

Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation



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November 2023 Progress Report

Project Coordination

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

- Worked with Denise on completing the request for reimbursement of August and September's Invoices from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management for the hauling, excavation, and removal of the waste culm material at the project site; Provided the Progress Report narrative to *Riyad Barkawi*-PA DEP BAMR; Followed up with *Hank Zielinski* from Northampton to see where they stand on the transfer of the acreage of the athletic field area to Swoyersville Borough; Keystone is in a bit of a transition with engineer consultants that took some time to get back in alignment, working on a land lease agreement with the Borough, and they have been putting their efforts to getting the GFCC extended

Penn-State Collaborative National Science Foundation Project (proposed)

- Finished up the final proposal submitted by PSU's *Dr. Thandazile Moyo* and *Dr. Kaitlyn Spangler*-Assistant Professor-Community Development and Engagement, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education on the Dynamic Integrated Socio-environmental Systems ([DISES](#)) National Science Foundation proposal to look at mining landscapes, a few landscapes in transition (even to solar), and an abandoned mine land or post mining landscape that already has solar on it; EPCAMR was included in the proposal for **\$25,000** as a community partner, should the proposal be awarded and requested a full copy of the submitted proposal once completed from PSU

Just Transition Fund Rare Earth Elements Capacity Building Project

- *Dr. Rose* from King's College, Environmental Economics Class, provided EPCAMR with an update on the rare earth elements service-learning project with her students and provided EPCAMR with an assignment description that was developed by herself and the EPCAMR Executive Director; Students were assigned a particular rare earth element and will be writing brief literature review of them and an infographic to go along with the assignment; All of the educational research materials from the assignments will be provided to EPCAMR to help with outreach and education of these elements, some of which may be found in AMD; EPCAMR Executive Director attended the classroom to hear each of the students' presentations and provided feedback, comments, and questions for each of the students; EPCAMR provided *Dr. Rose* and her students with a copy of our 25th Anniversary Conference Program and a link to all the online presentations at www.treatminewater.com; The King's College Graphic Department will be placing the logo of the College on each of the student's infographics to give them full credit for their work; Reviewed the Rare Earth Elements and Critical Minerals in Coal and Coal Ash

presentation provided given by *Larry Kuennen*, Dominion Energy to EPCAMR by *Cristy Sweeney-ARIPPA* that was giving during the ARIPPA Conference in October; Forwarded a copy of it for review to *Sean Kinney* at Columbia University; Provided *Sean Kinney* and a few of his graduate students a tour of some of the AMD sites in the Wyoming Valley where they grabbed some water samples and we discussed ideas on where to set up pressure transducers for future real-time data collection; Supplies for building the stilling wells for the pressure transducers were ordered and due to arrive at EPCAMR after the Thanksgiving Holidays; *Sean* reached out to *John Neubaum*, with the PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources to determine if they had any representative samples from cores that intersect coal seam in the Llewellyn Formation in and around the Wilkes-Barre area or mine waste piles; One aspect of the project is to test whether we can use redox sensitive isotopes to better understand rock-water interaction and water chemistry and groundwater movement in the mine pools of the Anthracite Coal Region, particularly within regions impacted by AMD; *John* replied that he has some cuttings and hand samples data that he will compile and send along; Provided our partners in The Just Transition Fund with an update on our earlier submission of the Rare Earth Elements Sampling Grant for the Hollywood AMD Treatment System and Tyler Banks AML Reclamation Project

ARIPPA AMD/AML Mini-Grant Program

- Provided *Branden Diehl* with the Foundation for PA Watersheds with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that was given at the October ARIPPA Conference to announce the mini-grant recipients selected by EPCAMR and WPCAMR; Since 2010, ARIPPA has provided **\$90,000** between the Coalitions that was used to sub-grant to other community partners and to leverage other funds. EPCAMR has awarded **\$4800** to the Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance for their Quaker Run Wetlands Preservation and Acquisition Project in the Borough of Kulpmont where the Veteran's Memorial Sports Complex is located. This is a part of a larger stream restoration project that is occurring on Quaker Run

