



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

Robert E. Hughes, *Executive Director*

101 South Main Street

Ashley, PA 18706

Main Line: (570) 371-3523

E-mail: rhughes@epcamr.org

Website: www.epcamr.org

May 2022 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Received the April Invoice from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management LLC for hauling and transportation of the waste culm material to the Co-Gen Plants; Received revised payroll certifications from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management LLC that had an administrative oversight and error on them related to the year typed on the paperwork; Submitted the April 2022 Progress Narrative Report, completed the Invoice with Denise, and sent the Request for Reimbursement to PA DEP BAMR

Catawissa Creek Fishing Access Project with the PA Fish & Boat Commission

- Reviewed draft MOU between EPCAMR and PA Fish & Boat Commission worked on by *Mike*, and the Executive Director; Provided additional comments to the PA Fish & Boat Commission

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

- Fixed some documentation signature needs on a previously submitted reimbursement at the request of the *Rachel Nelson*, PA DEP Grants Center; PA DEP may be in need of Adobe software to recognize signed documents that are submitted; EPCAMR inquired about the fully executed subcontract agreement from SRBC and was informed that they are waiting on a cost from Skelly & Loy; Requested hours from Steve for the Bear Creek mine pool mapping work that Staff have begun working on

Shamokin Creek Watershed AMD Discharge Monitoring with Shamokin Creek Watershed Association (SCRA), Northumberland County Conservation District, and Tetra Tech (proposed)

- EPCAMR provided a cost estimate for AMD and stream sampling collection and flow monitoring once a month for 1 year at the following AMD locations in the Shamokin Creek watershed; Grab samples will be picked up and or taken to the Northumberland County Conservation District for delivery to the PA DEP Lab:
 - Scott Ridge Mine Tunnel discharge (#19)
 - Excelsior Mine Strip Pit Overflow discharge (#12)
 - Henry Clay Stirling Mine Pump Slope discharge (#49)
 - Cameron Air Shaft discharge (#53)
 - Richard's Shaft Mine Drift (#55)
 - Big Mountain Mine No. 1 slope discharge (#23)

- Corbin Water Level Drift Discharge (#15)
- Cameron Drift discharge (#51A)
- Maysville Mine Borehole discharge (#21)

Stream Restoration Inc (SRI) Dashed Grant (*proposed*)

- EPCAMR submitted a letter of support to Cliff Denholm, SRI for his Growing Greener grant submission to continue to work on Dashed and to update it with water quality data for the hundreds of AMD treatment systems that are contained within it as well as to provide technical assistance and future trainings on the utilization of the database; EPCAMR would be subcontracted to perform some of the data entry and to assist with future trainings and or provide technical input into the upgrading of the interface of the website

ARIPPA/EPCAMR/WPCAMR Mini-Grant AMD/AML Project

- EPCAMR received an application from [Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance](#) that was reviewed for administrative completeness by WPCAMR; EPCAMR will award SCRA **\$4300** towards the jumping weir design, construction, and installation at Site 48 to prevent stormwater and sediments from entering the treatment system

AC Power Solar Development Project

- Forwarded a copy of the agreement with AC Power to Mike of the Phase 2 Task 1 completion; Followed up with AC Power to see if we can do anything additional work for the Task 2 that we still have outstanding while we wait on direction from AC Power

Loyalsock Creek AMD Treatment System and Watershed Monitoring Project

- Coordinated with Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association on our future monitoring efforts for the Summer of 2022; Coordinated with *Mel Zimmerman*, President, who has some interested interns from Lycoming College who might want to tag along in June 2022 with one of their professors; *Mike* coordinated with *Mel*

