



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

Website: www.epcamr.org

September 2021 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Began working on the July and August Progress Narrative Report and Reimbursement after receiving the invoice for hauling and excavation of culm waste material from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management

Mill Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan

- Submitted a Trout Unlimited Technical Assistance [Grant](#) (TAG) to request an electroshocking survey of the Mill/Gardner Creek watershed in the Wyoming Valley upon receiving approval from *Shawn Rummel*, TU; Worked with *Steve Cornia*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist on completing the application and mapping out the survey points throughout the entire watershed; Coordinated with *Kathleen Lavelle*, TU, to schedule and perform the electroshocking fishery assessment on Mill and Gardner Creek on October 1st with several EPCAMR Staff and our EPCAMR President, *Joe Simons*, and *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District; Conducted remaining macro surveys within the watershed with *Steve Cornia*

Bear Creek AMD Treatment Survey/Design, O & M Plan and Permitting Package

- Submitted a reimbursement and Progress Report from October 2020 through June 30th, 2021 to catch up more quickly since a large amount of funds haven't been spent to date; Contractual work with SRBC is being written this Fall since we just received the landowner permission forms recently and now are moving forward with a little more expediency; EPCAMR will then submit a second reimbursement and Progress Report through the end of September 2021 for the next quarter from July 1 through the end of September 2021; Followed up with *Essie I. Karnes*, President of the Wiconisco Creek Restoration Association (WCRA) to provide her with an update on the status of the project

Healing the Scars: Reclaiming Northeastern PA! with ISI

- Provided a draft grant application to Claudia Meglin and Joe Sapienza, for the *Forever WILD* grant that EPCAMR will be seeking sponsorship from the Stanley Cooper Trout Unlimited Chapter to submit for **\$2500** to put towards editing and enhancing one of the short film videos featuring EPCAMR's brook and rainbow trout puppets; The films when completed will be provided to the PATU Stream Girls and PA Trout in the Classroom

Programs as an additional curriculum resource video on AMD and watershed restoration; Worked with the Stanley Cooper Chapter to seek their approval of the submission of the grant following developing a full budget and narrative for the application

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 August; Reached out to several candidates after sifting through dozens of resumes for our open part-time GIS Watershed Outreach Technician position that we are hoping to fill very soon before the end of the year; EPCAMR Executive Director and Program Manager will be conducting Zoom interviews with the selected candidates that have been narrowed down

Ripple Effect Software Donation Program through Aquatic Informatics

- Worked with *Brigitta* from Shore Communications to draft up a [press release](#) announcing the award to EPCAMR; Coordinated an initial kick-off meeting with Aquatic Informatics Staff and the EPCAMR Staff on the Ripple Effect Program through Isabelle Cheniere

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

- EPCAMR reached out to *Briana McDuff*, after receiving a call from James Pagnotti from Pagnotti Enterprises who wanted to follow up after our initial meeting to see if AC Power would like to follow up on any of the sites that he provided information for, in addition to the initial ones that we looked at with the GIS Solar Site Selection Criteria Tool; He has other companies looking reaching out to his company and wanted to extend the courtesy to AC Power; EPCAMR will complete some additional analysis from the RAMLIS Tool on the particular parcels that were identified to provide additional information for the second part of the scope to be completed

Technical Assistance

- EPCAMR provided input to the [PA Council of Trout Unlimited's Strategic Plan Update](#) related to AMD impacted waterways and reviewed National Trout Unlimited's New Priority Waters Identification Program using the [Conservation Portfolio](#)
- EPCAMR prepared a letter of support for Hanover Township, Luzerne County, who will be resubmitting a Luzerne County Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Local Share Account (LSA) application for a new screener for the Earth Conservancy compost facility on behalf of the Lower South Valley Council of Governments (LSVCOG); EPCAMR utilizes compost that is donated by EC for some of our community gardening projects in the coalfield communities within the Nanticoke and Wilkes-Barre Area School Districts
- Provided *Susan Turcmanovich*, PA American Water with information on how EPCAMR could sign interested volunteers up for the [Aquatic Organism Passage \(AOP\) Culvert Assessments](#) through the NAACC; Signed up *Aaron Eldred*, Dirt & Gravel Road Technician and Watershed Specialist for the Columbia County Conservation District to become a Lead Observer and he completed the online portion of the training within two

weeks; EPCAMR will schedule a time to have him go out with us in the field to do culvert assessments so that he can get his 20 shadowed under his belt

