



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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September 2022 Progress Report

Project Coordination

Swoyersville Harry E. Reclamation and Community Athletic Area AMLER Project

- Completed the paperwork for the State PA DEP Bureau of Mining Programs to update our renewal for the Contract Operator License for EPCAMR necessary to have as a part of the project; Obtained a notarized document from Leonard's Auto Tags updating the renewal information and positions within EPCAMR due to our recent Election of Officers; The changes were provided on the document and sent it along to *Donna Ulrich*, PA DEP Bureau of Mining Programs in Harrisburg; Received the August Invoice from Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management and began working on the Progress Report and Request for Payment to PA DEP BAMR; Submitted the documentation and reminded Keystone Reclamation Fuels Management that we would need to submit a letter of extension for the project before the end of October 2022

Bear Creek Mine Pool Study and Conceptual Design Project

- Made an inquiry into the PA DEP BAMR and PA DEP Pottsville District Mining Office to see if they knew of any air shafts or boreholes in the southern coalfields of the Lykens Valley that could help EPCAMR obtain accurate and current water elevations of the mine pool(s) in the study area; *Todd Wood*-PA DEP BAMR referred to the Wiconisco Creek Scar Lift Report that showed historic mine pool elevations that were very dated; Dan Koury from the PA DEP Pottsville DMO wasn't aware of any either; EPCAMR reached out to the PA Game Commission State Game Lands 264 Staff to see if they have any maps or information; Followed up with Andrew King from SRBC about the Lykens Borough Meeting he attended to give an update on the project and to talk about the future establishment of a Qualified Hydrologic Unit Plan (QHUP) for the Bear Creek; Mike and EPCAMR will pull together a list of potential shafts in the Williamstown-Lykens Mine Pool area so that we can make a field investigation in the Fall with the SRBC Staff to see if we can find any locations where we can obtain some measurements down there either on the Teter property or PA Game Lands 264 after following up with *Steve Ferreri* with the PA Game Commission; Informed the Wiconisco Creek Restoration Association Board that EPCAMR and SRBC would be present at the October 17th meeting in Lykens Glen Park after hiking and surveying the Teter property to get a lay of the land prior to the meeting and then providing an update at the meeting;

ARIPPA Mini-Grant Program (*proposed*)

- Reached out to the Foundation for PA Watersheds to make an inquiry about seeing if we could submit another request for a convening grant for 2023 to support the Mini-Grant Program and it was determined that both EPCAMR and WPCAMR would be eligible to apply; EPCAMR,

WPCAMR, and ARIPPA have revised and updated the grant application and checklist for 2023; It was encouraged to make a presentation at the future State-wide Conference on Abandoned Mine Reclamation to get more outreach and awareness of the program out to the community groups across the State

PA DEP Energy Office Solar on AML Stakeholder Outreach Assessment Project (proposed)

- EPCAMR Staff are developing a proposal to the PA DEP Energy Office to facilitate 3 listening sessions across the Commonwealth and a 1 Day Summit in State College, PA to produce a Summary Presentation of comments and suggestions gathered by various invited stakeholders who are interested in developing solar on abandoned mine lands in PA to help the Commonwealth develop a strategy for implementation in 2023

Hollywood Rare Earth Elements Production Plant Proposal with Tetra Tech (proposed)

- Sent along a copy of the slide deck from Tetra Tech from the EPCAMR Board Meeting to *Cristy Sweeney*, EPCAMR Board Member at her request for further review of the draft application being worked on for a future submission to PA DEP by EPCAMR

Just Transition Fund Cycle 2 Planning Grant for Capacity Building Expansion of EPCAMR Solar Project Development

