

## 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](mailto:rhughes@epcamr.org)

Website: [www.epcamr.org](http://www.epcamr.org)

**May 2024 Progress Report**

**EPCAMR Conservation District Mining East Project**

### **Project Coordination**

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

- *Riyad Barkawi*, PA DEP BAMR visited the site with EPCAMR and Hank Zielinski on May 29<sup>th</sup> to see the progress on the site and the reclamation that is continuing in Phase I of the project

#### **Hazleton Beltway AMLER Reclamation with Hillwood Construction (*proposed*)**

- Worked with *Gerald Price*, Kauffman Engineering, to obtain the proper name of the construction company listed in the grant proposal at the request of the PA DEP BAMR

#### **NFWF Southern Wyoming Valley Small Watersheds Assessment Plan**

- *Marie Taylor*, Operation Director for the [Penns Valley Conservation Association](#) let us know that the reference book *Manual on Wetlands and Wildlife* (2003) hasn't been converted to a PDF or digital file, however, printed copies are available at a reduced rate if we needed to purchase additional copies; *Hope Mullins*, Wilkes University student provided EPCAMR with a copy of her senior project entitled, Feasibility Study Using Saline Tracers and Electrical Surveying to Track Disappearing Stream Waters in the Nanticoke Creek Watershed, Luzerne County, PA

#### **Tetra Tech/ SCRA AMD Sampling**

- Forwarded *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR and *Katie Wood*-Tetra Tech, a straggler AMD Lab Sample Report from the PA DEP Labs for one of the sampling sites in the Shamokin Creek watershed; Submitted an invoice for Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance sampling to Tetra Tech from February through April 2024

#### **Loyalsock Creek AMD Sampling and Tour for Sullivan County Conservation District**

- Sampled several AMD treatment systems and upstream and downstream locations within the Loyalsock Creek watershed with *Jolie Coates*, Watershed Specialist for the Sullivan County Conservation District; Provided her additional details about each of the treatment systems and our upstream and downstream monitoring locations; *Jolie Coates*, Sullivan County Conservation District Watershed Specialist received a letter regarding the draft evaluation report of the stream designations in the Loyalsock Creek watershed based on a petition from 2006.

### **Columbia University Rare Earth Elements Sampling**

- Participated in a Zoom call with *Sean Kinney* and *Anibar Basu* to discuss a future sampling event in the Wyoming Valley over the Summer; EPCAMR provided Columbia University with a location map of the boreholes in the Lackawanna Valley and Wyoming Valley that are accessible and could be sampled for water quality; Reviewed Winter 2023 Sampling data; Provided Columbia University colleagues with the link to [Stratification in water quality in inundated anthracite mines, eastern Pennsylvania / by K.J. Ladwig](#)

### **Luzerne Foundation Mine Mapping Educational Short Promo Video Production**

- Reached out to *Joe Sapienza*, Centone Picture Productions to see what his availability and schedule look like over the Summer to see if he can come up and shoot a short 5-minute video that highlights our Mine Mapping Work in the region

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

- Worked with *Frank*-EPCAMR and *Cliff*-SRI to see that *Renee Dolney* from Chalfont Run Watershed Association, received another copy of the survey to complete since she had only partially completed it; A new survey was sent to her for completion; Requested that *Frank* send *Ben Moyer*-President of the Chestnut Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited and *Bill Macek*; Participated in a Zoom meeting with SRI and WPCAMR to update everyone on the progress with the survey completion by respondents through the middle of May 2024; **77** surveys were completed; Reviewed and provided comments to *Natalie LaMagna*-SRI on the Dashed Statistics she was able to export and breakdown into numerous categories based on active and passive treatment, costs, funding sources and geographic municipal boundaries in which the systems are located across PA; Reviewed surveys and sent out request for follow up interviews; Interviewed *Bill Reichert*-Schuylkill Headwaters Association over Zoom

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

- EPCAMR Executive Director coordinated the cleanup of **674** illegally dumped tires on State Game Lands 224 in Glen Lyon, Luzerne County, where several abandoned stripping pits are located and the tires had been dumped over 40 years ago; Partnered with the PA Game Commission NE Region, Nanticoke Conservation Club, and the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers PA Eastern Region Chapter; The Tire Guys picked up all the tires and had them scrap recycled at Mahantango Scrap Tire Recycling, Inc.; **20** volunteers participated in the rain on a Sunday to conduct the cleanup; Communicated with *Keith George*-Luzerne Conservation District about another illegal tire pile that is scattered all over the steep hillside of I-81 Northbound over the PA DOT shoulder of the guide rail in the Sugar Notch Run headwaters on PA DCNR Pinchot State Forest Lands adjacent to the Earth Conservancy's Penobscot Trail; *Keith* reached out to PA DOT and PA DCNR and get back to EPCAMR; Provided *Keith* with *Frank Coughlin*'s contact information for PA DOT District 4-0; DCNR followed up with *Keith* and informed him that they will take the lead and follow up with us when they need assistance or volunteers to help with the cleanup