- Provided comments to *Jen Orr-Greene*, PA TU Eastern Policy Director, at her request, on a draft letter to PATU to consider approving on [HR 3684](#) (*Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act*) related to abandoned mines to be sent to PA General Assembly and PA Congressional Representatives
- Provided Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SRCA) with recommendations and links to include on their newly revamped website that is being worked on by Bucknell University students
- Presented to the Susquehanna County Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Lycoming Creek Watershed Association, and Lycoming County Conservation District, in Trout Run, PA at the TU Chapter's Annual Picnic, along with *Tom Clark*-AMD Basin Coordinator on our recommendations for conducting further remediation work on Red Run and Dutchman's Run in the Lycoming Creek watershed outside of Ralston and McIntyre; Suggested they partner with the District to submit and complete the ARIPPA application for limestone for the diversion wells on Red Run; The landowner where the diversion wells in supportive of the efforts to treat the headwaters of Red Run on his property and has been in communications with EPCAMR and partners
- Earth Conservancy requested EPCAMR's technical assistance with the Environmental Workforce Training program when *Brian Oram* conducts his Environmental Sampling course from October 18-20, 2021; He'd like our help in teaching the cohorts how to measure stream flow with a flow meter, how to sampling for macro-invertebrates, how to use our YSI Pro Multi-parameter Probe, and how to complete our Field Data sheet for visual habitat assessment protocols and data collection; Submitted an invoice to Penn-State Wilkes-Barre for EPCAMR's time to provide mine map interpretation, topographic map reading, an overview of GIS, and field training to the cohorts and an AMD/AML tour

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

- Participated in the Lackawanna County Stakeholders CAP Meeting with LDG to review progress to date on the development of the CAP and to update them on the AMD monitoring and collection of chemistry and flow from around the County; Downloaded all the pictures taken from the Lower Lackawanna Valley AMD discharges and placed them into a shared folder; *Cheryl Nolan*, Watershed Specialist for the Lackawanna County Conservation District provided us with the working draft document of the CAP; Reviewed and provided comments to an updated version provided by *Josh Glace*, LDG; [John Clune, Ph. D.](#); Hydrologist from the USGS, provided EPCAMR with a research paper from the Journal of Environmental Quality on *Nutrient Leaching and Soil Retention in Mined Land Reclaimed with Stabilized Manure* (2012)

