



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

Robert E. Hughes, *Executive Director*

101 South Main Street

Ashley, PA 18706

Phone: (570) 371-3523

E-mail: rhughes@epcamr.org

Website: www.epcamr.org

September 2019 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Upper Toby Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Performed culvert assessments and trained several individual volunteers from DHL Logistics, Hanover Township on how EPCAMR conducts the assessments; Signed Kenny Mann and Donald Andress to become Aquatic Organism Protocol (AOP) certified through the NAACC; Conal Herron, former EPCAMR Intern also completed his online certification in AOP

Huntsville Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan Project

- Worked with Lauren Perry, EPCAMR Summer Watershed Intern to create a draft powerpoint of the Huntsville Creek CHP Outline
- Coordinated and conducted an electroshocking survey with TU, DAMA, the Luzerne Conservation District and The Lands at Hillside in the Huntsville Creek and Brown Creek tributaries to document the presence or absence of either brook or brown trout, among other warm water species expected to be present below the Huntsville Reservoir; TU will provide EPCAMR with their results following the survey

Harry E. Breaker Swoyersville Bank Reclamation PA AML Pilot Project

- Completed EPCAMR's Invoice 7 for July 2019 Reimbursement and Keystone Reclamation's Invoice 8 and submitted the documents to *Gerard Schmidt*, Project Officer; Received the Keystone Reclamation Payroll Certificates for the operators working on the project and filed them; Received and reviewed the PA DEP Pottsville DMO Inspection Report and filed it with the project; Tried reaching out to KC Lopez, a news reporter interested in coming to the area to provide us with some coverage on the project; She was called away to cover another story and suggested that we reschedule in the Fall; Informed Carol from Keystone Reclamation of the May and June Invoices that were paid and mailed

Growboxx Food by Youth, Reclaiming Our Backyards in the Coalfields Project

- Participated in a conference call with Claudia and Pam to provide them an update on the project; Claudia provided EPCAMR with a link to the [UN Sustainability Development Goals](#) and forwarded us Ana Terranova's Groasis Great Green Way Project Report from Columbia; Met with Mike Corcoran-Wilkes-Barre Area School District to schedule presentations into 5 of the 4th grade classes within each of the elementary schools around the District for Laura and Denise in late September

Bear Creek 319 Mine Pool Mapping, Design Project (proposed)

- Provided Dan Koury-PA DEP Pottsville DMO and Tom Clark-SRBC with a copy of the submitted PA DEP Growing Greener 319 Grant that was submitted in the last round

Technical Assistance

Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority MS4 Efforts

- Reviewed the letter to the Wilkes-Barre Area School District regarding obtaining permission to access and conduct the cleanup along Spring Run that flows through the parcel and to remove any trash from the property on November 2, 2019 from 9-1
- Provided Ms. Schraeder, 8th Grade Science Teacher at Greater Nanticoke Area, a letter of support for her grant to the Educators of America Micro-Grant and assisted her with the preparation of the grant through a Google document by providing her with links to related resources that could be utilized in the classroom on the historical impacts and more recent reclamation efforts in the Nanticoke and Newport Creek watersheds; The grant is requesting water testing equipment that will be a part of the Trout in the Classroom Program and for testing the streams within the Nanticoke School District that are impacted by AMD
- John Whittaker, Scranton, PA ordered some of EPCAMR's iron oxide
- The PA Fish & Boat Commission's Executive Director, Tim Schaeffer, forwarded EPCAMR an updated Lost Recreational Value Excel File based on the 2018 Integrated Non-Attaining List of AMD Impacted Waterways that shows that PA loses \$145.8M in revenue from not being able to utilize AMD impacted streams
- Provided Tali MacArthur, Program Manager for PEC/POWR contact information for the Catawissa Creek Restoration Association at her request
- Provided a letter of support from EPCAMR to Dr. Melanie Shepard, Ph.D., Misericordia University for their NEH Humanities Connection Planning grant application entitled "Humanities at the Heart of Mission-Centered Interdisciplinary Inquiry: Environmental Studies at Misericordia University"; If funded, EPCAMR would support the experiential learning component in the course by working with faculty to develop and support site visits to local streams and abandoned mines throughout Northeastern PA
- EPCAMR inquired to Dana Kuhnline-through Appalachian Voices, about putting in another mini-grant to the RECLAIM Field Fund to continue pushing for support through outreach and education to groups on RECLAIM and by assisting them with the production of AML maps for their watersheds or Congressional Districts
- Participated on a PA AML Campaign Conference call and had a separate call with John Walliser-PEC
- Assisted John Levitsky, Luzerne Conservation District Watershed Specialist with preparing some design documentation and paperwork for an Instream Waiver Emergency Permit from the PA Fish & Boat Commission for the Glen Oaks Project in Dennison Township in the Nescopeck Creek watershed