### **Just Transition Fund Rare Earth Elements Capacity Building**

- Provided *Audrey Josephson-Day* with an update on the status of the review of the Hollywood REE AMLER Grant that is being reviewed by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement and going through the vetting process after already being supported by the Governor's Office in PA

## **Little Shickshinny Creek/Paddy Run/Rocky Run Assessment-PA American Water Charitable Foundation**

- Worked with *Dr. Brian Mangan* to develop a budget for 50 HOBO Temperature sensors that we might be able to secure through a grant at King's College to work with some of his students to assist us with installing in the watershed; Attended a webinar with the AWCF to learn more about the grant award

## **Technical Assistance**

### **C-SAW**

- EPCAMR will be receiving some technical assistance from the USGS through an application that was submitted to the Pocono NE RC & DC to help with determining the best way to take additional flow measurements at AMD discharges, establishing weir designs, templates for weir construction, and various methods of determining and estimating flows of AMD discharges and stream flows in addition to the flow meter method that we already use in the field; Coordinating a meeting with *Mark Roland* and his team from the USGS and EPCAMR over the Summer
- Attended a site showing with Kleinfelder and Cravotta Geochemical Consulting, at Commissioner's Lake in Northumberland County, which is an abandoned water-filled stripping pit that PA DEP BAMR would like to see reclaimed along with any additional features located within the project area in the Shamokin Creek watershed; Reached out to *Duane Feagley*-PA Anthracite Council to see if he can provide EPCAMR with a contact for Diamond Development Corporation in Mt. Carmel; Provided Kleinfelder with EPCAMR's contact-*Sam Lamport*, Environmental Coordinator for Knouse Foods and Hydrated Lime and *Kyle Miller's* contact information for AC Power; Worked with *Steve Cornia*-EPCAMR to perform a cursory site suitability model on the solar potential for the site after providing him with a boundary map; Followed up with *Joe Prociak* from Susquehanna Coal Company; EPCAMR worked on a project scope and budget proposal as a partner and submitted it along to Kleinfelder
- *Jacob Smith*, Wilkes University student and EPCAMR volunteer, provided EPCAMR with his final copy of the Bowman's Creek Acid Deposition Remediation Plan following EPCAMR's attendance at the University's Poster Presentation on his Senior Team Project
- *Dr. Zhen Lui* and his colleague *Dr. Shimin Liu* from Penn-State's Mining and Energy Engineering came across an EPA call on Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants; The call looks for proposals that implement projects involving both climate action and pollution reduction strategies and community engagement, with a budget of \$10-20 million; A proposal's PI has to be a community-based organization, with academic collaborators being co-PIs; They requested that EPCAMR review the Notice of Funding Opportunity over the Summer and get back to them if we are interested; Project proposals aren't due until November 2024
- *Jennifer Orr-Greene*, Environmental Team Lead, from [Cedarville Engineering](#) requested a meeting with EPCAMR over lunch to learn about their company's portfolio
- EPCAMR created an updated map of the total number of ARIPPA Co-Gen Plants in PA and the number that have closed and remain open within the appropriate Congressional Districts and provided it to *Cristy Sweeney*, ARIPPA; Only 10 Co-Gen Plants are open in 2024 and 5 closed

- Provided the Underground Miners with the location of the surface foundation of the abandoned [Wanamie 19 Pump House](#); They had a picture of it from 1969
- Conference call with Alfred Benesch & Company to do a cursory review of mine pools in the area of the Black Creek Creek watershed for a Northpoint proposed project
- Schuylkill Conservation District requested EPCAMR's help in becoming a partner on a grant to look at the Pine Knot/Oak Hill/Reppelier AMD discharges in the Upper Schuylkill Headwaters to map out the mine pools in the region to see if one of the discharges can be dewatered or moved to another pool if there is sufficient volume available to treat the water in another area and combine it with other discharges; Cravotta Geochemical Consulting will also be a partner; Worked on developing the scope for the grant with *Wayne Lehman*, Schuylkill Conservation District, *Chuck Cravotta*, and *Terry Ackman*