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

- Talked with *John Welsh*, *Mark Clemente*, and *Emily Zebel* about putting together a short film on boreholes, mine pool monitoring, and AMD; Began to discuss elements of such a short film and sites that might be considered to include in the film; EPCAMR will likely meet with *John* in the Fall to flush out an outline for future reference
- ARIPPA shared a companion bill, [House Bill 1901](#), to SB832 that establishes a clean streams fund to address nonpoint source pollution; Sen. Yaw will be presenting on SB832 at the PA AMR Conference
- *Zach Berger*, Graphics Designer, Fieldhouse Screenprinting & Embroidery- Dallas, PA provided EPCAMR with a vector PDF file of our EPCAMR logo in black and white for future use; Fieldhouse printed several Staff dry-fit shirts in our safety orange color
- Reviewed the National RECLAIM Working Group notes since EPCAMR had a conflict in getting on the call at the same time as the Lackawanna County Stakeholders CAP Meeting; Provided Frank Sindaco-EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist with a link to past [Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition webinars](#)
- Worked on developing several presentations to give to the Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper and forwarded them off to *John Zaktansky*, MSRK Riverkeeper, before the Sunday Board Retreat; Directed *Laura Rinehimer* to send the video of the Catawissa Creek AMD tour to John as well to be viewed at the Retreat; Attended the [Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper](#) Annual Board Retreat in LaPorte, Sullivan County, PA to make a presentation to the Board on EPCAMR's work in the region and to solidify an even stronger partnership with the organization on future projects along the Middle Susquehanna River; [EPCAMR Podcast Interview with Bobby Hughes-EPCAMR Executive Director with MSRK](#)
- Talked with the Appalachian Citizens' Law Center and Downstream Strategies about the AMLER Program as it enters its 7th year of funding that was developed as a pilot program; The funding has existed without the kinds of institutional structures and oversight that are typically associated with more permanent programs; EPCAMR had previously provided comments during a House Natural Resources Committee Hearing in early 2021 on suggestions to improve the program to make it easier for community groups to become eligible for funding
- Received a thank you follow up note from *Ronnie Vesnaver* and *Zach Hoisington*, teachers for the [Chesapeake Watershed Semester Gunston School Program](#) in Maryland who visited with EPCAMR in late August for an AMD/AML Watershed education tour hosted by the Executive Director
- Reached out to *Carolyn Heckman*, PA Council of Trout Unlimited's new AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer to introduce her to EPCAMR

- Informed *Rob Dubas*, Keep PA Beautiful, that EPCAMR would package up the two loaner surveillance cameras and the metal protective cases so that he can pick them up and have them returned
- Reached out to *Molly Updegrave*, new Director of Outreach for [Reimagine Appalachia](#) to introduce her to EPCAMR
- Followed up with *Dr. Lowell Sieck*, [CSI, Environmental](#) to provide him with an update on EPCAMR activities in the region; They have an interest in seeking funding for rare earth element monitoring in AMD and were curious if any State funding was available
- *Nicole McNelis* and *Evelyn Moyer*, two seniors at Wilkes University, currently enrolled in Professor *Julie McMonagle's* Environmental Science class requested a scheduled interview with the EPCAMR Executive Director as a part of her lab project on October 8th; They had to interview two environmental professionals in the region
- Reached out to *Steve Herzenberg*, [Keystone Research Center](#), who is working *Dana Kuhnline*, National RECLAIM Coalition on Reimagine Appalachia framework issues; *Steve* is doing some thinking on how the implementation of AML funds can incorporate more union labor for an upcoming virtual conference that the [Marshall Plan](#) mayors are organizing; Participated in a phone call with *Steven* and provided him with some insight into how the AML programs operate in PA and our previous networking with *Dan Taylor*, Blue Green Alliance, who EPCAMR had talked to months ago on similar topics; Connected *Steve* with *Frank Sindaco*, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist to discuss the Marshall Plan
- Interviewed by *Arielle Knight*, [Hardpin Media](#) from the Climate Action News Campaign and invited them out to Northeastern PA for an AMD tour following the storm events that were recently dropping lots of rain in the region so EPCAMR could show them the impacts and relationships of rainfall events to the increasing volumes of mine water from mine discharges that cause increased concerns for flooding in our coalfield communities; Provided *Arielle* with an AMD tour and did a 30 second sound byte on climate action related to abandoned mines
- Interviewed by *Mike Phillis*, AP reporter, about how AML funding impacts water quality - and what projects may be left behind if funding isn't reauthorized
- Forwarded around a link to our partners in the PA AML Campaign and Reimagine Appalachia partners of the Public News Service [article and interview](#) with EPCAMR to talk about the importance of including AMD remediation and treatment in the Infrastructure bill and the [letter](#) that was signed on to by **36** PA organizations that went to our Congressional Delegation to make them aware of the need to have this type of economic development considered for our coalfield communities

