



## 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](mailto:rhughes@epcamr.org)

Website: [www.epcamr.org](http://www.epcamr.org)

### July 2015 Progress Report

#### Education & Outreach

- Conducted the AMD and Anthracite Mining Tour agenda for the Commonwealth's ***Mining & Reclamation Advisory Board*** (MRAB) on July 8<sup>th</sup>, coordinated by *Duane Feagley*, PA Anthracite Council, and EPCAMR, in partnership with *Wayne Lehman*, Watershed Specialist with the Schuylkill Conservation District, Schuylkill Headwaters Association, *Bobby Burns* from Keystone Anthracite, and the PA DEP Pottsville District Mining Office; **4** AMD Treatment System sites are in Schuylkill County and the Brownsville Mining Site and Weston Tunnel AMD Remediation Project were visited on July 8<sup>th</sup> in the Western Middle Anthracite Coal Field; **18** attendees were present; Reviewed draft minutes from the July MRAB Meeting
- Coordinated an AMD and Anthracite Regional Tour with **12** Oregon University students and professors who were in the Dalton, PA area for a Field Study of Water impacts through their Landscape Architecture Program at the Fuller Overlook Field School; EPCAMR Executive Director worked with Staff and local partners to put together a day long field tour of AMD sites, treatment sites, and historic places where significant mining disasters occurred in the Northern Anthracite Coal Region for July 1<sup>st</sup>; Professors provided EPCAMR with contact information for the Fuller Overlook Foundation in order to allow us to inquire about submitting a future foundation grant application
- Provided suggestions for the upcoming ***Aggregate Advisory Board*** (AAB) Meeting to Dan Snowden, PA DEP to be placed on the agenda for consideration related to providing a directory of limestone quarries, educational materials, and brochures on stone types and categories to members of the AAB; Worked on drafting a mission statement for the Regulatory, Legislative, and Technical Committee of the AAB for the August Meeting as a subcommittee member

Confirmed EPCAMR's Executive Director's participation and recent appointment to the ***Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force's Environmental Protection Working Group*** by Governor Wolf and the PA DEP Secretary *John Quigley*; The task force will be enriched by the efforts of 12 workgroups, which will focus on such issues as pipeline safety and integrity, siting and routing, environmental protection, best management practices, agriculture, local government, public participation and other areas of concern; Submitted comments related to abandoned mines and potential impacts and safety concerns when dealing with areas that have been impacted by past mining practices and have mine pools beneath the ground for inclusion in the Best Management Practices (BMP) draft Manual that is being created by the Task Force and the Working Groups; Attended the first Pipeline Task Force Meeting in Harrisburg

- Reached out to legislators to inform them of EPCAMR's opposition to SB875 the coal mine water for fracking bill and the reasons why we're opposed to the bill

- Continued working on upcoming Civic Ecology Chapter draft edits with *Louis Turner Chawla*, Professor Emerita for the Environmental Design Program from the University of Colorado that is being co-authored by the EPCAMR Executive Director; Forwarded a draft to *Marianne Krasny*, Cornell University
- Worked on setting up an AMD Tour in the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valleys, with *Bernie McGurl*, LRCA and EPCAMR Staff for *Chante Coleman*, Field Director for the Choose Clean Water Coalition from Annapolis, MD and to arrange an underground mine tour at the Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour for her to gain a better understanding of Anthracite Mining in the region and the work of EPCAMR on the mapping of the underground mines and the mine pools in Eastern PA
- Forwarded EPCAMR Staff an opportunity to sign up for an online webinar hosted by Water Words that Work and PACD about “Working with Schools for Waterways Education”
- Clean Water Action requested that EPCAMR write a letter to *Senators Casey* and *Toomey* to express his opposition to S. 1140, the “Federal Water Quality Protection Act,” that is designed to weaken or nullify the final rule, Definition of Waters of the United States (Clean Water Rule), by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps); EPCAMR Executive Director prepared a Letter of Opposition and submitted to both Senators through their website’s online form submission
- EPCAMR Executive Director signed on to a letter regarding Pennsylvania's General Permit for MS4s - PAG-13 developed largely by PennFuture and American Rivers
- Networked with *Kristopher Berlied*, Director of Trucking and Warehouse Operations for Community Aid, Inc. who has provided EPCAMR with a screenshot of the coverage area of their operations to see if there is any overlap of counties or areas in which EPCAMR has projects; There is a possibility of a company or business within the service area that could host a bin that is placed to collect clothes where future donations might be made to EPCAMR based on the weight of the clothes collected over time; Jeff Crum, an employee and volunteer with EPCAMR, who helped with the previous two Centralia AML Cleanups has offered to help seek a business that might be interested in sponsoring a bin; There’s no cost to EPCAMR at all; EPCAMR could become eligible for a **\$5000** grant from Community Aid, Inc.
- Sent a request to several of our area legislators staffers to set up a meeting with Congressman Dent in the Lehigh Valley, and Congressman Barletta, in the Hazleton area to discuss and educate the legislators and their staffers on our concerns and insight into the Surface Mining Reclamation Control Act (SMCRA), it’s future need to reauthorized, language changes that we are supporting, the Basics of SMCRA Title IV, the 30% Set-Aside for Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) cleanup and abatement, and the Investing in Coal Communities, Workers, and Technology: The POWER+ Plan, a federal funding initiative proposal, which could benefit PA greatly
- Directed *Haley Giononne*, EPCAMR Watershed Outreach Intern to work on extracted poverty data, demographics, and school district boundaries from a few articles that the Executive Director had located that will help us to produce some interesting statistics for grants on the areas that we serve in the <https://spotfire.cloud.tibco.com/spotfire/wp/render/20389173303/analysis?file=/users/dmosenkis/Public/paschools1&waid=-gRh9gBOKiA6Ptt9HwL7-211748d31etwx0>