## **Education & Outreach**

- Participated in 3 weekly PA AML Campaign calls; Sent around to the group the article from *Senator Dave Argall* related to the remaining ARIPPA Co-Gen Plants and the impacts that the Governor's Budget could have on them; *Governor Shapiro's* energy plan threatens to close all the local plants, allowing the sad impacts of past mining operations to remain for hundreds of more years; Argall and local legislators asked the Governor to work with people in the region to draft a new energy plan that would protect these plants and allow them to continue their important environmental work; More can be found in Argall's [Statement](#)
- Reconnected with the Hazleton Integration Project (HIP), and their Executive Director, *Roseanna Gabriel*, and sent her along pictures from a previous education camp program that we had run years ago; Requested her assistance in some future translation work of some of our documents and educational materials and to schedule a future Zoom call to see if there are any future grant and educational opportunities that we can do with the students at the Center in Hazleton; EPCAMR had worked with *Debra Mills* on the Summer Camp program many years ago; EPCAMR had put several of the reporters from *El Tiempo Latino* in touch with the HIP for interview questions on the families living in the Eastern Middle Coalfields and how the environmental, social, and cultural scene is in the surrounding Hazleton communities
- Followed up with *Madeliene Marr* from *Senator Fetterman's* Office, to let her know that EPCAMR had supported the FY25 SENATE State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program funding; Madeleine forwarded our support to *Kurtis Miller*, who handles wildlife issues for the Senator; Reached out to Kurtis to thank him for sending along an individual letter in support of the FY25 SENATE State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program funding; EPCAMR sent a thank you note to the Staff of several legislative offices in the EPCAMR Region that supported the funding in the state budget
- Provided *Michael McGlenn*, teacher of Earth Science, Climate, Industry, and Policy courses at Wyoming Seminary with our educational link to provide to his students; He wasn't able to schedule a time for an AMD Tour with EPCAMR before the end of the school year with all of the conflicting events on campus
- EPCAMR signed on to PennFuture's Clean Water Education Day letter which is addressed to Governor Shapiro and the members of the General Assembly, outlines five requests: 1) fully fund the interstate basin commissions; 2) protect marginalized communities who bear the brunt of

downstream pollution by codifying the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) and the Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB); 3) create the Healthy Outdoors for All Program (HOAP); 4) strengthen standards for riparian buffers along our waterways; and 5) establish sustainable funding for the Clean Streams Fund

- Assisted the Wilkes-Barre Area School District with their annual Duck Derby drop in Solomon Creek that was live-streamed for the elementary school students around the District; EPCAMR Executive Director was interviewed to inform the students of the water quality of the Solomon Creek along Division Street and South Main Street in Wilkes-Barre
- EPCAMR signed on to a letter with PennEnvironment to support the bill to authorize community solar in PA ([HB 1842](#)) that passed the PA State House and is now awaiting a vote in the State Senate; Shared the letter and action alert to sign on through EPCAMR's social media outlets, particularly since we are advocating for solar development on formerly reclaimed mine lands
- Provided an interview with [Gordon Tomb](#)-Senior Fellow with the [Commonwealth Foundation](#) on the benefits of the Co-Gen Plants in PA
- *Stephanie Golden*, BIA, MIA- Adjunct Professor and Graduate Assistant at Marywood University followed up with the EPCAMR Executive Director to schedule a meet up at the University in Scranton to view her Art Exhibit Thesis in the School of Architecture on her personal heritage, site photos, mining town qualities, diagramming, material and environmental research, and finally architectural intervention of an abandoned structure in McAdoo and in Dickson City; Requested that she consider submitting an abstract to the PA AMR Conference on her thesis and provided her with the [link](#) to submit
- Reached out to *Todd Watne*-[Drone Legends](#) to obtain a quote on the Educational Drone Package and Curriculum that can be utilized with students in and out of the classroom; EPCAMR could potentially propose a grant to a local foundation in the future
- Coordinated the **Solomon Creek Streamside Cleanup** for the [United Way Day of Caring](#)-May 23<sup>rd</sup> Met in the parking lot near Don's Deli, along the Sans Souci Highway in Hanover Twp., Luzerne County; Hanover Township Road Department picked up the trash that was collected
- The Senate's WRDA bill was released flagging that there's a \$50M acid mine drainage pilot program for Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia; Sec. 311 in the bill [text](#); \$40M new program for the Army Corps to assist with acid mine remediation in PA, OH, and WV was eventually passed; This means that any community in PA with AMD will be eligible for engineering and financial assistance from the US Army Corps to do remediation
- *Elowyn Corby*-Mid Atlantic Regional Director, of [OurSolarPA.org](#) added EPCAMR to their website as a resource link due to our support of HB1842 community solar legislation; Participated in a Community Solar Work Group conference call to discuss our advocacy of solar development on abandoned mine lands
- EPCAMR signed on to a letter to the PA DEP to request additional Water Quality Testing from Roaring Brook through the Lackawanna River to the confluence with the Susquehanna River as it relates to the Cause/Effect Stream Survey, Dunmore Reservoir #7, Roaring Brook, Dunmore Borough, Lackawanna County, PA

