



## Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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## May 2023 Progress Report

### Project Coordination

#### **National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Southern Wyoming Valley Small Watershed Assessment**

- Worked on 4<sup>th</sup> Reimbursement submission and Progress Report Form with Project Officer *Emma Wigger* from NFWF

#### **PA American Water Charitable Trust Community Cleanups**

- Coordinated and picked up **40** illegally dumped tires and trash that was picked up by the City of Nanticoke Public Works Department in the Nanticoke Creek watershed along Middle Road in the City of Nanticoke with the Nanticoke Conservation Club and The Tire Guy; **5** volunteers participated from the Nanticoke Conservation Club

### Technical Assistance

#### **Shamokin Creek Watershed Assessment OCED Project with Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA) and Tetra Tech**

- Picked up HCl and Nitric Acid from PA DEP Bureau of Labs to pre-fill sample bottles for Shamokin Creek AMD sampling; Coordinated the pickup of samples with the Northumberland County Conservation District; Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance was awarded a Degenstein Foundation grant for **\$45,000** to assist with additional monitoring in the Shamokin Creek watershed over the next year; SCRA is looking at other grants for other projects in the watershed and sought EPCAMR's advice and expertise in providing some ideas for community outreach and education or installation of future dataloggers to obtain real-time data; They are looking to apply through the [First Community Foundation Partnership](#); Provided Tetra Tech with a photo collection of 9 AMD discharges in the watershed with the actual locations, upstream, and downstream photos that were taken during a reconnaissance trip to the watershed; Forwarded a batch of the PA DEP Lab Reports with sample analysis to Tetra Tech

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

- Reviewed the quarterly report prepared by the PA DEP Office of Energy & Technology provided by *Robert Young*, PA DEP; Met with *Robert Young* on May 10 at the EPCAMR Office to describe and show him the State-wide AML Inventory, Problem Areas, and Feature points; Talked to *Robert and Cassidy Robinson*, LaBella Associates, about pulling together a tentative agenda for the [Solar Summit on Previously Mine Lands](#) scheduled for July 19<sup>th</sup> in State College; Shared a link to a [poll](#) that showed that the support for solar development in PA is overwhelming to *Robert*

and *Cassidy*; Reviewed the banquet menu for the luncheon at the Ramada and provided it to *Jenn West*, Conference Planner and signed the contract agreement for the use and rental of the facility; Updated the website; Provided *Angela Meck* from Tetra Tech with information on the Summit and information on exhibiting at the Summit; Started to send out information on the Summit via social media and *Dave Hess* picked it up and placed it on his blog [site](#); *Evan Andres*, PA Director of Government Relations and Policy for The Nature Conservancy in PA and Delaware, was interested in becoming an exhibit sponsor and providing some content during the Summit; EPCAMR directed him to *Robert Young* to discuss how to incorporate his thoughts and comments; [Solitude Solar, LLC](#) became an exhibitor sponsor; Provided *Cassidy* with additional resource links for the Assessment Report