Technical Assistance

- Provided *Clayton Good*, Fishery Biologist, with the PA Fish & Boat Commission, some contact information for other colleagues more familiar with permitting issues at the Conservation District for Luzerne County as it relates to stormwater management, grading, reclamation and earthmoving activities of mine spoils for projects; He's been reviewing permits with some large commercial facilities in the Black Creek watershed near Conyngham in Luzerne County and the Black Creek has made a rebound in water quality and supports wild brook trout even though it's still listed on the Federal List of Impaired Waters for metals (303 [d] List); Referred him to *John Levitsky* and *Heather Graham*, our partners at the Luzerne Conservation District, *Terry Ostrowski* and *Jason Tarnowski* at Earth Conservancy, and *Dan Koury* at the Pottsville District Mining Office; Discussed with him various best management practices suggested for reclamation in mining impacted areas and ways to prevent further infiltration into the underground mine pools
- *Jake Smith*-[Native Fish Coalition, PA Chapter](#), requested information on any available water quantity from the Bowman's Creek in Wyoming/Luzerne Counties; *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District informed Jake that the SRBC [monitoring station on](#) Bowman Creek which only does Water quality not quantity; Historic water quality has been difficult to accomplish, however SRBC may have data that goes back to the early 2000s in response to the gas drilling that occurred in the watershed; There is a need for flow data monitoring stations and the PA Game Commission might possibly be a partner in securing funding to establish a few since a large portion of the headwaters of the watershed is on State Game Lands 57 or PA DCNR's

Rickett's Glen State Park; There is a great need for obtaining flow data for many reasons including loading of metals and capturing peak storm flows; Staff gauges would even help as well as transducers within the watershed; Ratings curves would also then have to be created in a similar-sized stream or headwater tributary to more accurately account for the flows when reading off a gauge; It's something to consider, but it's also something that hasn't been funded as often as it should

- Followed up with *Brett Connell*-Hydrologist, [Trutta Solutions](#), to inform him that the Congressional District Maps that showed the AML and AMD features we provided to him may need to be updated if the boundaries have changed; Suggested he follow up with *Dustin Morin*, the State Mine Land Reclamation Supervisor, if he wants to get an updated boundary map
- Provided *Tim Severson*, a Penn West University student seeking information and referrals on internships close to where he lives; Lancaster, York County, with the exception of Lebanon County are outside of the coal region and not in our service area; The work related to AMD and watershed restoration work in Lebanon County starts in the headwaters of the Swatara Creek watershed in the Northern Swatara Creek where a lot of work has been done; There is very little other work done on AMD in Lebanon County to my knowledge; Provided him with contact information for the [Lebanon County Conservation District](#); and the [York](#) and [Lancaster](#) County Conservation Districts; Provided him contact information for *Vince Carbone*-Senior Geologist for [HDR Inc.](#)

CWOs and AMR Engagement Project with POWR (proposed)

- Reviewed POWR's Request for proposal to engage and survey community watershed organizations across PA working on abandoned mine reclamation and AMD projects and discussed partnering with Stream Restoration Inc. and WPCAMR on a joint proposal that is due on December 15th; Provided draft comments and a proposal to WPCAMR and SRI for consideration to apply for an estimated **\$15000** between the three organizations

Education & Outreach

- Participated in 4 weekly PA AML Campaign calls
- Provided *Sara Ramotnik*, Choose Clean Water Coalition with EPCAMR comments, photos, and updates for the 2024 Legislative Briefing booklet on some considerations that should be given to abandoned mine land issues and AMD issues across the Commonwealth being addressed by EPCAMR's coalition partners, including the Conservation Districts, watershed groups, and other regional non-profit organizations
- Followed up with *Angie Gemma*, Bullpen Angle, who suggested that EPCAMR follow up with [Bravo Group](#), to see if they work with non-profit groups on marketing or web development pro-bono
- Reviewed an [article](#) on PA's new definition of Environmental Justice Areas and what it means for coalfield communities; EPCAMR had provided comments to the PA DEP Office of Environmental Justice during the Open Public Comment period

The Luzerne Foundation Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) 3D Printer on Mines, Macros, and Mining Artifacts Project (proposed)

- Prepared and submitted a **\$5000** grant application to the Youth Advisory Committee of The Luzerne Foundation to purchase a 3D Printer, supplies, filament, nozzles, design templates, and to allow Staff to spend time working with the Wilkes-Barre Area School District's and Wyoming Seminary's Maslow STEM Programs to create and discuss how to come up with a design to model 3D underground mines using mine maps, create sample mining artifacts and tools, and macroinvertebrates that are found in our streams and waterways; Stroud Water Research Center already has free design templates for [macroinvertebrates](#); Other design templates are available for mining tools online; Prepared a 2 slide PowerPoint presentation that will be given at a proposal pitch on December 3rd to the YAC after receiving word from The Luzerne Foundation that our proposal was accepted for full consideration and EPCAMR completed a Commitment Form to show up and make the presentation

American Water Charitable Trust Education AMD & Art Calendar Project with the Wilkes-Barre Area School District Creative Arts & Performance Academy

- EPCAMR Executive Director presented before an excited CAPAA Class at Wilkes-Barre Area to drop off completed printed copies of the 2024 AMD & Art Calendar to the **21** students that created artwork in hexagon shapes earlier this year; Printing was funded by the American Water Charitable Trust Foundation; Copies of the calendar were handed out to all students and new students for this year's class who are willing to participate in a similar project for 2024; The Interdependence Hexagon Project was also a partner in the effort; Copies will be presented to the School Board and one was provided to the Principal and the WBA Administrative Office
- EPCAMR was included in The Luzerne Foundation's WishList Book they created for area non-profits that will be in digital distribution and provided to donors
- EPCAMR held an evening EPCAMR Science & Education Committee Zoom Meeting to add details to our proposed strategic plan in the area of outreach and education
- EPCAMR Executive Director participated in a Zoom call with Wyoming Seminary's *Mike Silverman*, a sponsoring faculty member, who runs the Business Club that has students interested in doing some marketing via social media for EPCAMR; His students are interested specifically in providing EPCAMR help with video production, photos, and graphics to help connect our education and outreach awareness of the problems associated with abandoned mine lands and our message to a broader audience; He knows they can creatively work with materials that EPCAMR has already amassed to make some great content aimed at new audiences, on different social media platforms
- Participated in the Choose Clean Water Coalition's Equity Workgroup Zoom call with various Environmental Justice (EJ) state representatives in the Chesapeake Bay; They are looking to hear from EJ groups like EPCAMR, who is also a member of the CCWC to learn more about how non-profits and members of CCWC can get involved in statewide EJ work; EPCAMR Executive Director provided EPCAMR's perspective on working in coalfield communities and mining impacted watersheds across Northeastern and Northcentral PA with Conservation Districts and our community partners and is also as a state appointed member of the PA DEP's Environmental Justice Advisory Board

- Reached out to *Joe Sapienza*, Centone Picture Productions, to see if he was going to be able to work with EPCAMR on a short video production to showcase our mine mapping efforts and to get some footage of an example of a stream restoration effort that will be taking place in the Nanticoke Creek watershed by the Earth Conservancy with EPCAMR's assistance; EPCAMR has some grant funds available from The Luzerne Foundation to put together an educational video to highlight how the mine mapping work is completed

ISI Healing the Scars of NEPA Education Project

- Provided *Marianne Beane*, [Ignite Business Services, Inc.](#) with several examples of "calls to action" that could be placed on the new [webpage](#) on the EPCAMR site for environmental education resources and video links provided by the EPCAMR Science & Education Committee; Followed up with *Claudia Meglin*- [ISI, Inc.](#) to give her an update on the release of the new environmental education webpage
- Followed up with *Jerome Whittington*, Clinical Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Energy and Environment at New York University to schedule a call or visit in December '23 or January '24
- Attended the NEPADOC screening at the [PA Anthracite Heritage Museum](#) in Lackawanna County with Director, *David Heineman* and discussed EPCAMR's role in advocating for the cleanup of abandoned mines and abandoned mine lands in Northeastern and Northcentral PA
- Attended the [NEPADOC](#) screening in Lewisburg at the Campus Theatre in Northumberland County with Director, *David Heineman* and discussed EPCAMR's role in advocating for the cleanup of abandoned mines and abandoned mine lands in Northeastern and Northcentral PA

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

25th Anniversary PA AMR Conference

- Provided the Altoona Grand Hotel with an evaluation letter from the PA AMR Conference Committee after holding a follow-up post conference evaluation meeting to highlight strengths and some tweaks that could have been made to make the conference flow better; Altoona Grand Hotel addressed our concerns satisfactorily and appreciated the feedback and constructive comments; Received the final bill for the Conference from *Shaina* at the Altoona Grand Hotel and reviewed it for any discrepancies and found some errors in it; Revisions were made to the final bill and a request from WPCAMR to pay it was made to *Andy McAllister*, Regional Coordinator; EPCAMR inquired about a separate bill that needs to be provided for the Conservation District staff and watershed group volunteers who received scholarships to cover the cost of their lodging for the Conference; Provided *Janie French*-[Headwaters Charitable Trust](#), one of this year's Mayfly Award Winners with a copy of the biographical sketch that was put together by EPCAMR and was announced at the Conference so that she had a copy for herself; Worked with *Anne Daymut*-WPCAMR to approve the requested Professional Development Hours for the Conference and to create the final Certificate, complete with signatures to be sent to those who requested the PHDs; *Anne* had called the Professional Licensing Board to determine how the PDH credits are calculated so we used the following criteria and [document](#): PDH calculated on 30 minute increments, Keynotes included, meals and breaks not included, speakers get double for speaking time, and tour included, but only instruction time

ARIPPA Co-Gen Gilberton Power Company Tour with Wilkes University Environmental Engineering Class

- EPCAMR facilitated and coordinated getting permission for **8** Wilkes University students and *Dr. Murthy* to receive a tour of the Co-Gen Plant near Morea scheduled for December 1st; Worked with *Jake Smith*-Wilkes U. student, *Cristy Sweeney* from ARIPPA, and *Alex Brush* from Gilberton Power Company to set up the tour of the plant and to learn about the reclamation efforts on the surrounding mine lands in Schuylkill County