Education & Outreach

- Reviewed and approved the 4' x 2' banner from Center City Print for our joint STEM & AMD Art Exhibit by the Wyoming Seminary Environmental Science Students, The Interdependence Hexagon Project, and EPCAMR; The banner was exhibited at our PA AMR Conference in Pittsburgh; EPCAMR sent Dr. Nerozzi picture within the Solomon Creek watershed in preparation for the upcoming Art Show at the KCC Gallery in Kingston, PA; EPCAMR, the Executive Director, Dr. Andrea Nerozzi, and Wyoming Seminary received the 2019 International Interdependence Hexagon Community Partnership Award; Set up the EPCAMR Exhibit at the KCC Gallery that will run from the opening reception on October 4th through November 4th, 2019
- Reached out to Patrick Rooney in Congressman Dan Meuser's Office to encourage him to sign on to the AML Reauthorization Bill and thanked him for coming up to the AMD/AML Economic Development Tour of the Bliss Banks on the Earth Conservancy property with TU, PA DEP BAMR, and other regional partners; Dan Meuser and Connor Lamb signed on to the Reauthorization Bill, HR 4248 that was recently introduced; The Western Colorado Alliance and Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards both signed on to support Reauthorization; All 49 PA TU Chapters signed on to support Reauthorization; Participated in a conference call with members of the PA AML Campaign and Jeremy Marcus-Congressman Cartwright's Office to learn more about the Reauthorization Bill; <https://www.eenews.net/stories/1060971387>
- Set up the Trout in the Classroom (TIC) Tanks in the Life Skills Classroom and Science Classroom at Greater Nanticoke Elementary with Mike for Mrs. Dennis and Ms. Schraeder's Class; Informed Mr. Ron Kirkutis, Lake-Lehman High School teacher of how to become involved with the TIC program in 2020, since the teacher training program is complete for the 2019-2020 cycle
- Worked with Mike and ARIPPA to educate Congressmen Cartwright's and Meuser's Staff on the benefits of a coal refuse energy tax credit program that dedicates some funding to riparian restoration of the abandoned mine lands as a part of the reclamation project and removal of the waste culm to generate electricity; EPCAMR informed them that we were in agreement with the language and supportive of the bill that going forward
- Prepared soundbytes and researched information on AML Statistics to provide to Melvin Felix, who created a press release on Reauthorization for Congressman Cartwright and used a quote from EPCAMR
- Followed up with Greg Malaska-PATU President to continue to keep an open dialogue with Jaret Gibbons from ARIPPA on developing a partnership with them in support of reclamation and watershed restoration efforts across PA
- Met with Liz Fienberg, NFWF about funding future EPCAMR projects and building a stronger partnership with them to secure additional funding for the EPCAMR Region
- Participated in the National RECLAIM Working Group conference call and provided updated on EPCAMR's work to support RECLAIM and assisting several states with producing AML Statistical Maps for their respective Congressional Districts

- EPCAMR signed on to support Congressman Cartwright's coal bonding reform bill that was a part of the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee hearing on fiscal reforms; This legislation eliminates self-bonding, which is essentially a promise from a coal company to pay for reclamation without providing any collateral; It also requires the disclosure of any appraisal or valuation of real property or equipment used for bonding purposes, and there's a little section where the Secretary can require executive compensation, including salaries and bonuses, as collateral
- EPCAMR signed on to the Choose Clean Water Coalition's sign on letter to support the non-regulatory Chesapeake WILD Act that would direct the US Fish & Wildlife Service to establish a grants program to enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats; Non-profit organizations would be eligible to receive these project grants, and the intent is to help accelerate progress in a few key areas, such as:
 - Riparian buffer restoration
 - Improving stream health
 - Tidal and non-tidal wetland restoration
 - Improving fish habitat
 - Expanding populations of black ducks, and other key waterfowl
 - Restoring and protection eastern brook trout and their habitat