- Provided *Diane Madl*, Nescopeck State Park Environmental Education Specialist and *Lauren Forster*, her colleague at Jacobsburg EE Center information on the types of macro-invertebrates that can tolerate AMD or alkaline mine drainage so that she can incorporate the information into one of her education programs
- Requested that *Steve Cornia*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist make a trip into the Mill Creek Watershed to download the temperature sensor data from the HOBO sensors that remain throughout the watershed following Hurricane Ida and put together a map for *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District Watershed Specialist; A few more sensors will have to be re-installed that were lost during the severe storm event
- Provided *Mike Overturf*, from Overturf with technical assistance and resources to help him locate shafts in PA that were abandoned on abandoned mine lands in Eastern Pennsylvania; He had some talks with his contacts at the Department of Energy and there was little interest due to the cost and effort to focus on mine pools in terms of energy development at this time; Provided him with some GIS information on where to look for shafts and what the symbology looks like based on our Symbology Map that EPCAMR created year ago; It has been suggested that the shafts be investigated further to see if they can be used for gravitational storage
- Worked with *Jim Vorhees*, [Tiechos](#), who will be making an application to the Department of Energy for their solar project on abandoned mine lands in Northeastern PA in the Hazleton Area, who wanted to list EPCAMR as a regional stakeholder; They would like to expand upon any relationships EPCAMR has that could be listed as economic development beneficiaries, such as employment or work force programs, community groups and other likely stakeholders; EPCAMR provided them with a list of potential partners in the region that they reached out to for their community involvement; A very high level presentation was submitted to the Department of Energy and Teichos will follow up with EPCAMR once they have heard some feedback
- Prepared and provided a letter of support for the Earth Conservancy's PA DEP Growing Greener grant for continued reclamation and stream restoration in the Nanticoke Creek Watershed, Luzerne County, PA; Sent the finished letter to *Elizabeth Hughes, EdD*, Earth Conservancy
- Provided contact information via e-mail for the Citizens Coal Council to a resident in Southwestern PA that called EPCAMR seeking information on who to follow up with if she was having issues with well contamination at her residence that she thought might be from abandoned mines or a nearby mining operation; She left a voicemail, but didn't provide her name, only an email

- Provided *Aimee Erickson*, Executive Director, Citizens Coal Council with *Hunter Ridgeway's* contact information since he is the Environment designated Staff person in Congressman Cartwright's Office in Washington DC at her request
- *Angela Miles*, member of the US Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Natural Resources and Environment committee requested EPCAMR's input on OSMRE's Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization (AMLER) program; GAO has been directed by the committee report accompanying Interior's 2023 appropriations to conduct a review of OSMRE's Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization program, particularly noting impediments experienced by the states participating in the program; They were seeking to schedule a call with groups in the PA AML Campaign for insights and perspectives; Scheduled a call in June 2023
- Provided *Mike Shimko*, teacher at Wilkes-Barre Area STEM Academy, with contact information for *Joe Simons*, with the Stanley Cooper Chapter TU to see if they might be able to financially support the start up of a Trout in the Classroom tank for the students in the upcoming school year in the Fall 2023 since they need a local conservation organization sponsor; They are receiving some funding from a local foundation and are working with PetZone in Pittston to acquire some of the startup supplies and materials
- Participated in a call with *Patrick Kennedy*, from [Casella](#), who was looking for contact information for Reading Anthracite Company to discuss with them potential for biosolids application on abandoned mine lands and their reclaimed mine lands as a part of their Surface Mine Permit bond releases post-reclamation
- Participated in a call with *Jim Keene*, [EnviroGen Technologies](#) to inquire about his interests in abandoned mine land reclamation and AMD remediation and to introduce him to EPCAMR's work in the region in PA; His company can treat AMD; He's going to be attending the Fall 2023 Annual PA AMR Conference

## **Education & Outreach**

### **ISI Healing the Scars EE Project**

- EPCAMR received the re-grant agreement from ISI, Inc. for **\$23,000** for the year 2023 to continue to support environmental education work and our part-time staff positions working in environmental education related to AMD and watershed work and to release the two short trout puppet videos to schools that were completed in the last year; Submitted an invoice for our Education Specialist's time for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the year through the end of March 2023

### **TIDES Frontline Justice Fund Project (*proposed*)**

- Provided the Ohio River Valley Institute (ORVI), whose fiscal sponsor for the grant will be the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, with an EPCAMR informational brochure to include with the proposed application to the [TIDES Frontline Justice Fund](#); EPCAMR is a partner in the grant for **\$20,000**, as a sub-grant recipient, should it be funded; The total grant proposed is for **\$150,000**; Partners include the Ohio River Valley Institute, West Virginia Rivers, and the Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment, and funding for consulting, communications, and outreach; The grant is for organizations that require funding to cover advocacy efforts, community organizing, communications, technical assistance, and capacity building to community groups that have been harmed by environmental justice issues and environmental issues