- Participated in an interview with *Anya Slepyan* with the Daily Yonder, that covers national rural news, to discuss our project to advocate for solar project development on abandoned mine lands; She was writing an article about provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act that affect the rural energy market, and was very interested in learning more about EPCAMR's work around solar energy production in coalfield communities and AML sites; Downloaded worksheets for the Storytelling Workshop that will be a part of The Just Transition Fund National Convening Summit; Attended The Just Transition Convening Summit with Steve Cornia, EPCAMR GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist in Washington DC from 9-20/22-2022 to present on our work on solar development advocacy and building new partnerships across the Commonwealth of PA; Networked with dozens of other non-profit grant recipients across Appalachia and with numerous Federal agency representatives that are a part of the InterAgency Working Group (IWG); Provided *Steve Cornia* with a GIS data layer that we received from *Kate Gordon* from the US Department of Energy on various Energy Community and Coalfield Data

Healing the Scars with ISI: Year 2 Iron Oxide Short Educational Outreach Video Production

- Reached out to *Diane Cziakowski*, Ashley artist who has worked with our iron oxide pigment to see if she might be available for a demonstration of some of her artwork for our video production on October 1st; Although Diane was not available, she had said that she could make herself available at a late date if there was a need to come over to the office and set a demonstration up of her artwork using the iron oxide pigment; EPCAMR relayed that message to Laura and Annie for a future discussion if additional footage is needed; *Sue Hand* was not able to commit to attend for personal reasons; Drafted and prepared two letters for the Crestwood School District and the Bear Creek Charter School for the parents of the two youth that will be participants in the short educational videos funded by ISI and provided them to Laura to distribute to the parents; Visited local businesses to make a request to use a power outlet behind their place of business for a few hours for equipment and battery chargers for the light and sound system to film the educational video and received permission from multiple community businesses along the Sans Souci Highway in Hanover Township, PA near the Solomon Creek AMD Boreholes

Luzerne Foundation “As Above, So Not Below” Mine Mapping Video Project (*proposed*)

- Drafted a **\$10,000** grant proposal to produce a short video production on how EPCAMR maps out the surface and underground mines for an educational video to be able to make available to the public on our YouTube channel and for schools to watch; Submitted it to The Luzerne Foundation for consideration

Technical Assistance

- Provided *Andy McAllister*, WPCAMR Regional Coordinator with contact information for *F. Charles Petrillo*
- Provided *Cindy Limbert*, Mansfield, Tioga County, with contact information and organizations to reach out to in the County to try and obtain tree seedlings for planting as a part of the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership; Informed *Brenda Sieglitz*, Senior Manager for the Partnership, that we had made the proper referrals to *Cindy* and let her know that if she needed any further technical assistance to let EPCAMR know
- EPCAMR Staff made a drive down to the Mocanaqua AMD Tunnel in the southern tip of the northern coalfields to cleanout and download data from our pressure transducer at the discharge; Will forward the data to the SRBC and the PA DCNR
- Conducted a meeting with [Terracon](#) and [Skelly & Loy, Inc.](#) (A Terracon Company) Staff at the EPCAMR Office to hear about the technical services and engineering that they perform on reclamation, AMD, and solar projects; Provided them with an update on the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill funding for AML work and connected them up with other partners in the region working on reclamation and watershed restoration efforts throughout the coalfields
- Provided *Carl Mozeleski* and *Jacob Bliss* from the Lackawanna Valley Chapter of TU information on the [Lackawanna Cty County Action Plan](#) (CAP) that was funded by PA DEP through the Lackawanna County Conservation District to see if they could obtain any data collected from Larson Design Group that would assist in providing them with any historical water quality data that may have been collected in the Little Roaring Brook subwatershed of the Lackawanna River where a proposed leachate discharge from the Keystone Landfill that is being considered
- *Maggie McConnell*, a new AmeriCorps volunteer working within the Shamokin community on their Environmental Resiliency Plan asked EPCAMR about our AMD Tie Dye Programs and how she could partner with us to increase awareness and education about environmental matters and strategies in the area; *Dr. Shaunna Barnhart* from Bucknell University passed along EPCAMR to her for follow up; EPCAMR provided her with information on how to obtain the iron oxide from us and instructions on how to set up a workshop at a future event
- Provided an EPCAMR letter of support to *Dr. Robert S Hedin*, PhD, Hedin Environmental for a National Science Foundation Regional Innovation Engineers program grant proposal Type 1: Creation of a collaborative that integrates scientific innovation in coal mine land restoration with economic revitalization in Appalachian communities