## **Technical Assistance**

- Assisted *Elizabeth Hughes*, Earth Conservancy with preparing a grant application in partnership with the Wilkes-Barre Area School District’s Advanced Level Science students and a few teachers to work on setting up educational stations at the Askam AMD Treatment System and Wetlands Education Center in Hanover Township, along Dundee Road

- Assisted the Huber Breaker Preservation Society in obtaining an updated construction estimate and budget from McClane & Associates for the recently submitted PA DCED CFA Grant for the construction of the **Anthracite Region Miners' Memorial Park Project**, in Ashley, PA; Assisted in writing the HBPS Fundraising Plan document, banks statements from the HBPS, the official **\$2300** grant award letter from ESSA Bank and Trust, the appraisal document, a **\$20,000** private corporate commitment to the project, and a revised HBPS grant Request for Funding Letter that was submitted along with the grant
- Discussed with *Gabby Zawacki* an opportunity to submit an **EPA Region III Solid Waste Grant** that is looking to divert food waste into composting for alternative uses such as a soil amendment for community gardens; Will possibly use Earth Conservancy's Compost Facility as a site, the Huber Miner's Memorial Park, or the Espy Run AMD Treatment site; Provided her with language on programmatic capabilities of the EPCAMR Staff for the grant; Submitted the grant to the US EPA Region III
- Provided an EPCAMR Letter of Support to *Kristie Fach*, Director of Ecological Restoration for the Wildlands Conservancy's Growing Greener Grant Plus application for the **Black Creek Watershed Restoration Plan**
- Provided *Wayne Lehman*, Schuylkill Conservation District with contact information for Bill Yourey, Donaldson, PA in order for him to follow up with him on future reclamation projects in the Northern Swatara Creek Watershed
- Provided *Pat Kennedy*, Huber Breaker Preservation Society Board Member with a copy of EPCAMR's Intern Activity Description template for them to make additions to should they have tasks that they would like EPCAMR to assist them with when we sponsor local interns; HBPS is willing to provide EPCAMR with a donation to support us allowing our future interns to work on some administrative or community projects
- Researched and reviewed a YSI Photometer that is necessary for EPCAMR Staff to conduct improved monitoring in the field now that the AMD Hach Kits have been discontinued; Purchased a YSI Photometer and all necessary supplies, cables, batteries, vials, and calibration liquids

## **Community Volunteer Service Coordination**

- Worked with **24** Wilkes University first semester students to work on the continued reclamation of the Huber Anthracite Region Miners Memorial Park in Ashley, PA along with *Ray Clarke*, HBPS
- *Caloua Lowe*, Newark, NJ signed up to become an EPCAMR virtual volunteer; *Caloua* is a high school student interested in art, music, and business; Followed up with him to see if down the road we could provide him with some opportunities to volunteer online
- *Daniel Pomlett*, a freelance graphics designer from South East London offered to assist EPCAMR on creating some graphics design elements during his free time; <http://spaceroomdesign.com/>
- *Alana O'Rourke*, an Environmental GeoScience major student at Bloomsburg University requested an interview with EPCAMR to discuss volunteer opportunities throughout the Summer and Fall of 2015 or a possible internship

## **Project Coordination**

- EPCAMR Executive Director thanked ARIPPA Executive Director, *Jeff McNelly* and EPCAMR Board Member for his trade association's role, participation, and fundraising efforts to support the Coalitions at the **17<sup>TH</sup> Annual PA AMR Conference** last month in June