## **Luzerne Foundation Iron Oxide AMD and Mine Mapping Videos with Centone Productions**

- Presented to *Mrs. Gubitose's* CAPP Art Class on May 12 to **20** students on the use of iron oxide pigment in art and the work of EPCAMR in the region and in partnership with the Wilkes-Barre Area School District; The students were going to make hexagon shaped art pieces using EPCAMR's iron oxide packets that we donated to the class; EPCAMR will work to create a calendar with the finished art pieces at the end of the school year; EPCAMR had to wait to go into the schools once the PSSAs and Keystone Tests were completed in May; Sent *Joe Sapienza*, an image of a mockup acrylic, coal dust, and iron oxide photo, of a coal breaker of the Storrs Colliery in Dickson City, Lackawanna County, PA, completed by *Sue Hand* who will be featured in a short education video; Reviewed *Jason Sauer's* [website](#) (Most Wanted Fine Art), who is from Pittsburgh, who will be hosting the video for Centone Productions and EPCAMR; He's an artist who is very interested in our use of iron oxide for art since he does art with spray paint and mangled derby cars; Reviewed the call sheets from *Joe Sapienza* for May 24 and May 25; Participated in some of the video production and assisted with setting up iron oxide demonstration area for *Diane Czajkowski*, another local artist from Ashley and an EPCAMR volunteer, who will be a part of the short video; Filmed some of the video footage at the Solomon Creek AMD borehole in Hanover Township, Luzerne County from Solomon Creek

## **Askam AMD in Wonderland 3D VR EE Project**

- EPCAMR published our folders and files for the 3DVista Software program on the Askam AMD Treatment System in Hanover Township, Luzerne County, on Earth Conservancy property, on to our own [server](#) since the software hosting was only a 90-day free hosting option; We hope to develop future virtual tours when additional funding is secured; We will have two versions, one for the Oculus headsets and the other for the desktop environment; Worked with *Mike Hewitt*, EPCAMR Program Manager to fix and create the virtual tour links, videos, and informational points of interest in the VR environment
- Prepared a Letter of Support for Earth Conservancy's PA DEP Growing Greener Phase II Stream Restoration and Reclamation in the Nanticoke Creek Watershed
- Congratulated *Tara Jones* on becoming the new Executive Assistant for the Lackawanna River Conservation Association (LRCA) as *Bernie McGurl* is set to retire from the Executive Director position; Followed up with a phone call to her and offered her any technical assistance and advice that EPCAMR could as she begins her journey at the LRCA into the watershed issues around the Lackawanna River
- Provided *Anne Daymut*, WPCAMR, with an electronic file copy of our PA AML Campaign logo for her use on video production she was working on
- Participated in the weekly PA AML Campaign conference calls
- Followed up with *Keith George*, Special Projects Coordinator for the Luzerne Conservation District who was interested in any locations that EPCAMR knew of with illegal tire piles that might be in need of spraying for West Nile Virus; EPCAMR provided him with a few locations that we have not had a chance to coordinate the cleanup and removal of the tires on abandoned mine lands yet in Luzerne County until we obtain the permission of the landowners; He's interested in assisting us with future cleanups as they are planned