- Provided an EPCAMR letter of support to *Thomas Trite*, PD, Prh and *Dave Minnig*, Vytal Options Director for a National Science Foundation Regional Innovation Engines program grant proposal being submitted in partnership with a broad consortium of academic, public, private, non-profit, and economic development organizations to develop and support an initiative that can lead to a robust industrial hemp ecosystem in PA built upon plant genetics, bioengineering research, domestic propagation, cultivation, and processing that will support the manufacturing and deployment of innovative bio-based products; Abandoned mine lands are being considered for locations for the planting and cultivation of the industrial hemp products and EPCAMR is a partner; Reviewed a draft of the project proposal prior to writing the letter of support to be included
- Informed *Cody Whipple*, PA Fish & Boat Commission Trout in the Classroom Coordinator that EPCAMR would assist *Mr. Tony Fleury* in setting up his tank for raising rainbow trout this year if they had any questions about set up since EPCAMR assisted *Mrs. Amanda Schraeder* in previous years at the Greater Nanticoke Area High School, Luzerne County
- Followed up with *Bill Hayward*, W T & C Innovates, and Precision Periodic, Florida to give him an update on potential funding opportunities coming to PA under the Infrastructure bill for AMD treatment; Provided him with a list of priority questions that remain to be answered as to how many partners are going to get private landowners to commit to allowing testing, sampling, and eventual consideration for both design, construction, and future operation and maintenance of new AMD treatment systems on their property while ensuring that they still have some level of liability insurance and protection when these projects are being proposed; *Bill* has an innovative AMD treatment technology that he'd like to see utilized here in PA; Suggested that he attend our 2023 PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference to exhibit and network with other reclamation partners across PA

Loyalsock Creek Watershed AMD Treatment System Monitoring

- Some advanced local [press coverage](#) in the Williamsport Sun Gazette went out on a co-presentation to be made by EPCAMR and the SRCBC about the AMD Monitoring efforts in the Loyalsock Creek watershed; Summarized water quality data on EPCAMR's continuous monitoring of the 3 AMD Treatment systems in the Loyalsock Creek watershed and upstream and downstream locations and presented it at the joint annual meeting on 9-14-22 with the Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association (LCWA), and Susquehanna Chapter of TU at the Loyalsock Field Station in Montoursville; Lycoming College students were also present with a few posterboards of their research work they've done in the watershed with all of the partners; *Tom Clark*-SRBC Mine Drainage Coordinator also co-presented with EPCAMR; *Harvey Kratz*, researcher, provided EPCAMR with some insight as to his data collection efforts a few years ago on bogs and ponds in the Loyalsock Creek watershed related to their temperature and ecology; EPCAMR forwarded the information to *Tom Clark* and *Andrew King*-SRBC and *Mike Hewitt*-EPCAMR Program Manager for their review and further discussion; Provided *Stacey Hanrahan*, SRBC Communications & Outreach Specialist, with information for an article (entitled "Who Dunnit?") in their [newsletter](#) on the presentations made by Tom Clark and the EPCAMR Executive Director at the joint meeting

Earth Conservancy Nanticoke Creek Watershed Transducer Data Collection/Monitoring

- EPCAMR Staff will be collecting transducer and barometric data at 5 locations within the Nanticoke Creek watershed that were installed by EC and EPCAMR