- Worked with Gabby on developing amendments to the **Groassis Waterboxx Phase III Research Project** with ISI; Made a request for a second allotment of funds in the amount of **\$4000** from ISI; EPCAMR Staff have been running into delays and problems associated with the original shipment of parts through customs since the supplies were coming from Holland, the headquarters of Groassis; The project has been suspended until the Spring of 2016 since we've missed a planting season for the tree seedlings that have since died while waiting on the shipment of the parts that are necessary for us to provide a complete set of the materials needed for our partners to construct and plant the Waterboxxes; EPCAMR asked for additional funds from ISI and an additional **\$2500** has been awarded and will be amended and included in our grant agreement with ISI
- Reviewed a sample construction contract provided by Hedin Environmental to recreate for *the Lewis Mine AMD Rehabilitation Project* once a contractor is awarded and chosen; Hedin provided EPCAMR with the link to the project documents for the bidding process; Attended the bid showing at the site on July 7<sup>TH</sup>; Received 3 bids and accepted the lowest bid from REXXERS, LLC in Dushore, PA in the amount of **\$69,824**; Conference called with Hedin Environmental and Moshannon District Mining Office to determine the best way to pursue additional construction funding to cover the project costs and a few ways to reduce monitoring expenses under the grant to move some funds that can be allocated for construction; Followed up with REXXERS to inform them of their winning bid and began to work on the paperwork to get a contract in place for construction; Requested that Hedin Environmental send a larger set of plans to REXXERS, LLC at Richard REXXERS request; Contacted the other two bidders to thank them and to inform them of just how close the bids really were and that we would keep them in mind for future projects; Paid several outstanding Hedin Environmental Invoices; Submitted a progress report to *Eric Rosengrant*, Project Officer, Moshannon DMO along with a third application for reimbursement for the project; Prepared a Letter to the Grants Center requesting some additional funding to cover the construction costs and to move funds from one category to another in our existing grant
- Provided *Gabby Zawacki* with several dozen photos to include with the final report for the **AMD EE & Pottery Grant**; Reviewed the final draft report and made final comments and additions prior to sending along to *Ann Devine*, PA DEP EE Program
- Worked with Larson Design Group Environmental Team members and Ashley Borough officials, to fully develop and complete a Growing Greener Grant Application and budget for the **Sulphur Run Flood Protection Project** in Ashley Borough, Luzerne County in the amount of **\$481,101**; EPCAMR was asked to be the sponsor of the application on behalf of Ashley Borough to administer the grant, if funded; Forwarded summary of the application to *Ron Yablonsky*, PA DEP NE Region, Wilkes-Barre, to inform him of our intent to submit the application; Sent a copy of the grant to *Josh Longmore* and *John Levitsky*, at the Luzerne Conservation District as well; Forwarded the completed grant to Ashley Borough Manager, *Greg Gulick* to provide to Borough Council and the Mayor; Provided information to other local area legislators on the grant submission as well; Informed PA DOT and Ashley Borough of a collapsed headwall that is at the headwaters of the Sulphur Run tributary that drains from a stormwater detention basin that is causing some sedimentation issues and gravel bar formation in the upper portion of the stream channel in Hanover Township prior to flowing into Ashley Borough
- Followed up with *Butch Frati*, City of Wilkes-Barre, PA to set up a field meeting at the basins along Laurel Run near Hollenback and the entrance to the North Cross Valley Expressway with Gabby and Liz to assess the waterway in the area for the **Laurel Run Coldwater Conservation Plan**; Followed up with

*John Levitsky*, Luzerne Conservation District to see if the Staff can come up to the District Office to meet with him to go over some landowner contacts that he has in the upper headwaters of Laurel Run

