pyrite would be another one that we would need and manganese oxide and hydroxide would be another. A water molecule too and a hydroxyl ion (OH), Sodium (Na), Calcium (Ca), Carbonate (CO₃), Limestone (CaCO₃), Hydrogen Peroxide too, Sodium Chloride (NaCl), Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) gas and Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH) would all be others that we could use

- Informed *Rob Dubas*, [Keep PA Beautiful](#) Camera Surveillance Loaner Program Manager, that EPCAMR would be down in Centralia to check the cameras and replace the batteries this month; Updated him on the progress made on an illegal dumper who was caught and prosecuted at the local Magistrate in Catawissa for a large pile that got a lot of press and attention not long ago by EPCAMR and the Channel 16 News' *Chelsea Strub*; Provided *Colleen Connelly*, PA DEP, with some photos of the dumping taken by EPCAMR on May 20th, prior to it getting cleaned up; EPCAMR Executive Director found a few names and turned them over the Conyngham Township, Columbia County, Code Enforcement Officer for processing and further investigation
- *Michelle Fu*, an Environmental Engineering student at UCLA reached out to EPCAMR about applying for a Summer Internship, however, was told that we already have 3 interns working for us in the Summer of 2020; Encouraged her to send her resume and cover letter and LinkedIn account to the Executive Director for consideration in the Fall of 2020

Conferences, Training, Tours, Exhibits, & Workshops

- Participated in a monthly PA AMR Conference Planning Committee call
- Attended a Keep PA Beautiful Webinar on Litter Research

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for May 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; Provided Denise with the April 2020 Statement for reconciliations
- Dropped off donated masks to EPCAMR Staff from the Executive Director's sister, *Pat Hughes*, Mountain Top who sews and made hundreds of them to give away to those in need
- EPCAMR was informed by EC that the working remotely from home order from the PA Governor was extended until June 4th, 2020 at this time
- Requested that *Jessica Barbose*-OneSource Payroll Administrator, place *Levi* and *Kyle* on the payroll for their 8-week paid internships under the SLIP Program and gave her their official start dates and hourly wage; Directed *Kyle* and *Levi* to complete their hiring paperwork for EPCAMR as interns
- Provided Mike a copy of the January 2020 Monthly Report for submission to the PA DEP 319 Program

- Downloaded all the completed and signed documentation for the PPP Loan from First National Bank that was awarded to EPCAMR in the amount of **\$52,585**
- Ordered a Forehead Thermometer and a Finger Pulse Oximeter Oxygen Saturation Meter for when EPCAMR Staff return to the Office as a part of a protocol policy that will be drafted
- EPCAMR Executive Director applied for a [NEPA COVID-19 Response Fund](#) Grant through the Scranton Area Foundation and were awarded a **\$5000** grant
- EPCAMR Executive Director forwarded around to the EPCAMR Board an update of all the work that the Staff have been working on since the pandemic hit and we had to work from home remotely
- Provided *Doreen Gorsuch*-Executive Assistant with [Community Aid](#), EPCAMR's updated contact information since they will be not having a grant round in 2020 and will resume with their applications in 2021 due to COVI-19
- EPCAMR Executive Director drafted a COVID-19 Return to Work Policy draft and received input from *Mike Hewitt*, EPCAMR Program Manager before sending it off to the EPCAMR Executive Committee for review and approval
- Extended the date of the ARIPPA Mini Grant Deadline to July 31st due to COVID-19
- Completed the May 2020 Board Report