Education & Outreach

- Followed up with *John Stefanko*, Deputy Secretary of Active and Abandoned Mine Operations PA DEP, to inquire if he was familiar with any details on the RENEW Act ([H.R. 7937](#))
- EPCAMR thanked *Tali MacArthur*, with the PA Organization for Watersheds & Rivers (POWR), for sending out an encouraging alert to get community groups from across PA to get behind the Safeguarding Treatment for the Restoration of Ecosystems from Abandoned Mines ([STREAM](#)) Act

EPCAMR was asked to help promote *Dr. David Heineman's* documentary trailer on YouTube called [NEPADOC](#); EPCAMR provided a tour of many sites that will be highlighted in the documentary, which will be more like a non-verbal film with a musical score, although full of colorful places across Northeastern PA, including abandoned mine lands and AMD; EPCAMR shared it out through our social media outlets; the film is set to premiere at venues around the region in 2023

- Conducted a zoom interview with Wilkes University students *Everette Pfiesser* and *Hank Lobban*, for an Environmental Class he's taking in college where he had to interview a local environmental community leader to discuss career paths taken and information on EPCAMR's goals and mission
- Coordinated with *Gabby Zawacki*-EPCAMR Board Member about coming in with Patagonia representatives in late September to meet with *Mike Hewitt*, since the Executive Director will be out of the Office in Washington DC the day the visit would occur; Met with *Gabby* earlier in the month on the 7th of September to provide her with a rundown on projects since she wasn't able to make the Board Meeting due to a conflict in her schedule; *Gabby* suggested sending an email to *Yvonne Besvold*, Patagonia to see if EPCAMR could come off the pause on Patagonia Action Works to become eligible for future grants; EPCAMR forwarded an email to *Yvonne Besvold* requested assistance in determining how EPCAMR could apply for grants
- Read and reviewed the National Wildlife Federation's [Degraded Lands Policy Report](#); Coordinated with Staff from the National Wildlife Federation on the AMD, AML, and Stream Restoration Tour that both EPCAMR and the Earth Conservancy will host for them to release their Policy Report at several locations within the Southern Wyoming Valley in the Nanticoke Creek watershed on October 3, 2022; Invited *Sam Robinson*-Deputy Chief of Staff from the Governor's Office to attend
- Reached out to *Michael Mehrazar*, Campaign Manager for Watershed Advocacy for PennFuture to schedule a future call to discuss partnership opportunities to advocate for clean water; *Michael* will be the new Choose Clean Water Coalition's State Lead
- In keeping with the bipartisan energy behind the very popular STREAM Act, 2 new cosponsors were added; Senators *Kaine* and *Hagerty*; Appalachian Citizens Law Clinic sent out a [tweet](#)
- EPCAMR received a letter of support for our work from [Geisinger Health Foundation](#) that was sent along to Senator Casey's Office to inform him of the technical assistance and outreach work that we've historically done with Geisinger and to support the STREAM Act; Provided *Crystal A Quintin*, MPA, Geisinger Health Foundation, with contact information for the Earth Conservancy, who has lots of experience with the grant program and outlined some of the details covered by previous grants that EPCAMR is aware of and had assisted in writing for

other organizations; Provided her with additional information for the Brownfields Coalition of the Northeast ([BCONE](#))