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

- Directed Staff to pull their hours together working on culvert assessment work in the watersheds; Reviewed additional culvert assessments and approved them into the NAACC database; Provided *Levi Sunday Lefkowitz*, EPCAMR Summer Watershed Specialist Intern, with a link to the PA Chapter 93 Water Quality Standards to document the category of the various streams in the Southern Wyoming Valley in the project area; Submitted a separate invoice for temperature monitoring supplies to NFWF and inquired about adding our intern to the project for the Summer and got approval to do so since there is remaining funds in the budget that we can reallocate from other Staff positions that haven't been able to spend as much time on various aspects of the project due to other project demands within EPCAMR; *Blake* informed us that he'd find out the status of our submitted QAPP at one of their upcoming Staff meetings; Mike and the Executive Director scheduled a Zoom call to work on updating the QAPP after a second round of comments were submitted by Cardno, who reviewed it for revisions in early June 2022

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

- Directed Staff to provide hours to *Denise* to bill down on the project for the work that they have been doing on the site suitability GIS model development since she was working on the Board Reports; *Branden Diehl*, Earthwise Consulting, provided a contact to EPCAMR from The Nature Conservancy, *Nels Johnson*, who is doing a lot of work on solar; He was suggested as a contact by *Brian Hill*, with the Heinz Foundation after reading the article on solar development in Virginia; [Coal Mines Solar Farms Climate Change Video](#); Conference call with *Robert Young*, PA DEP Energy Office; Provided *Robert* with a copy of the EPCAMR Executive Director's presentation and ARM Group, LLC's presentation, at the last virtual Solar Summit and sent it along to all of the EPCAMR Staff for their review; Updated *Robert* on EPCAMR's application through the Department of General Services for the ITQ Approval; Talked with *Andrew DeSantis* with [BlueWave](#) Solar LLC, out of Boston, MA about EPCAMR's work in the region to advocate and promote solar development on abandoned mine lands; Talked with *Tyler Jones*, from SGC Power; Provided *Levi* with the solar statistics provided by *Nikko Simons*, EPCAMR volunteer for PA to incorporate them into a Solar Infographic; Worked with *Levi* to design and create a solar on AML Banner for EPCAMR to take to events and for education and outreach purposes, similar to our Drone Banner from a few years ago designed by *Shawnese*;

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

- On May 27th, *Susan Turcmanovich*, PA American Water stopped by the EPCAMR Office to provide us with the check for the roadside/streamside cleanup and monitoring installation device for the Packer AMD discharge in the Gardner Creek tributary of Mill Creek, Luzerne County; Susan introduced us to *Kristi English*, Program Coordinator for the Source Water Protection Plans in the PA American Water Service area; EPCAMR will connect up with her when we install and decide what will be placed in at the Packer AMD discharge and when we reinstall our HOBO Temperature monitors in the Mill Creek watershed this Summer

Healing the Scars with ISI: Year 2 Iron Oxide Short Educational Outreach Video Production

- Submitted the 1st Quarter Invoice to ISI for Staff time on the project (January through April 2022); Travel will be invoiced separately; Conference call on budget development for the Year 2 video production with ISI and *Laura*

Technical Assistance

- Provided *Dr. Brian Whitman*, Wilkes University, with a reference author from the Earth Conservancy that he requested for work his students who were doing research on Nanticoke Creek; *Dr. Elizabeth Hughes* wrote the articles they were citing
- Reached out to National TU to *Jacob Tomlinson*, to see if he can provide a contact for someone who is working on habitat restoration and culvert replacements since *Shawn McAdams's* departure; *Tim Williams* from the ARM Group is interested in connecting with the newly filled position to inquire about future project development potential
- *Lenny Lichvar*, Somerset County, inquired with EPCAMR to see if we can bring up for discussion at the next EPCAMR Board meeting the possibility of a discussion around the funding of a Regional Operation & Maintenance Manager for the number of AMD Treatment systems that are going to be needing more attention in the coming years ahead; EPCAMR Executive Director placed it on the agenda