Penn-State University Alumni Career Panel Presentation for Environmental Resource Management Program on EPCAMR (planned)

- EPCAMR Executive Director has been requested to speak to **75** students and faculty on December 1st in State College in the Ferguson Building, with a few other alumni on the work of EPCAMR across PA and to discuss ways students can become more involved in the efforts of community groups, Conservation Districts, and regional or local non-profit organizations working on AMD and abandoned mine land issues; EPCAMR has provided tours over the years for the ERM Program when they bring their Blue Bus out for watershed tours of the Anthracite Region

Misericordia University Sustainability Symposium (planned)

- *Linda Auker*-Program Director of Environmental Studies at Misericordia University requested that EPCAMR join the University as an exhibitor and at their Sustainability Symposium on December 4th, 2023 from 9am-5pm, which is open to the Misericordia community and public; Students from their Issues in Sustainability course will be designing posters and handouts on the UN Sustainability Goals and students from our Research Methods in [Environmental Studies](#) will be presenting on their research from 12-2pm; EPCAMR assisted one of the students in the Environmental Studies Science Track, *Carli Tabone*, with resources and links for her presentation on AMD and Environmental Justice in coalfield communities where she will be using the Shamokin Creek watershed as an example for her work; EPCAMR will have an exhibit and talk with students and members of the community at large on our work with our partners across the Commonwealth; A large number of area non-profits organizations will be exhibiting and interacting with the students, faculty, and the community at large

Chesapeake Semester AMD/AML Watershed Tour Field Study with the Gunton School, MD

- Provided a watershed tour for Maryland high school students who make the trip up into the Anthracite Region each year to be hosted by EPCAMR for the day to take them around to AMD and abandoned mine land impacted areas in the Southern Wyoming Valley as a part of their field study

PA DCNR Community Connections to Our Watershed Tour-Lackawanna Valley

- EPCAMR Executive Director, along with *Tony DeSantis*, [PA DCNR](#) Environmental Education Specialist for the Lackawanna State Park and other Staff coordinated and hosted the Lackawanna Valley Watershed AMD Tour with *Bernie McGurl* and *Tara Jones*, Lackawanna River Conservation Association; The Old Forge AMD Borehole was visited and sampled, the Jermyn Outfall, and the Powderly Creek Dam, on Aylesworth Creek (where a AMD treatment system known as an oxic limestone drain) is located to neutralize the acidity in the headwaters before entering the Aylesworth Dam; WVIA was there to video the oral histories of the Lackawanna Valley that were discussed by the Executive Directors of both the LRCA and EPCAMR; *Tony* commented that EPCAMR and LRCA know the Lackawanna Valley inside and out, literally, and that he was really glad that the students were able to meet both community leaders

AML & IRA Storytelling Tour of AMD, Reclamation, and Stream Restoration in the Southern Wyoming Valley

- Participated in a Google Meet call with *Beth Meiklejohn*-Principal, [TwoRoads Strategy](#) and several other videographers and an animation content creator from [Bonfire Media Coop](#), out of Philadelphia that are planning to come up to the Anthracite Region on December 13th to film a short video on examples of infrastructure projects to be funded under the Infrastructure bill on abandoned mine lands for economic development, stream restoration, and AMD cleanup in watersheds; EPCAMR is going to coordinate a half-day tour with the Earth Conservancy in the Wyoming Valley and in the Nanticoke Creek watershed to provide them with sites for the footage they will need and to discuss the [IRA funding](#) that Earth Conservancy received to work in the Nanticoke Creek watershed recently as well as explain to them the impacts from legacy Anthracite mining and the steps that groups like ours and our partners have been taking to restore the land and water for the last few decades; Mapped out a tentative tour route and sent it to *Beth* and her team from Bonfire Media; Connected *Beth* with *Terry Ostrowski* from Earth Conservancy to follow up with him about a possible interview and involvement with the tour

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts with Denise in QuickBooks; Provided *Denise* with a copy of the monthly bank statement for Quickbooks; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for the November 2023 renewal with Highmark; Paid EC the rent; Made EPCAMR deposits to FNB
- EPCAMR received and paid our invoices automatically for payroll services from OneSource for the month of November 2023
- Provided Kohanski & Co., CPA with requested documentation for the 2022 Audit and 990 Organizer
- Provided Columbia University with a copy of EPCAMR's Certificate of Liability Insurance
- Reviewed the minutes of the previous Board Meeting of EPCAMR completed by Mike and the tentative agenda revised for the December 14th Meeting next month; The November 16th meeting had to be postponed due to prior commitments of many of the Board Members and an anticipated lack of quorum
- Continued to finalize documents and budget information sheets for the new 319 Program Grant Award in the amount of **\$260,000** over 2 years
- Completed the November 2023 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike* to upload to the website