Community Volunteer Coordination

- Reached out to Pagnotti Enterprises to update them on the coordination of the 6th Annual Centralia Cleanup; Pagnotti provided EPCAMR with a **\$250** sponsorship for the event and remains supportive of the effort each and every year; Received a \$10 donation from Joanne Russell-United Kingdom
- Picked up the placard listing all sponsors, supporters, and donors for the informational kiosk as an Eagle Scout Project that was constructed by Matthew Williams, his family, the EPCAMR Executive Director, in the Ashley Borough Park where we completed the Dam Removal and Habitat Improvement Project last year
- Mailed Carol Gargan some of EPCAMR's iron oxide pigment for an art project that she would like to do in the Kosciuska Healing Garden park in Scranton on some trees creating monarchs on dead trees artistically with the pigment

Conferences, Training, Tours, Exhibits, & Workshops

- EPCAMR continued to monitor the online registrations as they were coming in for the NAAMLPA/NASLR/PA AMR Conference; EPCAMR Staff prepped supplies and resources together to take with us to the Conference; Received the logo from Schuylkill Energy Resources and passed it along to Gene Trio for the event and program; Mayfly Award Artwork follow-up--Went to see Mark Chuck and provided him with some iron oxide that he will be incorporating into both the fish and the rocks at the base of the two awards and picked them up later in week; Picked up at the Anthracite Heritage Museum Gift Shop a book on the Avondale Mine Disaster and a coal keychain related to Anthracite for the PA Basket; Designed and created two 50/50 Drawing Posters for the Conference
- EPCAMR Staff attended the NAAMLPA Conference that was jointly sponsored by the PA AMR Conference and NASLR in Pittsburgh, from the 8th-11th; The Executive Director presented with Dr. Bill Bellows-Deming Institute and Lauran Rinehimer presented on our Growboxx Project; EPCAMR presented the 2019 Mayfly Awards to Gary Merritt and Mark Killar; Wrote out scholarship checks at the Conference and provided them to the recipients in attendance; Held a conference call to finalize remaining scholarship recipients that need to have a check cut to them

- Served as a Guest Panel Speaker and provided a presentation on EPCAMR's historical and involvement in the early years of restoration and preservation of the site on the Avondale Mine Disaster Panel at the Museum, McDade Park, Scranton, PA; Submitted bio to Mark Riccetti Jr.- Luzerne County Historical Society
- Applied for a scholarship through the submission of a letter of request that was approved by the Scranton Area Foundation to attend the NEPA Learning Conference in Scranton, PA, a regional conference for Non-Profit Executives from NEPA and many of the regional foundations
- Attended the PATU Annual Membership Meeting in Huntingdon, PA

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for September 2019 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Made a deposit to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivable
- Prepared notes for the EPCAMR Personnel Committee; Held the EPCAMR Personnel Committee Meeting to have an in-depth discussion on developing a future hiring plan and procedure for doing so after making a presentation of materials created by the EPCAMR Executive Director, Program Manager, and Dr. Bill Bellows-Deming Institute; Discussed how to create a living wage and increase the wage rates in our future grant applications to bring in additional revenue that will allow us to pay higher wages for our professional services that are marketable and highly skilled; Offered up a 3 Plan Option to the Personnel Committee for discussion and action at the November 20, 2019 Meeting of the Board
- Entered the EPCAMR bi-weekly payroll into ADP online to release it and provide Denise with a link to obtain the health care expenses to be reimbursed through our PA DEP 319 Grant
- Worked with Mike to determine if EPCAMR should request the offered 10 Microsoft 365 licenses from TechSoup or stay with our Gmail Suite
- Completed the August 2019 Board Report and forwarded it off to the EPCAMR Executive Committee for their review
- The EPCAMR 2018 990s Accountant Copy was forwarded to Basil Lynch, Kovalchik & Kollar for their review, completion, and submission of our Annual 990 for submission to the IRS
- Provided Andy McAllister-WPCAMR Regional Coordinator with information on the types of Health Care Benefits provided to EPCAMR Employees
- Reached out to Jeff Meitrott-Secretary/Treasurer of [NASLR](http://NASLR.org) to see if they have a non-profit membership category so that EPCAMR can become a member
- Participated in the MRAB Technical Committee Skype Meeting
- Provided a governmental background check for former intern, Josh Rinehimer and another employment verification for Sean Banul, former intern
- Completed the SWIF Annual Audit Payment Form and mailed it