- Worked with *Crystal A. Quintan*, MPA- to schedule a conference call on June 2, 2022 with a few representatives from the [Geisinger Health Foundation](#) that was interested in EPCAMR's knowledge of the underground abandoned mines in the region; They are working on a few development projects where they will be building facilities in the region and sought support and technical assistance from EPCAMR
- Attended an evening virtual meeting on Zoom with the Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance and, Northumberland County Conservation District, Clauser Environmental to give the community an update on the Buck Run and Quaker Run subwatershed restoration plan; EPCAMR assisted our partners in Northumberland County by provided mine pool mapping, water quality, and other information for the project
- Provided *Heather Makal*, Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA) with a number of suggested tasks that she could provide to their new intern for the Summer 2022; Heather had asked for assistance in coming up with project ideas in the watershed for their GIS Intern from Bucknell University
- Provided *Andy Gegaris* with a copy of the Litter Laws in PA at his request
- Mike and the Executive Director tried to download transducer data from the Old Forge Borehole and found out that during a recent flood event and high flow from the late Fall of last year, the cables were snapped and severed and the transducer was lost to the powerful forces of the velocity of the water in the borehole; EPCAMR informed *Bernie McGurl*, Lackawanna River Conservation Association of what happened

PEC Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority Clean Water Advisory Committee Coordination

- Participated in a Zoom call on May 16th to see where EPCAMR can offer recommendations to the WVSA on implementing future watershed restoration projects within the Wyoming Valley; Submitted a W-9 to PEC for EPCAMR's participation in the CWAC

Community Volunteer Coordination

- Received an update from one of our Centralia Apple Tree volunteers on how the trees were doing; EPCAMR plans to take a drive down this Summer to see how the saplings are holding up over the last year; Many trees fruited 4 months after being planted; EPCAMR will remove some of the chicken wire cages protecting many of the trees if they are well beyond the reach of the browse line of any deer in the area; *Laura* reached out to *Ed Wytovich* to get his insight and opinion on how long we should leave the cages around the saplings; He lives in Ashland and said he'd take a drive over to take a look at how they were doing; *Justin Clements*, an EPCAMR volunteer inquired as to whether or not there will be a Fall 2022 Cleanup in Centralia; EPCAMR hasn't had a chance to consider planning one at the moment so we had informed him that we would follow up when we had some more concrete decisions and if we had the capacity to coordinate another cleanup down there if it was warranted
- Provided *Ryan Sotelo's* contact information to *Branden Diehl*, Earthwise Consulting, who is interested in some drone footage for some of his projects after seeing the few minute [video](#) he put together with EPCAMR and for use by the PA AML Campaign that he submitted to the PA AMR Conference to be shown at our exhibit; Provided Ryan with the PA AML Campaign logo to be included in the video

- Coordinated a Tunnel Road, Dennison Township, Luzerne County, Cleanup in the Nescopeck Creek watershed with our partner, the Friends of the Nescopeck Creek watershed, Luzerne County Citizens Blight Committee, Stanley Cooper Chapter of TU, and local White Haven residents on May 14th, 2022; Cleaned up 3 illegal dumping sections along the road, along Conety Creek, a trout stream, and other areas along the roadside ditches leading into the creek; 13 volunteers attended; 5 cubic yards of material was collected; EPCAMR asked Luzerne County Road Department if they could pick up the trash that was placed along the roadside

Education & Outreach

Keep PA Beautiful Anti-Litter Campaign Update on Materials and Curriculum

- Reviewed the final KPB Agreement and signed it; Forwarded it to *Stephanie Larson*-Keep PA Beautiful; Received a signed copy back on May 13th from KPB

Askam in Wonderland: A Virtual Reality AMD Watershed Experience Environmental Education Project

- Sent a note to *Cristy Sweeney* and *Joe Simons* from the EPCAMR Board that an e-signature request for our grant would be coming around to them to sign in order to execute the grant agreement; Received a flow chart from *Kathleen Banski*-PA DEP EE Office on the e-signature process

