



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

Michael A. Hewitt, GISP
Program Manager
101 South Main Street
Ashley, PA 18706
Main Line: (570) 371-3522
E-mail: hardcoal@epcamr.org

July 2017 Progress Report

Highlights:

- Managed EPCAMR staff as they scanned 396 mine maps into TIFF images, georeferenced 105 & digitized 36 maps for the MSI Mine Mapping Grant. QA/QC checked work.
- EPCAMR staff hosted AML tours for **University of Oregon, Wuppertal Institute** and **Heinrich Böll Foundation**. Conducted a cleanup with **Wilkes University** and an EE program with **Hazleton Integration Center**. Tabled at the **Wilkes-Barre Farmer's Market**. Released our **TIC** brook trout into **Solomon's Creek** all in the name of EE.
- EPCAMR staff worked on a 3D model for the **Mocanaqua Tunnel, Luzerne Co.** mine pool projects. Sampled the **Plainsville Borehole Discharge** and **Askam Treatment System** both in **Luzerne Co.** Responded to a question about a potential subsidence at our **Solomon Creek Dam Removal Project**.
- Updated www.epcamr.org. Administered the EPCAMR Facebook and G Suite for Nonprofit accounts. Maintained GobbaDaPile in-house domain server.

Education, Outreach and Admin.:

- EPCAMR staff hosted University of Oregon students as they learned about disturbed landscapes in Pennsylvania. Took them on a tour of abandoned mine land (AML) features and abandoned mine discharges (AMD) in the southern Wyoming Valley. Paula Degnan also interviewed a few of them and staff to document their visit via her "Community and You" segment on WYLN a local Hazleton TV station.
- EPCAMR staff coordinated incoming Wilkes University freshmen during their community service orientation. Half the group cleaned up illegally dumped trash near Plainsville AMD site while others helped to plant trees in Waterboxx brand tree watering containers on a nearby culm pile.
- Evaluated the Solomon's Creek Dam Removal project site for Trout in the Classroom (TIC) raised brook trout release. The project was delayed, and the fish need to be released sooner than later. The chemical parameters were amenable, but construction was not an ideal environment. Decided to look upstream of the waterfalls and schedule a time when we could get a school group involved.
- EPCAMR staff completed a "Take Me Fishing" Program at Lake Irena with kids from the Hazleton Integration Project. Started off by teaching them how to cast plugs into hula-hoops from a distance then after lunch they were taken down to the lake and taught to bait and catch fish. A few kids only spoke Spanish, but luckily one EPCAMR staffer, Denise Hernandez is bilingual.
- Complied a reimbursement to the Mine Subsidence Insurance (MSI) program for the months of March, April, May and June. Reviewed scanned, georeferenced and digitized mine map images for quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) and sent a hard drive with to the PA DEP California District Mining Office (DMO). [MSI]

- Purchased a stand and lid for the TIC tank. Increased perspiration of the chilled tank over the spring and summer months had leaked all over the wooden stand, ruining it. We learned that we should place the trout in the stream earlier than July.
- Added information to a few more pages to the EPCAMR website related to mining impacted watersheds. Created [Schuylkill River](#), [Pine Creek](#), and [Swatara Creek](#) pages. Updated [Loyalsock Creek](#), and several [Wyoming Valley Watersheds](#) including [Solomon Creek](#), [Mill Creek](#), [Newport Creek](#) and [Nanticoke Creek](#).
- EPCAMR staff hosted Timon Weinert from the Wuppertal Institute and Nora Löhle from the Heinrich Böll Foundation, both organizations that are dealing with the energy transition in Germany. Provided them with a tour of the southern Wyoming Valley AMD and AML sites. Sat down to a dinner at Rodano's and then to a speaking engagement at Wilkes University.
- There was a heavy rainstorm on July 25th. Took readings at several gauges and sent photos via Google Photos of Solomon's and Nanticoke Creek AMD to John Levitsky, Luzerne Conservation District Watershed Specialist.
- EPCAMR staff setup a table at the Wilkes-Barre Farmer's Market to inform residents about rain barrels and how to obtain a free rain barrel from EPCAMR.
- Took the Suburban in for some routine maintenance and an inspection. Caught up on emails and read several testimonies related to the House Natural Resources Committee hearing on the RECLAIM Act while I waited.
- Ordered supplies for several programs. Researched how to recharge desiccant. Turns out it can be microwaved for 5 minutes to remove water. Recharged several pounds of desiccant.
- EPCAMR staff released approximately 50 fingerling brook trout into Solomon's Creek above the waterfalls on state game lands with kids from a church youth group as a part of the TIC program.

Technical Assistance:

- EPCAMR staff finished a "sludge judge" of the Askam Treatment System under the tutelage of John Levitsky, Luzerne Conservation District Watershed Specialist. The depth of the sludge in most places was under 1-2 feet (2% of the total volume) and not a concern in the 8-10 feet deep pond at this time. Sent historical sampling data as John develops a recommendations document for Earth Conservancy. [EC]
- Moved server up to top of desk. Maybe it wasn't getting enough airflow.
- Solomon Creek Dam Removal project in full swing until a local resident mentioned issues with mine subsidence and water loss. Produced maps to show the stream alignment and underground mines via ArcGIS using previously georeferenced Office of Surface Mining (OSM) Anthracite Folios. An onsite meeting was scheduled with contractors to show results of the investigation. Maps show that the stream was re-routed when the interstate was built, so the stream is undermined. Maps show the Bottom Baltimore was stripped and the current stream channel was placed in this area. The vein was also underground mined, but there are no voids under the stream for this vein, which was the original concern. There is a chance that water flows from the bottom of the stream in 3 of the 4 upstream cross-veins down a 13-degree pitch to underground voids. Visual inspection does not show evidence of vast flow loss, perhaps in low flow situations. Recommend coming back to do an upstream and downstream flow analysis at low flow. [PFBC]
- Attempted to install SedCAD thinking it could help in calculating sediment that has settled in the Askam AMD Treatment System. Could not find a serial number with the installation documents.
- Met with John Levitsky and Earth Conservancy staff to discuss improvements to Askam AMD Treatment System and sludge depths.
- Contacted Verizon Wireless about increased robocalls coming into our main phone line. The EPCAMR main phone line and Robert's phone line are actually cellular phones routed through a regular land line. I was told that if it was a cell phone, there are apps to block them. If it was a regular land line, there is a service that would automatically block them. But because they are different, there is really nothing that can be done other than signing up for the federal "no call" list (which we have been registered for many years). Something recently happened to get several of these types of hang-up or "you've won a vacation!" calls. I have been listening to see if there is

a way to remove our number. Sometimes dialing 9 works, sometimes I have to wait on the line until an actual person picks up and explain that they are calling a non-profit organization.

- Responded to an AML Campaign request for AML statistics in Thompson's District.
- Our building experienced a power outage for a few minutes. This is the first time I have witnessed how the backup power supply handles an outage. It switched over to batter power and kept the server and RAID towers up and running as expected. The network and internet went down because the router and cable modem are not on a backup power supply.
- Dropped off and picked up maps at PA DEP Wilkes-Barre Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) office for the MSI Program. [MSI]
- Sampled the Askam Treatment System and sent results to Earth Conservancy. [EC]
- Georeferenced several Pennsylvania Second Geological Survey maps and digitized faults / anticlines from the maps for incorporation into the Mocanaqua Mine Pool Model. [SRBC]
- EPCAMR staff sampled the Plainsville Borehole in an attempt to gather baseline information and ascertain the feasibility of enhancing the ponds to settle out and retain more iron. [FPW]

[] - Denotes funding source where applicable.