- Met with *Carl Rodzewich*, Operations Manager for Tetra Tech at the EPCAMR Office to talk about solar development and reclamation on abandoned mine lands to spur further economic development in the coal regions of PA
- EPCAMR Staff assisted Wilkes-Barre Area's Heights Elementary Staff, Teachers, and Administrators with their first Duck Derby in the Solomon Creek watershed in Wilkes-Barre, above the Solomon Creek AMD Borehole discharge off S. Main Street; It was live-streamed back to the school for all the classes to view and the EPCAMR Executive Director gave a quick snapshot of the water quality with a demonstration of the use of a YSI multi-parameter probe and interview for the students to talk about our work to assess and restore the watershed from past mining water quality impacts; Over **2500** ducks were dropped and captured from the E. Division Street Bridge and before going under the S. Main Street Bridge near the recently completed WVSA stream channel and floodplain restoration project on Solomon Creek that was recommended in EPCAMR's Solomon Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan
- Followed up with *Patrick Lim*, Strategic Partners Program Manager for Climate Action Campaign who would like for EPCAMR to be a part of their Solutions to Pollution Campaign just through sharing social media posts or providing quotes; Informed him that we advocate for alternative energy development on abandoned mine land sites and through the reuse of mine water for many different type of energy development projects such as mine pool geothermal, micro hydro turbine generation of electricity, pump hydro storage of mine pool water, community and grid-scale solar on abandoned mine lands; We advocate for carbon sequestration and tree and riparian restoration on our abandoned mine lands as well; We also support Co-Generation plants that reclaim culm waste and silt from our abandoned mine lands and convert it to electricity
- Participated in the Clean Water Education Week meetings on May 2 virtually, and in person on May 3 in Harrisburg at the Capital meeting with legislators and their staff to educate them on and advocate for clean water funding within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including our work on AMD cleanup and abandoned mine land reclamation work with our partners and those in the Choose Clean Water Coalition; Met up with partners from PennFuture including *Mike Mehrazar* and *Patrick McDonnell*, before heading over to the Capital; Met with State Rep. *Paul Takac* to discuss rare earth elements and our recent efforts to try and secure funding to sample for the minerals in AMD across PA
- Met with *Mark Boris* and *Brian Derenick*, Borton Lawson Engineering on May 7, to discuss regional AMD and watershed restoration projects, and opportunities for future partnerships; Borton Lawson is interested in attending our State-wide Conference on Abandoned Mine Reclamation in the Fall and the Solar Summit on Previously Mine Lands in July to network with the abandoned mine land reclamation community groups and partners to become more familiar with them to be able to expand their clientele coverage and services that they offer to community groups; Provided them with links and resources to review and follow up on for previously completed EPCAMR Projects that have recommendations for future implementation, design, and engineering projects that could be proposed in future grants and partnerships
- Participated on the Teams call for the quarterly PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice Advisory Board Meeting as EPCAMR's representative on the EJAB representing coalfield communities in Northeastern and Northcentral PA on May 16; Provided *Justin Dula*, *Amani Reid*, and *Jen McLuckie*, PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice, some potential locations and groups in the Scranton area for the August 15 Environmental Justice Advisory Board Meeting

- Provided *April Nivers and John Blake, Congressman Matt Cartwright's Office* who works on economic development projects with a suggestion to ask community members if they know who owns abandoned mine lands in their neighborhood; Suggested a graphic similar to the old Sesame Street neighborhood book and song, "Who are the People in Your Neighborhood?" Maybe we ask..."Who owns the abandoned mine lands in your neighborhood?" It would be nice to get a graphic artist to come up with a graphic that includes a culm pile and an orange stream with a cast of characters representing a local coalfield community; She passed along the information to her Communications Team; The idea is to get more community members more aware of their surroundings and the impacts that the landscapes are having on their neighborhoods on a local level with a cast of characters that represent local community non-profits and governmental leaders and residents on a mural or billboard drawn by a local artist
- Communicated with *Andrew Yablonski, Regional Business Manager, [Profile Products, LLC](#)* who was interested in becoming a member company with EPCAMR; His company was also interested in presenting and exhibiting at the Annual Conference in the Fall 2023 and the Solar Summit on Previously Mine Lands in July 2023; They are involved with watershed restoration and reclamation efforts and provide various supplies for projects
- Provided *[David Heineman, NEPADOC](#)* Director, with information on the Hamburg Strand Theatre in Hamburg and the Majestic Theater in Pottsville suggested by *Angela Meck* to show his film documentary; The Hazelton Art League, the Lumber Museum, and the Taber Museum are also other venues that are being planned for screening of the documentary
- Followed up with the North Branch Land Trust (NBLT) to have them remove *Ray Clarke's* name from their database for future mailings that often come to the EPCAMR Office for the Huber Breaker Preservation Society (HBPS); He had passed away and we provided the NBLT with *George Lehman's* name, who is the current President of the HBPS
- Met with a representative from True Value Hardware Distribution Center to receive a donation of Gatorade and hand sanitizer for future community cleanup projects coordinated by EPCAMR over the Summer and Fall of 2023 on May 8 and May 26; Provided the representative with verification of EPCAMR's non-profit status