Trout in the Classroom (TIC) Grant for Existing Partners

- Worked on developing a **\$500** budget for a mini-grant for existing partners in the TIC Program; Submitted the narrative and budget to *Rachel Kester*-PA Trout Unlimited; Scheduled our release date of our Rainbow trout fingerlings for June 30, 2022 on Harvey's Creek, our approved trout stocked waters; Received notification that EPCAMR was awarded the \$500 mini-grant
- State *Rep. Kaufer* (Luzerne Co.) and *Rep. Joe Webster* (Montgomery Co.) will be introducing a resolution to study the usage of geothermal energy in AML called [HR200](#); It's been referred to the Committee on Environmental Resources and Energy on May 11th
- Attended a press event with Senator *Bob Casey*, Congressman *Cartwright*, PA DEP BAMR's *John Stefanko*, *Bernie McGurl*-Lackawanna River Conservation Association, and *Tim Schaeffer*-PA Fish & Boat Commission at Sweeney Beach, in Scranton, to discuss the STREAM Act and it's importance to AMD remediation across PA; IJJA and the STREAMS Act were discussed and PA DEP BAMR and the PA Fish & Boat Commission Executive Director, *Tim Schaeffer* was present and talked about the Lackawanna River and the potential for its restoration with the new incoming funds and the need for a fix to the IJJA for the use of the Set Aside funds for AMD operation, maintenance, and repair/rehabilitation; *Bernie McGurl* was about the future looking positive for the Lackawanna and discussed the history of the pollution of the watershed until now and how far along it has come
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) [Blog](#): Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) - The Legacy Of Coal Mining A Key Source Of Harm To Pennsylvania's Headwaters; EPCAMR was featured in the blog

- Filled an iron oxide chalk order for *Sarah Sutton* and mailed it to her in New York
- Provided feedback on PennFuture's Common Agenda draft document of Environmental Issues of great concern in PA affecting Environmental Justice Communities across the Commonwealth
- Requested that SRBC update EPCAMR's link on their Mine Drainage Portal [Page](#)
- Provided an interview to *Paul Golias*-Correspondent for the Citizens' Voice newspaper who wanted to run a few stories on EPCAMR's progress and work throughout the pandemic and projects on the horizon; Provided him with pictures and an update of our work regionally and locally; [AMD Discharge Found in Plains Township](#) and [Solar Energy Work Continues in NEPA](#) (*regrettably, the two articles are behind paywalls*)
- House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources to Hold Legislative Hearing on Coal Legislation on June 9th to take a look at several pieces of legislation; EPCAMR reviewed the legislation:
 - [H.R. 2073](#) (Rep. Yarmuth) – Appalachian Communities Health Emergency (ACHE) Act
 - Places a moratorium on permitting for mountaintop removal coal mining until health studies are conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The bill also requires continuous monitoring for any pollution of water and air (including noise) and frequent monitoring of soil while also assessing and collecting a one-time fee from each person that is conducting a mountaintop removal coal mining project in the U.S. in an amount sufficient to recover the Federal cost of conducting health studies and continuous monitoring activities.
 - [H.R. 2505](#) (Rep. Cartwright) – Coal Cleanup Taxpayer Protection Act
 - Prohibits the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement (OSMRE) and state regulatory authorities from accepting new self-bonds for coal reclamation, establishes limits on bonding practices associated with surface coal mining operations, and establishes requirements for coal mining operations to provide sufficient financial resources to complete mine reclamation. The bill also requires any existing self-bonds or corporate bonds utilized for coal reclamation to be converted to surety or collateral bonds. OSMRE must also issue rules establishing limitations on surety bonds to minimize the financial liability to the federal or state government.
 - [H.R. 4799](#) (Rep. Cartwright) – Coal Royalty Fairness and Communities Investment Act
 - Establishes the "Coal Area Economic Revitalization Fund" of \$75 million from royalty revenues collected from a minimum coal lease royalty of 12.5% of the assessment value of federal coal while providing grant assistance to impacted communities for economic and workforce development programs. The bill also provides financial assistance for the design, construction, and operation of large-scale carbon capture and sequestration projects while also providing technical assistance and educational outreach to impacted communities.