- Working with [Teichos Energy](#) on developing a new partnership to look at solar on abandoned mine lands in the PA
- Attended a lunch meeting with former Congressman *Paul Kanjorski* and *Bob McDonald* to provide him with an update of EPCAMR activities throughout the region
- EPCAMR Executive Director was interviewed for a [story](#) in the Chesapeake Bay Journal by *Ad Crable* on a \$90M project for a solar array on abandoned mine lands in Central PA; The [PA DEP Assessment Report on Solar Development on Previously Mine Lands](#) completed by EPCAMR and LaBella Associates was released on May 30<sup>th</sup>; PA DEP also has a Solar Energy Resources Hub [page](#)

### **Keep PA Beautiful Open Your Eyes to Litter Educational Booklets**

- *Ada Soriano*, Wilkes University student and EPCAMR volunteer, assisted in the translation of our OYEL Watersheds Book to Spanish; Provided Laura Rinehimer-EPCAMR a copy of the booklet translation for her to incorporate into the booklet

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

### **26<sup>th</sup> PA AMR Conference Planning for 2024**

- Forwarded a link to [Natural Streams Foundation](#), who was interested in exhibiting and attending the Conference; Received a quote from Toftrees in State College as a backup to the Ramada Inn & Conference Center because we hadn't heard from them in awhile; Participated in the PA AMR Conference Planning Committee Meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup>; Received a link for the form to invite *Senator Fetterman* or one of his Staff to say a few words at the Conference related to abandoned mines and the STREAM Act; Received confirmation that PA DEP Secretary *Jessica Shirley* will be attending and speaking at the Conference; [NEPADOC](#) will be screened at the Conference and [David Heineman](#), Director, will be doing a presentation as well at the Conference on the development of the documentary; Reached out to Brianna Hutchinson-SRBC to see if she was interested in making a presentation on the trade-offs between invasion and isolation of brook trout with other species of trout such as rainbows and browns when considering AMD Treatment options

### **Choose Clean Water Coalition Conference**

- EPCAMR Executive Director attended the Conference and moderating several sessions of the Conference as a part of the Planning Committee from May 20 thru 22 at the [Turf Valley Resort](#) in Ellicott City, Maryland

### **10<sup>th</sup> Annual PA Renewable Energy Summit on June 3 & 4 in Camp Hill, PA**

- EPCAMR Executive Director was requested to be a part of a panel for the Summit to discuss solar development on abandoned mine lands; Coordinated with *Kurt Princic*, CEP Renewables on our presentations

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

- Obtained FBI Background clearance and fingerprinting at Identigo in Wilkes-Barre; EPCAMR finalized the outline and tour schedule of the program workshop day on May 28<sup>th</sup>; Conducted the workshop with **20** teachers from around Luzerne County

## **EPCAMR Program Administration**

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts in QuickBooks; Inquired to PA Invest as to why our dividends were being wire transferred to our checking account and why we were incurring a wire transfer fee when we didn't request the transfers; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for May 2024 with Highmark and United Concordia; Paid EC the rent; Made EPCAMR deposits to FNB
- Reviewed financials before the May 16<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting with *Cristy Sweeney*, EPCAMR Treasurer and Vice-President, following the production of reports by *Marianne Beane*, our Bookkeeper and Accountant that we met with in the EPCAMR Office; Participated in the EPCAMR Board Meeting; Added *Alan Belles*, Road and Watershed Specialist for the Columbia County Conservation District to our Board list at *Nancy Beyer's* request; Provided EPCAMR Board Members with a copy of the [Legislative Briefing Book for FY25](#) from the Choose Clean Water Coalition; EPCAMR Executive Director authored the section on AMD and abandoned mine land priorities; Approved the [ARIPPA AML Reclamation Mini-Grant Program](#) Award to Earth Conservancy for \$4.8K for O&M of the Askam Maelstrom Oxidizer Treatment System
- Requested a copy of the receipt from *Steve Cornia*-EPCAMR for the renewal of our DJI Mavic 2 drone registration
- Forwarded information from NFWF on how to develop [Indirect Cost Rates](#) for Federal grants to WPCAMR and SRI
- Participated in the **Section 319 Virtual Watershed Planning and Implementation Zoom Meeting**
- Completed OEWS Survey for PA Dept. L&I and BLS
- The Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce informed EPCAMR that our Executive Director was nominated to be recognized as a 2024 Change Maker in the Wyoming Valley; He was anonymously nominated for his dedication, passion, and tireless efforts that have truly made a significant impact on the Wyoming Valley, and they were honored to celebrate his contributions at a [Change Maker Ceremony](#) on Public Square, in Wilkes-Barre, PA; 40 people will be recognized
- Completed the May 2024 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike* to upload to the website