

EPCAMR



Robert E. Hughes-November 2006 Monthly Report
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LUZERNE COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

- Prepared a follow-up letter of recommendations that was provided to Luzerne County Commissioner Stephen Urban regarding the flooding problems sustained at the Broskoske Property in Newport Township, due to some serious erosion & sedimentation issues on an abandoned mine land property owned by the Earth Conservancy and another property owned by the Regional Equipment Center
- Produced a GIS Abandoned Mine Land Inventory and Watershed Boundaries Map for Mr. Rob Bonoczewski, Science Teacher and EnviroThon Advisor for the Wyoming Valley West School District for his class to use as an environmental education and GIS teaching aide in the classroom
- Conducted another COALS supported abandoned mine land cleanup at the site of the Avondale Mine Disaster and along the abandoned Delaware, Lackawanna, & Western RR grade in Plymouth Township; Removed nearly **60 tires** and **1.5 Ton** of debris from the sites with over **30 community volunteers** participating
- Mike, Valerie, myself, and Kate Feissner-EMARR, led a group of nearly **24 Hazleton-area home schoolers** and nearly a **dozen parents** to the Audenreid AMD Remediation Site and the Green Mountain Tunnel in the Catawissa Creek Watershed for the entire day and conducted an AMD Outreach & Education Program; The LCD was contacted by Cheryl Bagnata, one of the teachers from the Hazleton Area, who talked with us at the Bloomsburg Fair in September and was interested in going out with us on a tour
- Valerie and I shoveled nearly a **.5 Ton** of topsoil from along the Susquehanna River to mix in with our compost that was donated by the Earth Conservancy from their Newport Township Recycling Center, in Wanamie for our Avondale Rock Wall Garden Project; Mike, Valerie, and I worked with **4 W-B Area Vo-Tech students** and Mrs. Leiby, the Horticulture Class teacher, in the pouring rain to construct, design, landscape, and build a **10' diameter, 18" high**, natural field stone, rock wall garden, complete with donated plants from Wal-Mart and ones that Valerie had been caring for throughout the Fall, at the location of the PA Historical Museum Commission' Marker for the Avondale Mine Disaster to beautify the location; Nearly 22,000 vehicles pass the location on a daily basis driving to and from work on State Route 11
- Conducted an Education & Outreach Watershed Tour as a part of PA DCNR's Community Connections, Watershed Forum Program, throughout the Wyoming Valley with **8 teachers** from **8 school districts** in Luzerne County, and **40 students**

- Reviewed the PA DEP Environmental Education CCD AMD Education Grant contract that I was provided by Josh, discussed setting up a grant expense budget tracking system for future use with Susan Sutton, and talked with Josh about grant administration and program management
- Made a presentation at the first-annual COALS Summit on “Citizen Engagement” that was held at Luzerne County Community College on the District’s and EPCAMR’s role in the newly supported PA DEP Waste Management Program that provides free dumpsters, tire removal, and funds for beautification efforts on AML sites throughout a large area across PA, in partnership with PA Cleanways, PEC, PA DEP, active coal industry operators, landfills, and coal land owners
- Worked with Mike and Valerie, along with two LCD/EPCAMR Watershed Volunteers to begin monitoring what was originally thought to be the Glen Nan Mine discharge in Plymouth Township, and upon further research and investigation, turns out to be the Grand Tunnel #1 Slope AMD discharge that is a part of the larger Avondale Mine Colliery Underground Mining Complex on the West side of the Wyoming Valley; Curt and his son, Chris, will continue to monitor the water quality and flow of the site over the next year prior to EPCAMR or the Conservation District making an application for future funding for treatment of the mine discharge

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Prepared a letter of support at the request of the Lackawanna River Corridor Association’s Executive Director, Bernie McGurl, and EPCAMR Vice President for a grant proposal that LRCA is submitting to a local Lackawanna County Foundation where the organization is proposing to develop a comprehensive Watershed Atlas for the Lackawanna Valley Watershed; The Luzerne Conservation District and EPCAMR will be providing GIS technical assistance and support, as well as sharing of any relevant data layers and environmental land-use data information that is needed by the LRCA
- Worked on completed an ASAP Enrollment Process for EPCAMR with the Office of Surface Mining; They are migrating to a new accounting and electronic file transfer payment system for all of their grants and it is mandatory to complete the enrollment process from scratch for any past recipient of an OSM Grant Award
- Provided comments to the Pocono NE RC & DC on an Energy Harvest Grant application in Schuylkill County related to using Class A Biosolids for abandoned mine land reclamation and using animal manure as a fuel source for a manure biofuels combustion system called the Schuylkill County Agricultural Facility; Pocono NE RC & DC Board are deciding whether or not to sponsor the grant that was awarded
- Talked with Josh and Dr. Allan Comp OSM/VISTA Coordinator about the possibility of sponsoring a second year OSM/VISTA Watershed Development Coordinator in 2007; Concerns over liability, health insurance, and potential workmen’s compensation were addressed by OSM; OSM/VISTA Watershed Development Coordinator positions are federally funded and the Luzerne Conservation District and or the EPCAMR can continue to sponsor a VISTA, given the successful and rewarding relationship that we had with Valerie Taylor in 2005-2006
- Informed Chari Towne-Schuylkill RiverKeeper, that both EPCAMR and the Luzerne Conservation District would continue to support the Schuylkill River Watershed Congress in 2007 by assisting with publicity on our websites and forwarding information on the event when it becomes available; The Congress takes place in March 2007 and SRK requested that an update be provided on the status of the AML Trust Fund and any pertinent legislation related to AML/AMD at that time
- Complete a Final Evaluation for Valerie Taylor’s OSM/VISTA Watershed Development Coordinator and sent it along to the Corporation for National Service for final review