- *Beth Berkhauser*, Chair of the International Interdependence [Hexagon Project](#), Keystone College Art Education Program, reached out to EPCAMR to see if we can help promote and publicize the 2023 Special Theme: Environmental Justice for 2023; EPCAMR developed an AMD & Art Education Curriculum with *Beth* a few years ago that utilizes our iron oxide pigment; Participated in a brainstorming conference call to see how we can do additional outreach in the region; EPCAMR reached out to *Justin Dula*, PA DEP Regional EJ Coordinator to see if he can pass the information along to the full the Environmental Justice Advisory Board as an outreach opportunity for them to share within their communities across the Commonwealth
- EPCAMR informed Congressman *Cartwright's* Office that we support the [S. 2372 Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) and would like to see it passed in the Senate where it is gaining more and more bipartisan support; Senator Casey is a co-sponsor; EPCAMR remains a long-term partner with the PA Game Commission and years ago had helped to provide comments and input on the PA Wildlife Action Plan; We are also a long-term partner with the PA Fish & Boat Commission in the support of our improvements in trout fisheries and cold-water resources across Northeastern and Northcentral PA; EPCAMR is working on assessing waterfowl habitat areas of the American Black Duck and stream habitat areas of the Eastern Brook Trout in the Southern Wyoming Valley and next year will be making recommendations in a plan that is currently being developed to make habitat and stream improvements, as well as reclamation considerations for those watersheds impacted by abandoned mine lands, where we are finding both isolated populations of brook trout and have identified American Black Ducks laying over and utilizing water-filled stripping pits and ponded areas for habitat and possibly nesting and layover sites along their migratory pathways; EPCAMR sent a letter of support to Senator Casey's and Toomey's Office through an online portal created by the [Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife](#)

Askam in Wonderland 360 Virtual Tour of AMD Treatment Environmental Education Project

- EPCAMR heard from *Angela Rothrock*, PA DEP EE Program that our grant agreement was making its way through the signature process before full execution and award to EPCAMR; EPCAMR Executive Board members have already e-signed the agreement; On September 23, 2022, EPCAMR received the fully executed **\$13,879** grant agreement from the PA DEP EE Program

Coordination with Community Volunteers

- *Judy Brown*, Ashland resident, and EPCAMR volunteer informed us that she would take a hike around Centralia, PA to see how much litter has been scattered to determine if there is a need for a large or small cleanup effort that we can try to get in this Fall or if a roadside cleanup effort by a much smaller group would be sufficient; Railroad Street seemed to be a hot spot for demolition dumping over the last year and she was going take a closer look

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

- EPCAMR Executive Director was a part of a panel discussion the PA Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) with partners of Conservation Districts at the Wyndham Garden, in State College on 9-14-22; Had a discussion on examining the barriers, filters or disconnects which may be hindering collaboration and effective communication between Districts and their Partners; EPCAMR shared ideas and ways to cultivate and improve these relationships and communication; The workshop included facilitation of roundtable exercises to identify or clarify the issues managers face in communicating with partners; An interactive Q&A session between the managers and the panelists occurred to discuss ways to address communication issues and improve collaboration
- Participated in a Roundtable Discussion/Tour with the House Democratic Policy Committee on 9-26-22 on Bitcoin mining and abandoned mine reclamation on lands being reclaimed by the Co-Gen plants across PA with ARIPPA and EPCAMR; Interesting [article](#) on Bitcoin was shared with ARIPPA
- *Ronnie Vesnaver*, Director of the Chesapeake Watershed Semester and Sustainability Environmental Humanities Teacher and *Mel Skirkanich*, Teacher, who requested an AMD/AML Reclamation tour for the high school students who will be returning this Fall to PA; EPCAMR provided this tour in 2021; EPCAMR will coordinate a tour on October 31st with the organization and students and networked them with other regional partners in the Catawissa Creek watershed and Mahanoy Creek watershed for additional tours on another day during their camp stay at Hickory Run State Park

EPCAMR Program Administration

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Account and PA Invest Accounts; Paid Health Care Premiums for EPCAMR Staff for September 2022 with Highmark; Paid Verizon and Internet monthly bills; Paid EC the rent; Made deposits to FNB for incoming reimbursements, checks, and accounts receivables; Provided *Denise* with a copy of the August and September 2022 FNB Statement and Payroll Details for July/August/September 2022 for the 319 Program Reimbursements
- Completed the September 2022 Monthly Report for both the 319 Program and for the Board Reporting and forwarded it to *Mike*
- Reviewed SIMPLE Plan IRA brochure from Cetera Investment Services provided by *Janice Perry* to EPCAMR with *Mike Hewitt*; Discussed some options to look at for the future and will follow up with Janice in the 4th quarter of 2022