- Participated in an interview on EPCAMR's work in promoting community solar development projects on formerly reclaimed abandoned mine sites in Northeastern PA with *Falon Weidman*, an MPA candidate, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), University of Pittsburgh, FLAS Fellow European Studies Center, and Project Coordinator for the Ford Institute for Human Security; Forwarded her an [article](#) that was more related to solar development in the ag sector, however, it showed the demand for solar across the State
- EPCAMR wonders if the AMD that continues to flow out from the Butler Mine Tunnel will be considered an abandoned mine tunnel discharge under the SMCRA Law now that it has been removed from the Superfund National Priority List; [US EPA Removes Butler Mine Tunnel from List of Nation's Most Contaminated Sites National Priority List](#); [Butler Mine Tunnel Removed from Superfund Priority List](#)
- EPCAMR's annual participation in the PA TU/PA Fish & Boat Commission [Trout in the Classroom Program](#) to raise rainbow trout from eggs will begin on January 11th, 2022 when the eggs are delivered; PA TIC is an interdisciplinary environmental education program in which students learn about current and past impacts, management, and protection and enhancement opportunities of Pennsylvania's coldwater resources, while raising trout in the classroom
- The Just Transition Fund is underwriting some stories for [Grist](#) on key issues in coal communities; Grist is currently working on a broad piece about Reclamation; *Samantha Nobles-Block* is the writer and Trey Pollard, Pollard Communications asked to have the Executive Director put in touch with her for some insight and expertise on the subject for the story
- Provided *Don Walko Jr.*, who was a reporter that is working in Western PA to promote the Appalachian Climate Infrastructure Plan; *Don* was working on pitching a story to the local CBS news outlet about various environmental projects that could be remediated through the Build Back Better agenda and Bipartisan Infrastructure Plan; He was looking for a site or two in Beaver County in Western PA; Referred him to our contacts and colleagues in WPCAMR, the Foundation for PA Watersheds, and or the Beaver County Conservation District to follow up with them
- Submitted a letter from EPCAMR to Senator *Robert P. Casey, Jr.*'s Office to inform him of our support for the revitalization of the Civilian Conservation Corps that could create environmental jobs in abandoned mine reclamation and AMD remediation throughout past mining impacted coalfield and Appalachian communities; EPCAMR received a response that on March 31, 2021, President Biden traveled to Pittsburgh to announce his [American Jobs Plan](#), an ambitious agenda to rebuild our infrastructure, create jobs and grow incomes for hardworking families; Included in the proposal was a \$10 billion investment toward the creation of a Civilian Climate Corps; Additionally, several legislative proposals have been put forward to establish a modernized CCC, such as S. 1244, the [Civilian Climate Corps for Jobs and Justice Act](#), which was introduced by Senator *Edward Markey* of Massachusetts on April 20, 2021; Reached out to Senator Casey's Office to let him know of EPCAMR's support for the Infrastructure bill and Reauthorization that hasn't moved yet in Congress

- Participated in a discussion call with the PA DEP Environmental Justice Office and stakeholders on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) about making investments in our underserved communities