## **Community Volunteers**

- *Sean Bieski, EPCAMR Volunteer*, asked if the Executive Director would give a recommendation for him for a watershed restoration internship that he is applying for at the Stroud Water Research Center, Philadelphia over the Summer; Stroud Water Research Center has been a partner of EPCAMR's for many years; EPCAMR happily obliged
- Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance informed EPCAMR that they have a new partnership with the [AmeriCorps Retired Senior Volunteer Program](#); They are looking for ways to incorporate them into monitoring throughout the watershed; EPCAMR offered to take them on a tour of AMD discharges in the watershed over the Summer while SCRA continues to seek funding to see how they can incorporate their active volunteer services and desire to have involvement in the watershed activities in Shamokin Creek

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

- Provided *Mike Korb*, Tetra Tech, with some information on the Jeddo Mine Tunnel for an upcoming tour he's leading with other community partners and local legislators in the area, including the Friends of the Nescopeck Creek; EPCAMR Staff had a conflict the day of the tour with some field work and were not able to make the tour, however, were able to provide some technical assistance resources to *Mike* for the tour including the *53rd Annual Field Conference of Pennsylvania Geologists (1988)* which contains an article written by *Jim LaRegina* regarding Mine Drainage Tunnels in the Eastern Middle Anthracite Field; It has some good historic and geologic context
- Attended the ***PA DCNR 2022-23 Community Connections to our Watershed Forum*** on May 2 on Montage Mountain to view the final student presentations from Luzerne and Lackawanna County High Schools that participated all year and were a part of an AMD tour and educational presentations by EPCAMR Staff earlier in the year; A booklet was produced by the students that included a collage of photos of EPCAMR on the front cover and an entire page dedicated to the part of the field tour that we had given with photos and some captions
- Asked *Cody Forgach*, NE Regional Field Representative for *Senator John Fetterman*, if the Senator would be interested in putting together a pre-recorded short welcome or talking points to be presented by video at the ***25th Annual PA AMR Conference*** in October 2023; Continued working on making changes to the contract agreement for the Conference with NASLR and provided an updated copy to *Shaina McNally*, our Conference Planner, at the Altoona Grand Hotel, particularly for our AV and microphone needs; GAI Consultants became a Gold Sponsor for the Conference; Participated in our monthly PA AMR Conference call to continue planning of the conference; Jeddo Coal Company became a Silver Sponsor; Kleinfelder will become a Gold Sponsor as well
- Worked on coordinating and AMD/AML Tour with *Karl Borton*, Coordinator for the Penn-State Master Watershed Stewardship Program Class of 2023 for Luzerne/Lackawanna/Susquehanna Counties this Summer
- Worked on preparing a presentation for the ***American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG) Annual NE Sectional Meeting***; Travelled to Middletown, PA on May 5 to make an EPCAMR Presentation at the PA Geological Survey Office on EPCAMR's work in the region
- Received information on an upcoming webinar by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) on various funding opportunities and sources related to abandoned mines and disadvantaged coalfield communities throughout Appalachia on June 28; EPCAMR will register to attend
- EPCAMR received a **\$100** grant from the National Wildlife Federation to offset some travel costs to attend the ***Choose Clean Water Coalition's ForumPlus*** event in Harrisburg where the Executive Director was invited to be a part of a panel discussion on abandoned mine land reclamation, AMD remediation, and the potential for solar development on abandoned mine lands on May 22; Presented as a part of the panel discussion on watershed restoration efforts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed

- Participated on an energy transition panel on May 22 for ***Penn-State University's Climate Solutions Symposium*** as a virtual speaker to discuss abandoned mine land reclamation, AMD geothermal potential, solar on abandoned mine lands, and reforestation and carbon sequestration on abandoned mine lands; EPCAMR Executive Director was invited by *Cheryl R. Stamm*, Education Program Coordinator and *Jeremy Krebs*, Program Manager; Provided them with a copy of my PowerPoint presentation in advance of the panel to send it around to all attendees; EPCAMR was informed that our presentation was well received and that we provided a very valuable perspective on legacy energy production and redevelopment needs on abandoned mine lands that they don't often hear about; *Jen Baka* was interested in a tour of AML sites and AMD in the Lackawanna Valley area in August to coincide with the PA DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Board Meeting and EPCAMR informed them that it would be best to discuss that with the PA DEP OEJ since they are coordinating the meeting; EPCAMR Executive Director might be able to meet people at the Old Forge AMD Borehole who are on their way in to the meeting prior to the meeting or after the meeting, if time allows
- Worked with *Anne Daymut*, *Andy McAllister*, (WPCAMR), and *Mike Hewitt* to plan for a 3-day ***AMD Treat Training on Passive Treatment Technology*** being hosted by NTTP OSMRE Pittsburgh Office and the PA DEP in State College, PA for Conservation District Watershed Specialists working on AMD treatment; Participated in a conference call with *Andy*, *Anne*, and *Mike* for follow up tasks and discussions; Priority due to the funding was given first to Western PA Conservation Districts, however, all EPCAMR Region Conservation Districts with AMD were invited for the Fall 2023; Planned out the meal plans with the Ramada Conference Center and suggested some budget costs for van rental for a tour that is a part of the training; Provided *Anne* with a link to the newest version of AMD Treat on the OSMRE website to provide to those who register to attend to become familiar with it before the training and on wording for the invite that she was preparing; There may be a waiting list and a suggestion for a second training if there is overwhelming interest in the training since the course capacity is limited; Continued to provide *Anne* with updates on those who were registering through EventBrite set up by EPCAMR

## **EPCAMR Program Administration**

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts; Provided Denise with a copy of the monthly bank statement for Quickbooks; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for the May 2023 renewal with Highmark; Paid EC the rent; Made deposits to FNB for incoming checks
- Completed the Highmark Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) and Medical Loss Ration (MLR) Survey for EPCAMR and submitted it electronically
- Reviewed the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations [link](#) sent by our former President, *Ed Wytovich* that details dozens of funding sources for clean energy projects as exchange for potential grant applicants
- Submitted Supplier Self-Certification and Vendor ACH forms for GAI Consultants



- Sent a package back to *Rob Dubas*, Keep PA Beautiful of the Loaner Cameras for the Surveillance Program that we had instituted in Centralia until we got a handle on the illegal dumping and eventually planted trees in April of 2021; Will send down the metal camera cases separately; The dwarf apple trees are in their second year of growth
- Signed off on an employment verification form for former EPCAMR employee, *Kelsey Biondo Smith* for her Public Student Loan Forgiveness Application from the Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid
- Worked on Treasurer's Report, Grants Applied for, and workload update PowerPoint presentation for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Board Meeting on May 18<sup>th</sup>; Sent out meeting notice to EPCAMR partners and Board members; Convened the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Board Meeting; Met *Beck Chickillo*, new Watershed Specialist for Dauphin County Conservation District
- Worked on obtaining signatures, notary document, and filling out and completing the PA Department of Revenue's Renewal Application Forms for EPCAMR's Sales Tax Exemption
- Filled out and completed the GAI Consultants Vendor/ACH Deposit Form and Supplier Self-Certification Form and e-mailed it to the Pittsburgh Office
- Submitted updated Executive Officer Declarations to EPCAMR's State Workers Insurance Fund Policy for our renewal set to begin on July 1, 2023 through July 1, 2024 since we had elections during the year that changed some of the position titles and names; *Cristy, Joe, and Christine*, all electronically signed the renewal documents and sent them back to EPCAMR to send to *Maria Tomassonni* at SWIF
- Completed the May 2023 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike*