



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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October 2021 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- July and August Invoices from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management, LLC were received following a submission of a older invoice that was mistakenly sent to EPCAMR and submitted for reimbursement; Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management, LLC followed up with *Gene Breznay*, Swoyersville Borough Manager to update him on the status of the project; *Hank Zielinski*, provided EPCAMR with a letter for an extension to submit to PA DEP BAMR; EPCAMR worked on an extension request letter on EPCAMR letterhead to send to PA DEP BAMR for consideration and approval; *TJ Matinas*-PA DEP BAMR brought it to our attention that the AMLER Project doesn't expire until 2023 since the PA DEP uses federal funding first before the State funds that have been allocated towards the project; Hank did send EPCAMR correspondence that was submitted to Swoyersville Borough to update them on the status of the project and to continue our open lines of communication and transparency with the project; However, EPCAMR still needed a separate extension letter for the land transfer from Pagnotti Enterprises to Swoyersville Borough, and the excavation, and hauling of the material from the site to the Co-Gen plants through October 31, 2022; EPCAMR Executive Director prepared and submitted the extension letter to *Gerard Schmidt*, Project Advisor for PA DEP BAMR, that was approved by the PA DEP; Provided a copy of the approved extension to *Hank Zielinski*; Received the September Invoice from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management, LLC and will begin to process it in early November

Healing the Scars: Reclaiming Northeastern PA! with ISI

- Completed an application in partnership with the Stanley Cooper Chapter TU for a **\$2500** Forever WILD grant that would support the editing and completion of a short educational video/film on AMD and watershed restoration that utilizes EPCAMR's two trout puppets (Rainbow and Brook); Submitted the final version and budget to the Chapter to submit to PA TU for consideration following approval of the submission by the Chapter at their Board Meeting; Submitted a **\$5000** Mountain Dew Outdoors Program Grant to support the educational video production work that EPCAMR is trying to develop to reach out to our area youth and students in our communities to show them how we are cleaning up our mining impacted watersheds; Funds would support the video editing and production same as the Forever WILD Trout Unlimited grant and the remaining funds would go towards EPCAMR to pick up some software

editing packages and small equipment that we can use while in the field doing more impromptu filming or blogging while we are in the field throughout the year; Copied *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator, on the grant submission; Participated in a conference zoom call with *Claudia Meglin* and *Pam Campbell*- ISI, Inc. to update up them on the project status and our anticipation of *Joe Sapienza's* editing work and first cut of the video shoot and film in mid-November

Mine Subsidence Mine Mapping Project

- Coordinated with the EPCAMR Staff on monthly work progress on scanning, digitizing, georeferencing, cataloguing, and mosaicking of mine maps for September; Followed up with several candidates that EPCAMR will be interviewing for the part-time GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist position to let them know that interviews are likely to follow in mid to late November or early December 2021

Mill Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Assessment Project

- Conducted an electroshocking survey with Trout Unlimited Staff, EPCAMR Staff, and *John Levitsky*, the Watershed Specialist for the Luzerne Conservation District at multiple locations throughout the Mill Creek and Gardner Creek watershed

Ripple Effect Software Donation Program through Aquatic Informatics

- A number of the EPCAMR Staff participated in the kick-off meeting with Aquatic Informatics to be introduced to the Ripple Effect software program to get a better understanding of how we can begin to gather all of our time-series water quality and flow data on AMD monitoring and put them into the robust program; Staff answered questions directed by Aquatic Informatics Staff to better help develop the plan for how we could begin to centralize our water quality, quantity, and flow data for AMD around our region; Sent around to all Staff copies of the minutes from the meeting for their review for those who were not able to attend; Attended another meeting and demonstration training of the Aquarium software program during the month with Aquatic Informatics and EPCAMR Staff; EPCAMR Program Manager and Executive Director participated in two Business Analysis meetings with Aquatic Informatics Staff

GIS Solar Feasibility Site Selection Criteria for Reclaimed Abandoned Mine Lands with AC Power Project

- Reached out to *John Cowley*, D & L Realty to see if they had any interested in talking with AC Power on potential development of small scale community solar projects on parcels identified in Lackawanna County; Provided *Briana McDuff*-AC Power with additional contact information for the *DeNaples* Family in Lackawanna County for them to follow up with; Informed Briana that a fellow Board Member of ours, *Christina Haldeman*, from Schuylkill County informed us that the CBRE site that we were looking into for solar development in Schuylkill County along I-81 where we were trying to reach *Mike Hess*, had been sold and heading to development as a planned industrial park in 2022; Another Board Member of EPCAMR's *Leigh Ann Kemmerer* sent EPCAMR a link to a great [article](#) on what Virginia is doing on abandoned mine lands with solar development in the Clinch Valley

NFWF Southern Wyoming Valley Assessment

- EPCAMR Program Manager stumbled upon a really interesting map of "*Glen Alden & State Federal Mine Drainage Projects Completed - In Process - Proposed North Branch Susquehanna River*" from January 1940; There were very different names of tributaries

to the streams and headwater areas at that time that are not named today because many of them were strip mined; Staff conducted American Black Duck and waterfowl assessments of several wetlands, open water bodies, and water-filled stripping pits in the Newport Township project area and water quality monitoring

Technical Assistance

- *Butch Frati*, Wilkes-Barre City Planning Director requested some technical assistance and direction to assist a homeowner near Trailwood Lake, near the Wilkes-Barre Municipal Golf Course that seems to be having an algal bloom issue at Behren Pond; Reviewed photos over the years provided by *Bob Klimek* and it seems to be having algal bloom issues that could possibly be due to excess plant nutrients and low oxygen levels in Behren Pond or just the natural succession of the pond filling in and becoming a wetland over time; Sediments could be finding their way in to the pond from culverts or ditches along the roads that surround it; In smaller ponds, it's often a good idea to place a floating aerator in it to increase the oxygen levels of the water; Suggested a solar powered floating aerator; If the pond is not too deep, often times they won't turnover seasonally and cycle the nutrients, dead plant matter, and leaf litter efficiently like on larger lake or ponds; Suggested that he reach out to those who are familiar with lake and pond management from the organization called the PA Association of Lake Management Society ([PALMS](#)), a partner of EPCAMR's for many years; If it's a private pond with multiple landowners, they may have to come together for a solution to address the eutrophication that seems to be occurring; PALMS also have a [grant program](#), so maybe he or a group of the landowners might qualify for a submission
- Provided *John Zakatansky*-Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper, *Ed Wytovich*-Catawissa Creek Restoration Association (CCRA), and other stakeholders from the Catawissa Creek watershed with future brainstorming ideas for events and programs, should the Catawissa Creek be selected as the 2022 River of the Year, following the submission of the [nomination](#) in November; Participated in a separate Zoom meeting with partners to coordinate pulling the application together
- EPCAMR suggested to Scott Brady, President of the Stanley Cooper Chapter of TU (SCTU) that they could potentially get involved in a small restoration project that was recommended on the little tributary that flows past the greenhouses at Hillside Farms if *Chet Mozloom*- Executive Director of The Lands at Hillside Farms and *John Levitsky* think it's a viable small project; It involves opening up the end of the channel until it reaches the Huntsville Creek below the one bridge at the edge of the greenhouses towards the back; It's sediment laden because the bridge opening is too small and it keeps building up; It could be a great spawning area or retreat for the brookies and browns we did see there during our shocking survey last year; This could be a small project that SCTU could support; This would be one of the recommendations that is in the CHP Plan for Huntsville Creek; *Chet* would need to be approached first for consideration to see what he thinks of the suggestion

- Provided *Kristin English*-PA American Water with resources on our recent completion of the Huntsville Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan since EPCAMR was identified as a key stakeholder in protecting drinking water supplies for the communities we serve; EPCAMR is familiar with the local sources of public water supplies due to our years of partnership with PA American Water and their efforts to protect them; Provided the information for their Source Water Protection Plans for the PAW Huntsville Region/Ceasetown/Watres/Nesbitt Systems prior to annual update submittal to PA DEP
- EPCAMR Program Manager and Executive Director attended a Sullivan County Conservation District County Action Plan (CAP) Meeting to review the final draft plan and to include additional recommendations on AMD work of many partners in the County on the Loyalsock Creek watershed; Introduced to *Quinn Hartung*, new Watershed Specialist for the District; Offered to sign Quinn up for the AOP Training through NAACC and provided him with a link to TU's [Chop and Drop Habitat Improvement method](#)
- Provided *Eric Bella*, Lehigh Engineering with 7 digital scanned maps he requested from EPCAMR
- Provided the [link](#) to the ARIPPA Mini-Grant for the Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA) to consider at their monthly community organization meeting
- Coordinated with *Liz Hughes*-Earth Conservancy and *Brian Oram*-BF Environmental to assist him with his Environmental Monitoring Course as a part of the Environmental Workforce Training Program; EPCAMR Staff will teach the cohort members how to use a flow meter, to sample for macroinvertebrates, use our field sampling chemistry kits and YSI Multi-parameter probe at the Solomon Creek site in Ashley Borough at the Park at the end of Wyoming Street
- *Angela Fiorentino's* and *Brandon Whitman's* senior project at Wilkes University is progressing well; They are finalizing the details on how they will use their rhodamine tracer to see how long it will take for water to flow through the mine pools underneath Nanticoke Creek; EPCAMR is helping with the next step, which is to look at the digital mine maps and make the 3D mine map model based on their depths; EPCAMR provided them with where to look for the maps that we've scanned in to the PHUMMIS inventory already for Nanticoke Creek; There are an insanelly large amount of mine maps for the area that cover Nanticoke Creek that may have to be downloaded; Here is the link to the Wyoming Valley 3D Mine Pool map model that is very regional but not entirely specific to each watershed. This model was done before we had completed scanning most of the Northern Field Maps. Wait for the advertisement to be over and you will be able to see our [video](#) of the Wyoming Valley in 3D; The full report is the property of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. The estimated volume of AMD water conservatively being held underground in the Wyoming Valley alone is

based on our first iteration of the model we did years ago: Wyoming Valley Mine Pools Volume Estimate: Total ~274,370,518,000 gallons; Directed the students to ask SRBC for the full report; <http://epcamr.org/home/current-initiatives/technical-assistance/watershed-assessment/mine-pool-mapping-initiative/#NorthSouth>

- Reviewed some information provided by the Sierra Club Lehigh Valley Chapter on the Buck Mountain AMD Tunnel in the Upper Lehigh River watershed; The tunnel outflow is the source of aluminum that renders the Buck Mountain Creek toxic to aquatic life along the full 5-mile reach to the confluence with the Lehigh River at Rockport in Lehigh Gorge Park; Provided some technical assistance to the Chapter based on EPCAMR's available knowledge of the former AMD treatment system that is currently off-line; Participated in a Zoom call with members of the Sierra Club Lehigh Valley Chapter to discuss the AMD impacts in the Buck Mountain Creek tributary

Luzerne/Lackawanna/Susquehanna County Action Plan (CAP) with [LDG](#)

- Provided *Jen Demchak* with a copy of a link to a [video](#) and research that was produced by a student from Westminster College on Phosphorus Adsorption by AMD

Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association/Sullivan County Conservation District Monitoring of AMD Treatment Systems

- Worked with Mike to review the final draft and completion of the yearlong monitoring report for 2020-2021 of 3 AMD Treatment Systems and several upstream and downstream locations within the Loyalsock Creek watershed; Submitted the report with our recommendations on how to proceed further into the next year to the Sullivan County Conservation District, Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association, White Ash Land Association, and the Susquehanna County Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Community Volunteer Coordination

- Discussed with *Janet Sweeney*, PEC NE Regional Office about trying to coordinate a Fall 2021 Cleanup in the Wyoming Valley with the WWSA
- EPCAMR partnered with *Jasmyne Morgans*, Glen Lyon, to coordinate a community cleanup of the Glen Lyon Area in the Newport Creek Watershed in the Southern Wyoming Valley, sponsored by Jazz Body Care that doubled as a Multiple Sclerosis Fundraiser
- Some volunteers have reached out to EPCAMR to see if we were going to coordinate a smaller cleanup in Centralia this Fall; EPCAMR has yet to decide due to having to run our State-wide Conference later in the Fall that conflicted with the October timeframe for the usual cleanup and due to the earlier Spring Apple Tree planting; We're undecided about the cleanup at the moment and will take a drive down in November to see if a cleanup is warranted

Education & Outreach

- Participated in weekly PA AML Campaign conference calls with partners to hear updates and give updates on legislation and the Infrastructure bill's recent passage in the Senate; Worked on selecting and providing input to a new logo for the PA AML Campaign that is in development with WPCAMR; Appalachian Voices and other partners are sending out notes calling for the Reauthorization of AML on social media through the [action alert](#) that was created; EPCAMR submitted our letter to Congressman *Matt Cartwright*; Provided members of the PA AML Campaign with the link to [Reimagine Jobs](#) and the taped recorded presentation on Land Reclamation that was in partnership with the PA League of Conservation Voters; The EPCAMR Executive Director was invited to be a member of the State-wide Panel to discuss abandoned mine land reclamation, AMD, and economic development efforts supported and underway in Northeastern PA; Provided information on the White House's [Justice 40 Executive Order](#) to members of the PA AML Campaign
- EPCAMR signed on to a letter to the PA Legislature to voice our support for PA to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and to voice opposition for legislative efforts to keep the Commonwealth from joining this initiative, such as HCRRR 1, Senate Bill 119, and House Bill 637
- Provided *Trey Pollard*, [Pollard Communications, LLC](#) with a series of quotes from EPCAMR for an article that is anticipated to be released should the Infrastructure bill pass or not
- Provided *Joey James*, Downstream Strategies, with contact information for *Eric Cavazza*, OSMRE
- Amplified a new [AMD video](#) and blog featuring *Marissa Lautzenheiser* from [Rural Action](#), talking through the basics of the issue and some of the work her organization is doing in Ohio to tackle these challenges
- Amplified a second [interview](#) and video with former OSMRE director *Joe Pizarchik* about how AMD is addressed -- or not addressed -- in the pending infrastructure bill and what next steps he sees as necessary for state and federal policy makers; Provided *Bernie McGurl*-LRCA with a link to the information for his review
- Sent *Joe Sapienza* a brief bio of the EPCAMR Executive Director to provide to the Dushore Public Library for the public screening in Sullivan County of [Centralia PA: America's Lost Town](#), on November 6th, where Joe and the Executive Director will answer questions and discuss the documentary following the viewing of the film
- Conducted a zoom interview with *Nichole McNelis* and *Evelyn Moyer*, seniors from Wilkes University on EPCAMR's work and the Executive Director's professional career and background as well as how students can become more engaged in local community

projects, with non-profits, and as volunteers or to seek internships in the environmental field

- Interviewed by *Samantha Nobles-Block* from [Grist](#) for a story on Reclamation, Reauthorization, and Economic Redevelopment of PA's abandoned mine lands
- Participated in a Zoom conference call with members of the Content Committee that is continuing to review and update the K-5 PA Standards Curriculum for Education related to the environment and other areas of study
- EPCAMR Executive Director was invited to be the Guest Speaker for the Wilkes-Barre Rotary Club and provided an overview of EPCAMR's work and local involvement in Wilkes-Barre City watersheds and projects with the current Administration
- Reviewed minutes from the Reimagine Appalachia monthly meeting provided by *Molly Updegrave*-Director of Outreach and forwarded them to *Frank Sindaco*, EPCAMR Watershed Outreach GIS Specialist who has been following the Marshall Plan; Provided *Frank* some insight into how to sort out the networks and mechanisms involved with Northeastern PA and PA abandoned mine land reclamation development projects; He'll be doing a network analysis of all of the various players (economic development, elected officials, nonprofits, businesses, etc.) and working through how resources flow, who does what, how, and where; Asked *Frank* to look into clipping his Community Data for the EPCAMR Region by watershed boundaries in addition to the municipal boundaries and typical Census tract data boundaries
- Participated in a follow up interview with *Kesley Forren*-Atlantic Council, Associate Director for Climate Programs, Global Energy Center and the University of Pittsburgh on the state of reclamation in PA; Atlantic Council is in the process of writing a report on the lessons learned and policy pathways forward based on the discussion with many leaders across PA working on abandoned mine reclamation
- Followed up with *Renee Reber*, Choose Clean Water Coalition and signed EPCAMR on to the Choose Clean Water Coalition letter Governor Wolf and the PA General Assembly to support American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) funds for clean water, Growing Greener III, and the Clean Streams Fund; The Clean Streams Fund puts money into the state's AMD grant program
- EPCAMR watched and shared on our social media a film entitled, [A New Documentary Chronicles the Rebirth of a Western PA River](#)
- Reviewed Governor Wolf's Executive Order; [Gov. Wolf, Lawmakers Announce Actions to Prioritize Environmental Justice \(pa.gov\)](#)