- [H.R. 7283 \(Rep. Cartwright\) – Safeguarding Treatment for the Restoration of Ecosystems from Abandoned Mines \(STREAM\) Act](#)
 - Amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to make state acid mine drainage abatement and treatment activities eligible for grants from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund of up to 30 percent.
- [H.R. 200 \(Rep. Lamb\) – Revitalize, Enhance, and Nurture in Expanded Ways \(RENEW\) Our Abandoned Mine Lands Act](#)
 - This legislation is still being drafted, but according to committee staff, it would provide money to states to clean up bond-forfeited mines and would make changes to state bonding programs.
- EPCAMR signed on to The Chesapeake Bay Foundation [sign on letter](#) to comment on the Council for Environmental Quality’s [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST); This is a new tool President Biden’s Administration developed to prioritize incorporating environmental justice considerations into the federal regulatory process through its Justice 40 initiative; CEJST was designed to be a centralized database that provides regulators, organizations, and the public the information necessary to assess environmental justice indicators; Developing this tool is a good step to better address environmental justice, but it fails to meet its objectives in its current form; These comments provide detailed recommendations the Biden Administration should address to properly assess EJ indicators; EPCAMR had previously comments on the Screening Tool and provided input on the need to include GIS data layers related to coalfield communities, abandoned mine lands, and AMD; Forwarded the letter to Justin Dula, Director for the PA DEP Environmental Justice Office
- Provided *Joe Greco* and *Kitty Davis*, BEG Group with information on the upcoming PA AMR Conference in June in case they would like to exhibit, attend, and or become a sponsor to meet with attendees from within the PA AMR Community across PA
- Participated on a weekly conference call update for the PA AML Campaign to hear about the status of pending legislation and the federal funds for AML that will be coming to PA
- Reviewed the White House’s new technical assistance [guide](#) to support state, local, Tribal and territorial governments navigate, access, and deploy funding opportunities within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL); This new technical assistance document is a complementary resource to the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Guidebook](#), a tool the administration released in January that serves as a roadmap to the funding available under the law, as well as an explanatory document that shows in detail program-by-program information; *Mike Korb* sent EPCAMR PDF documents of the BIL Draft Guidance out for comment press releases related to AML
- EPCAMR Executive Director was able to be a guest writer for the Op-Ed section of The Scranton-Times Tribune to discuss the importance of the Clean Streams Fund and the importance of AMD legislation that could allow for funding to be utilized for the future operation, maintenance, and repair or rehabilitation of AMD treatment systems and funding for new systems; [The Sweet Smell of Progress](#) (*regrettably, the article is behind a paywall*)
- Conference call with *Katie Dunbar* to inform her of EPCAMR’s work; Discussed grant writing, grant administration, and capacity building needs of EPCAMR

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

- New Jersey Resources Clean Energy Ventures, Tetra Tech, and Solar Landscape became sponsors for the PA AMR Conference; The PA AMR Conference Committee members voted for the 2022 Mayfly Award winners; Convened several conference planning committee calls during the month; Followed up with *Chris Casper* from EDA about his presentation; Followed up with *Joey James-Downstream* Strategies to see if he would be able to present on the solar on abandoned mine lands work that he is doing in southwestern Virginia; *Joey* couldn't present and offered up two names, *Eriks Brolis* and *Brad Kreps* as possible speakers, however, neither was available; Followed up with *Jen West* at the Ramada about the food menu and received it towards the end of the month when we chose the meal selections; Followed up with *Robert Young*, PA DEP Energy Office on his Strategy for Solar Development in PA presentation for the Conference who submitted his materials to *Anne Daymut*, WPCAMR; Approved Tetra Tech's Gladden AMD Treatment System presentation proposal; Approved a few lodging scholarships for attendees; Informed the EPCAMR Staff of the plan to carpool down to State College and assistance that will be needed by everyone to pull off the conference coordination smoothly on June 21-23rd
- Coordinated a tour on May 11th with *Cristy Sweeney*, from ARIPPA and *Alex Brush-Gilberton* Power Company, in Morea, and [We're Here Podcast](#) with *Melissa Wade* and *Abi Newhouse* to provide them with interviews on the positive benefits of the Co-Gen waste to energy industry, to discuss bitcoin mining and cryptocurrency, abandoned mine land reclamation, and AMD watershed restoration and remediation throughout the Anthracite Coal Region
- Provided *Kelly Gibbons*, King's College, with a receipt for her donation to EPCAMR for conducting an AMD Tie-Dye Workshop and EPCAMR Outreach Program with the Environmental Club on campus for Earth Day in late April
- Attended the OSMRE TIPS Training 2-day Global Mapper Introductory Training online taught by BlueMarble instructors
- *Eric Oliver*, PA DEP Moshannon District Mining Office provided EPCAMR with an announcement of the ARRI Reforestation Conference in August that we shared to our regional partners and our EPCAMR Board