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

- Participated in two calls with all panelists to review the agenda and flow of the panel discussion for the upcoming [2021 Schuylkill Watershed Congress](#); Participated as an Intergeneration Panel Speaker at the Schuylkill Watershed Congress, to represent the Generation X to talk about the future of the environment; The Panel's title is "*Stories That Shape Us: Bridging Barriers to Environmental Justice and Climate-Resilient Communities Through Intergenerational Storytelling*"
- Participated in the virtual [PennFuture's 2021 Celebrating Women in Conservation Awards](#), to see *Louise C. Dunlap*, honored posthumously, for her decades of work on abandoned mine reclamation, AMD, and SMCRA; EPCAMR and the Foundation for PA Watersheds submitted her nomination earlier in the year and she was selected for the Lifetime Achievement Award
- Participated as a panel speaker on abandoned mine land reclamation and future job opportunities and innovations in the field of reclamation and AMD remediation for a Zoom [program](#) with the [PA League of Women Voters](#) and the [Climate Reality Project](#) on September 29th; Information is on the [ReimagineJobs](#) site; EPCAMR was an [Exhibitor](#) and was given a page to place information about our organization; *Kelly Cook*, PA League of Women Voters really appreciated the input and knowledge provided
- Participated in our weekly PA AMR Conference calls to provide updates on speakers who were contacted and followed up with to confirm their attendance; *Ryan Ellis* from IMCC will be presenting and Mike was following up with *Josh Glace*, Larson Design Group on his presentation about the Luzerne/Lackawanna/Susquehanna [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation County Action Plans](#) (CAPs); Suggested a presentation for next year that was offered by Dan Snowden, PA DEP MRAB, on [research](#) of a new sensor to detect rare earth elements in AMD being conducted by Penn-State; The [topic](#) is on Terbium, a rare earth element in AMD that can be found with a new sensor developed by graduate students at PSU; Reminded *Wayne Lehman*, Watershed Specialist with the Schuylkill Conservation District to register for the Conference since he'll be presenting on the virtual AMD Treatment Tours portion of the conference; Discussed moderator and speaker trainings a week or two before the conference; Finalized our sponsor lists and exhibitors and updated the WHOVA app and website
- Conducted a tour over a few days in September with several [RES](#) team members (land-agents, designers, ecologists, construction, and in-house nursery staff) who are looking to develop ecological offsets (some sort of 'credit') to offset unavoidable impacts to wetlands, streams, endangered species habitats, and other natural and water resources; RES typically contracts with folks building large infrastructure through more "product" based contracts, where they assume 100% of the legal, regulatory and operational responsibility for implementing the ecological offsets; Forwarded the information to *John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District's Watershed Specialist, to see if there were any agricultural lands that might be more suitable because the abandoned mine land wetland areas haven't been evaluated yet and may need additional funding to increase their ecological value; The tour was on abandoned mine

lands, AMD impacted areas, and some agricultural areas in watersheds that EPCAMR had previously completed several Coldwater Conservation Plans; Forwarded RES contacts to former Congressman *Paul Kanjorski* who had an interest in wetlands mitigation banking to see if they can network with one another

- Provided a virtual tour and presentation to the PA DEP Chesapeake Bay Office, Watershed Support Section, and the US EPA Section 319 Program Staff to highlight EPCAMR's work in the region over the last year at their request; EPCAMR will be highlighted in their Annual Report this year
- The Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation & Enforcement (OSMRE) and the National Mine Map Repository (NMMR) presented "*The 3D Rendering of Subsurface Mining Conditions & Mine Fire Progression for Areas Surrounding Centralia; Columbia and Schuylkill Counties, PA*" that several EPCAMR attended that was given by *Toby Grzejka, P.G. and Tom Mastrorocco*-OSMRE GIS Analyst; The presentation included A brief history of Centralia, Historic coal mining and mapping, 3D Model Data Collection, 3D Model Creation (*Tom Mastrorocco*), Completed 3D Subsurface Model, Fire Progression, Analysis of Fire, A conceptual look at possible mitigations, Analysis: Cutoff Walls, and an Analysis of mine pool hydrology; EPCAMR requested access to the files once they are available for download from TIPS; Provided *Toby* with a link to our completed regional mine pool work for the Western and Southern Coalfields in case he might find any useful data that would help analyze further the actual mine pool boundaries around Centralia or determine that there may need to be further investigations of the mine pool hydrogeology in the Centralia Basin; EPCAMR suggested that his presentation be considered as an abstract and part of the 2022 PA AMR Conference
- *Alana Jajko*, Director of Communications & Outreach for the [Susquehanna Greenway Partnership](#) (SGP), a non-profit that promotes parks, trails, and communities along the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania requested participation from EPCAMR in the Susquehanna Greenway Outdoor Expo, slated for June 4, 2022 at Shikellamy State Park where the branches of the river meet; The SGP are really hoping to make the expo a premier opportunity for our partnering organizations and outfitters to connect with the public on the outdoor resources available throughout the region; They will have an "Adventure & Advocacy" section of the expo for non-profits like EPCAMR to exhibit and connect with the public; They encourage booths to be activity-focused
- EPCAMR Executive Director was asked to participate in a screening of *Centralia: PA's Lost Town*, by fellow Board Member, *Joe Sapienza*, in Williamsport, PA, November 6th at 1PM at a location to be determined
- *James Bruggers*, from [Inside Climate News](#) visited the Northeast Region of the Anthracite Coal Fields to tour the Swoyersville AMLER Reclamation Project, the Old Forge AMD Borehole, and the Dolph Mine Fire Project with the PA DEP BAMR and EPCAMR to understand and document the significance of AML problems and benefits of the reclamation to our local communities; Created a news [post](#) on EPCAMR's site to highlight his visit to the region, since he came all the way from Louisville, Kentucky
- Toured the Catawissa Creek Watershed with *Ed Wytovich*-Catawissa Creek Restoration Association, *Wayne Lehman*-Schuylkill Conservation District, *Nancy Corbin*-Columbia County Conservation District, *Cheryl Brobst*-Catawissa Creek Restoration Association,