- Worked with Mike to complete another PA DEP Growing Greener Plus Grant for submission for **Monitoring AMD and Evaluating Their Source Mine Pools** in the amount of **\$236,856** with **\$67,500** in matching funds; Submitted the application
- Continued to finalize two additional grant application with a private partnership with Twin Oaks Research Inc. to perform technical monitoring, setup, field work, sampling, and operating and running a mobile AMD Treatment unit technology at the site of the **Solomon Creek AMD Boreholes Rainmaker Treatment Demonstration Project and Resource Recovery Project** in South Wilkes-Barre, PA; Completed an MOU with Twin Oaks Research Inc. for submission to the PA DCED CFA grant
- EPCAMR Interns *Haley Gianonne* and *Mallory Pinkowski*, along with the Executive Director travelled to Scranton, PA to Nay Aug Avenue to assist with staining wooden park elements at the first **Nay Aug Avenue Natural Playground** in PA that has incorporated iron oxide into the water sealant and stain to protect the wood on the playground in partnership with PA American Water and the Lackawanna Valley Heritage Authority, right along the Lackawanna River
- Provided *Liz Rosser*, a copy of the Luzerne County Municipal Directory to update a database of the **25** municipalities with contact information that will be targeted to receive free mine maps from the OSM Folio Series digitally from EPCAMR, along with some poster-sized maps funded under a **PennEast Pipeline Community Connector Grant** for **\$5000**; This project will allow EPCAMR to print maps, utilize some staff time, travel, purchase paper, and conduct outreach and awareness to the downstream municipalities of the proposed PennEast Pipeline crossing under the Susquehanna River in the area of Jenkins Township and W. Wyoming Borough; Explained the scope of work to Gabby and Liz for the project and how to set up the organizational folders for each municipality where the converted map files that will be converted to PDFs will be placed; Drafted a letter that went out to all municipalities explaining the project and sent it electronically with the exception of two municipalities that could not be reached by e-mail, who were mailed hard copy letters detailing the technical assistance that EPCAMR will be providing; Contacted Paul Golias, Staff Correspondent for the Citizen's Voice to see if EPCAMR can get a story in the newspaper
- Followed up with *Gregg Davis*, Project Officer for our **Hicks Creek Natural Stream Channel Design and Construction Project** to see if he had heard from the Grants Center with regards to our formal request for an extension for one year
- Attended the first field meeting with SRBC, Rausch Creek Partners, PA DEP BAMR, PA DEP Pottsville DMO, Rausch Creek Treatment Plant staff, and Skelly & Loy staff, to begin discussing the monitoring plan for the areas impacting the Rausch Creek AMD Treatment Plant and surrounding waterways; EPCAMR will be working on developing a detailed underground mine pool model and hydrogeological investigation of the areas in partnership with SRBC

## **Conference Coordination, Training, Conferences, Workshops**

- EPCAMR has agreed to present the 2015 ARIPPA AML/AMD Awards that will be given by EPCAMR and WPCAMR to community groups across PA and to accept the donation to the Coalitions at the **2015 ARIPPA Technical Symposium/Convention** in Harrisburg on August 19<sup>th</sup> and will set up an exhibit
- Provided constructive comments and positive feedback to all speakers that attended the PA AMR Conference that were provided to the PA AMR Conference Committee through the evaluation process; Reviewed all conference evaluations and pulled together comments and personal thoughts on areas that need improvement, areas that went well, thoughts for next year, themes for next year, and changes to be considered for 2016; Provided comments to all members of the PA AMR Conference Committee
- Paid the outstanding balances for the Golf Outing at the PA AMR Conference and the Ramada Inn Conference Center bill for the facilities, management, and rooms blocked for scholarships

## **EPCAMR Program Administration**

- Reconciled EPCAMR's Checking Accounts and PA Invest Accounts; Completed bi-weekly Payroll Reporting and submitted to RJ Zagrapan and filed reports
- Conducted our monthly EPCAMR Staff Meeting to get caught up on projects and proposed grants
- Completed reimbursement reports and progress reports for the second quarter of 2015 and submitted for reimbursement to the PA DEP 319 Program; Completed June and July 2015 Progress Report
- Prepared a Letter of Support for the nomination of *Corey Richmond*, Sullivan County Conservation District Watershed Specialist and EPCAMR Board Member to be considered for a PEC Partnership Award for his work in Sullivan County on all things environmental
- EPCAMR Executive Director updated the EPCAMR VolunteerMatch opportunities that were about to expire; <http://epcamr.org/home/donate-your-time-talent-or-treasures/epcamr-volunteer-opportunities/>
- Reviewed and updated a draft list of awarded grants, grants applied for and their amounts, and open sales orders for EPCAMR developed by Gabby for all Staff to review and add to shared network drive
- Requested that *Christine Haldeman*, Secretary of EPCAMR, complete an Executive Officer's Declaration form to send back to the Dept. of L & I Bur. of Workers' Compensation & Policy; Mailed her the form
- Communicated with the EPCAMR President, *Bernie McGurl*, on Personnel Committee recommendations for the upcoming August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Board Meeting with regards to several Staff Evaluations and cross-training of several of the part-time positions to fill a position in the MSI Mine Map Project; *Samantha Schafer*, GIS Specialist has moved on to a full-time position with a quarry company in the Poconos; Prepared written evaluations of all Staff up for review besides Mike and myself at this time
- Contacted *Ed Wytovich* to obtain a phone number and contact for arranging our upcoming August Annual Board Meeting at the Pioneer Tunnel Pavilion and to look into a local caterer, "A Matter of Taste" in Ashland, PA run by *Sandy Miller*; Followed up to secure the pavilion and made food arrangements with the help of *Kelsey* by contacting *Sandy*
- Met with a *Rebecca Greco*, from Times Company locally that provides direct mail services and small fundraising campaigns online through [www.classy.org](http://www.classy.org), however, EPCAMR has a successful relationship with [www.givegab.com](http://www.givegab.com) already