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

- EPCAMR suggested to *Chari Towne*, Schuylkill Riverkeeper, that the Schuylkill Watershed Congress Planning Committee make editing cuts to the video from the Intergenerational Panel to shorten it's length; To read over the panel as a script may not come out very conversational and wouldn't allow us to have the flow and feelings that we had in the moment the questions were asked following the presentation; People on the panel were very passionate in their responses and playing off one another's responses on occasion adding to the questions that were asked; As an alternative, EPCAMR suggested that they could create "pull quotes" from some of the responses and put them in slides with the speaker's names and include them somehow as a PowerPoint that could be in addition to the panel with the content that may be cut
- Provided *Wayne Lehman*, Schuylkill Conservation District with a copy of the nearly completed video of the Oneida # 3 AMD Treatment System footage and other locations along the Catawissa Creek that was a part of the AMD Tour filmed by *Laura Rinehimer*, EPCAMR; The tour that took place to highlight the operation and maintenance of the system for the Virtual AMD Treatment Systems Tour component of the 2021 PA AMR Conference, as well as to be used at a later date for a submission of the 2021 River of the Year nomination by the Middle Susquehanna Riverkeepers
- Directed *Denise* to invoice Pagnotti Enterprises (Jeddo Coal Company) for **\$750** since they agreed to become a Bronze level sponsor of the 2021 PA AMR Conference; Paid Zoom for an additional license to be utilized during the conference presentations; Reviewed PA AMR Conference Committee tasks remaining as a part of the weekly conference call as the state-wide conference inched closer to the event planning; Followed up with speakers with last minute details; Reviewed and downloaded Moderator Training Packet and Coffee Break/Exhibit Hall morning Introductions that the Executive Director is tasked with running as a part of the overall conference; Discussed prizes for those who attend and participate in the gamification and photo uploads portion of the [conference](#) on the WHOVA App; Coordinated the conference where **150** attendees, **6** sponsors, and **10** Exhibitors joined the virtual event and participated in the entire [Datashed](#) Training Workshop
- Reviewed highlights of the Marshall Plan Conference in Pittsburgh, PA in a [Post Gazette article](#) and forwarded it to *Frank Sindaco*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist as a resource for his internship with the Keystone Resources Council
- *Diane Madl*, PA DCNR Nescopeck State Park requested EPCAMR's assistance in providing a watershed tour on AMD to students from multiple high schools in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties as a part of their annual Community Connections Watershed Program in early November; EPCAMR confirmed that we would be able to schedule the tours and provide an educational outdoor learning experience for the students and perform AMD water quality monitoring at the sites
- EPCAMR Program Manager and Executive Director attended the opening reception for the Science Explorations Exhibit, which celebrated 25 years of science research at Wyoming Seminary, featuring the 25th Anniversary of the Science Research Group

sponsored by EPCAMR Board Member, *Dr. Andrea Nerozzi*, as well as their STEM Program and academic concentrations; EPCAMR has been a part of the program for many years; Provided *Dr. Nerozzi* with resources to provide to some of her students looking to do some community service research

- EPCAMR assisted with convening an AMD and Reclamation Tour with ARIPPA and area legislators from Luzerne and Lackawanna County to highlight projects in the region and the need for additional support of AMD funding and economic development projects that involve clean energy alternatives for abandoned mine lands; EPCAMR added additional insight to the locations that were visited in the various watersheds from the Southern Wyoming Valley's Newport Creek, to Nanticoke Creek, Abraham's Creek, and Mill Creek on the Lackawanna County border with Luzerne county bear the culm banks near Avoca and the Flood Protection Project
- EPCAMR was requested to obtain a 20 to 30 second aerial drone footage clip of the area around the Harry E. Colliery Swoyersville AMLER Project location for inclusion in to a feature story that *James Bruggers* is preparing for Inside Climate News in early November; Provided PA DEP BAMR with estimates of flow and chemistry for the Old Forge AMD and Duryea Breach discharges to the Lackawanna River
- Provided an AMD Tour throughout the Southern Wyoming Valley to *Dr. Cosima Weiss's* Environmental Science Class from Misericordia University

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for September 2021 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Provided *Denise* with the September and October 2021 Statement for reconciliations; Made deposits to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables
- Completed the October 2021 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded it to Mike; Worked on a draft EPCAMR Highlights article for *Trish Attardo*, PA DEP to submit to the US EPA for the 2021 Annual Report at her request, since the US EPA Region III wanted to highlight EPCAMR's successful efforts over the past year, particularly in our mine mapping efforts
- Followed up with responses to questions that were asked of EPCAMR on our recent **\$25,000** submission to the Just Transition Fund's Cycle 2 Organizational Capacity Planning grant; Solar GIS Tool expansion, building new partnerships through outreach, education, and awareness, and support of our internship program and providing continued support EC's workforce development training program
- Compiled office expenses and payroll to submit to the First National Bank for the 2nd Draw of the PPP Loan Forgiveness application to be prepared for submission for consideration of forgiveness; EPCAMR received confirmation that the Small Business

Loan was forgiven following the submission and approval by the Small Business Administration and the bank was notified

- Updated our Staples Sales Tax Exemption Vendor form and submitted it to the Staples Tax Exemption Department for approval
- Checked in with Kohanski and Company, CPA on EPCAMR's completion of the FY2020 990s to be submitted to the IRS and returned back to EPCAMR before the Fall November 2021 Board Meeting
- Sent a copy of the draft notes from the Communications SubCommittee of the Strategic Plan seeking further input before finalizing the document and including it in the Update