the Catawissa Water Authority, *Aaron Eldred*-Columbia County Conservation District, and *Laura Rinehimer*-EPCAMR to video the entire tour and to capture the operations and maintenance of the Oneida #3 AMD Treatment System; Laura edited the video for *Ed* and *Wayne* to use at the PA AMR Conference as a part of the virtual AMD Treatment Systems tour theme, for use at the Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper's Annual Board Retreat, and to utilize it for a future submission for the River of the Year nomination in November

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA, Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for August 2021 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Balanced EPCAMR Checking Register; Provided *Denise* with the August 2021 Statement for reconciliations; Made deposits to FNB for incoming reimbursements and accounts receivables
- Completed the September 2021 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded them to Mike
- EPCAMR had to spend some time in the warehouse side of the building moving storage supplies and field equipment to provide access to areas where the older overhead lights and ballasts were going to be replaced; Organized and condensed some of our maps, boxes, supplies, equipment, to allow for easier access to the lighting system so Earth Conservancy can have their light installers replace the old units with new LED units
- Electronically submitted EPCAMR's renewal information, changes to the policy due to leadership changes on the Executive Board, Applications for Executive Officer Exceptions, Executive Officer's Declarations, to the PA Department of Labor & Industry's State Workers' Insurance Fund for July 1, 2021 through July 1, 2022; Mailed hard copies to Harrisburg of the documentation
- *Dr. Andrea Nerozzi*, EPCAMR Board Member and Co-Chair of the Science and Education Subcommittee had her class of Advanced Placement Environmental Science students review the EPCAMR website to provide suggestions for future improvements under our communications and outreach committee work for our Strategic Plan Update; The shared document was sent to *Dr. Ken Klemow*, Wilkes University and EPCAMR Board Member, Chair of the Science and Education Subcommittee, as well for inclusion in the draft Science and Education portion of the Plan; *Dr. Klemow* sent around the draft to other Committee members for comments and review
- EPCAMR Program Manager and Executive Director narrowed down resumes for a second part-time GIS Watershed Outreach position for the MSI Mine Mapping Grant and will be scheduling Zoom interviews to select a candidate before the end of the year
- EPCAMR received our successful close-out letter and audit from the PA DEP Grant Center for the Grant Document 4100078980 -Project 1722 - *Conservation District Mining Program East*; The PA DEP having reviewed available materials and data pertaining to the grant, has determined that all required work relating to the grant has been completed, and accordingly, EPCAMR was notified that it was closed effective August 9, 2021