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for May 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 May 2022 FNB Statement
- Informed *Mike* that we would have to work on the PA DEP 319 Grant that is due on June 24th, 2022, only a day after the completion of our state-wide conference on abandoned mine reclamation in State College, PA; Downloaded the application and forms to get a head start on the application process
- Completed the May 2022 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike*
- Invoiced Lehigh Engineering for the 60+ maps that were scanned by *Denise*

- EPCAMR Board meeting was coordinated and convened in person for the first time in over 2 years on May 19th at the EPCAMR Office
- Interviewed by *Steve Raabe*, [OpinionWorks](#), who had been interviewing select non-profits who are partners with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the Choose Clean Water Coalition on capacity building and coming up with far reaching ideas that will provide practical and far-reaching ideas that will provide good guidance for the recommendations in a report they will be completing later in the year
- Added *Nancy Corbin* and *Aaron Eldred* from the Columbia County Conservation District to the EPCAMR mailing list for various notices
- Completed paperwork with OneSource to bring *Levi Sunday-Lefkowitz*, University of Rochester graduate student, and a former intern, back with EPCAMR for several months to work on a few projects as a seasonal position
- Contacted the State Workers Insurance Fund (SWIF) to update our policy with our current Executive Board Members
- Worked with *Robert Capral*, Kohanski Company, Public Accountants to file a requested extension for completion of our 990s for 2021 until November 15, 2022; Kohanski Company reviewed our Swoyersville AMLER Grant and determined that we would not need a single audit for 2021
- Received new codes from *Colleen Henning*, Human Resource Analyst, with the PA Fish & Boat Commission, to register for a few (FBI & DHS) clearances for the Executive Director under Act 153 to continue as a volunteer with the PA Fish & Boat Commission; EPCAMR Executive Director will fill out the paperwork over the Summer and submit them online
- Resubmitted an invoice to PSU Wilkes-Barre for the time spent on providing training to the EC EWT Cohort since EPCAMR had an incorrect address to mail it to since we got a return to sender on our letter that was mailed that seemed to have been held up at a mail facility in the region for several months
- *Dr. Ken Klemow*, Wilkes University and Chair of the Science and Education Committee for EPCAMR informed EPCAMR that he'd like to call a meeting hopefully in June; He has a lot of water quality data from the Scarlift reports that he'd like to combine with our EPCAMR historic water quality data on AMD from his various vegetation studies from 20-30 years ago; The data may be able to be incorporated into the Ripple Effect Program with Aquatic Informatics; He thinks we might have enough for some extremely interesting papers looking at long-term (decades) trends in water quality throughout the Wyoming Valley; He also plans to do a forensic analysis of the data collected by his various research teams at the Avondale Reforestation site in Plymouth Township, Luzerne County; He plans to compile the data, assess major trends, and then produce a report that will go to EPCAMR, DEP, DCNR, OSM, PEC, and anyone else interested