



Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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November 2015 Progress Report

Highlights:

- EPCAMR staff continued to scan 72 mine maps into TIFF images & georeferenced 72 maps for the MSI Mine Map Processing Grant.
- Drafted a workplace safety policy and revised the 2016 budget for consideration by the board.
- EPCAMR staff participated in an EPCAMR staff meeting, an AMR Conference Call, toured a possible AMR conference venue, and lead an AMD tour for consultants.
- EPCAMR staff sorted NMMR maps into collieries; Continued printing/PDF-ing maps for municipalities in the **Wyoming Valley**
- EPCAMR staff took daily gauge readings and sampled flow/chemistry at **Askam** Boreholes and one time sampling to determine if Silt Ponds near **Concrete City** are AMD
- Updated www.epcamr.org; administered the EPCAMR Facebook and Google Apps for Nonprofits accounts.

Education, Outreach and Admin.:

- Caught up on writing Program Manager reports for previous months and posted them to www.epcamr.org.
- Helped crew from Taylor Sheds setup our shed in the back of the office. EPCAMR plans to use the shed for additional storage mostly of outdoor equipment. The height of the door was lower than expected at 70.5" and initially we thought we would not be able to fit our 73" tall Polaris Ranger in it. Went back and forth with the company to fix the mistake, but they were relatively unwilling to admit the mistake was theirs. It was not worth a legal battle. Once we got the ATV on site, we built a rudimentary ramp with rocks to test a theory to fit the ATV in the shed. After building a more permanent short ramp we were able to use the "pendulum effect" to our advantage, providing enough clearance.
- Updated the EPCAMR Board Meeting page on www.epcamr.org in preparation for the upcoming meeting.
- Sent an invoice to Ashley and Laflin Borough's for the thumb drives they kept. As a part of the PennEast Grant EPCAMR was supplying electronic and/or paper copies of underground mine maps for free for each municipality in the Wyoming Valley. Unfortunately, the deal was to take the electronic map files of the thumb drive and return it to EPCAMR so we could save costs by reusing them. These municipalities said they do not have computers? Wow... very interesting.
- EPCAMR staff held a staff meeting to coordinate efforts for the month.
- Updated the EPCAMR asset inventory and posted it to the M drive for other staff to help update as we purchase new items and old items are decommissioned. EPCAMR board should consider an Asset Management Policy to determine the use and storage of business personal property.

- Drafted a Work Place Safety Policy with guidelines found at www.nonprofitrisk.org. Circulated it to the personnel committee and staff for comment. Some comments came back regarding the terminology “workplace violence”. I realized it was included to hint at the need to develop a separate “Zero Tolerance” policy, but I added one page of pertinent guidelines regarding identification/reporting of internal/external threats, suspicious packages/letters, bullying on blogs/social media, and how to handle lawsuit threats. All very interesting topics with random acts of terrorism becoming more and more a reality in today’s society.
- EPCAMR staff took consultants from CSI Environmental to several mine drainage sites in the Wyoming Valley in hopes that their 3D weave technology could be implemented on one or several sites to remediate the water pollution. The firm from Maryland had performed some pilot scale studies in Tioga County and claimed some success in treating mine drainage. Provided them with a google map route of the sites we visited on the tour.
- Completed an employee self-evaluation and submitted it to the Executive Director who would send it on to the Personnel Committee prior to the upcoming board meeting. The committee uses this information in conjunction with other factors to determine merit for a raise.
- Was asked by the HBPS to come up with a monthly cost to host a grant writing intern for them. An intern position would not require a vast amount of resources or time from staff, but HBPS would like to reimburse us for a share of our overhead costs since they do not have a business office of their own. Using an old technique developed when EPCAMR was at the Luzerne Conservation District, which we named the “Overhead Mess” calculator, we divided up monthly costs and came up with a reasonable number that the HBPS was willing to pay.
- Revised the 2016 EPCAMR Budget with suggestions from the last board meeting. Began collection items for a board packet such as staff reports, the board meeting agenda and the treasurer’s report to send along with a reminder for the upcoming board meeting.
- Forwarded personnel concerns to the personnel committee regarding the existence of an indoor non-smoking policy and recent state laws that bans smoking in public places. Since this building is a private building, it may not be pertinent.
- EPCAMR staff participated in an AMR Conference Call to review recent site visits to possible venues in western Pennsylvania for the 2016 AMR Conference.
- Met with Laflin Borough staff who visited the office to learn how to read and interpret the underground mine maps that we provided them. Unfortunately, they were also missing a full set of folios in electronic form on the thumb drive. The printed set was complete. I was able to process the maps into a PDF format and transfer the files to him.
- Met with Paul Golias, a freelance writer for the local newspaper. He was interested in creating an article about the mine pools in the Wyoming Valley which were identified in our study commissioned by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. Created a simple map that would print well in papers. The statistics are mind boggling and the resulting newspaper article was thought provoking, but severely edited by newspaper staff and the map was not used. Paul was disappointed and provided us with a copy of the original article he submitted.
- EPCAMR staff purchased a larger 5.5’ x 10’ trailer that would fit the Polaris Ranger. Our current trailer is only a 5’ x 8’. Registered the title under EPCAMR with the PA Department of Transportation Bureau of Motor Vehicles via Leonard’s Tag and Title Service on the Sans Soucci Parkway. Quickly hooked up the trailer to go pick up and put a final payment on our ATV at the Polaris dealership near Mountain Top.
- Completed the Treasurer’s Report after several hours of work in QuickBooks. Several transactions were not being recorded properly and many were missing in regard to grant reimbursements that had been received. The report was handed out at the meeting.
- EPCAMR staff prepared for and hosted the EPCAMR 4th Quarterly Board Meeting in EC’s conference room.
- EPCAMR staff toured Bucknell University campus to ascertain if it would be a good venue for the 2016 AMR Conference here in Eastern Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, the one large conference center is closed due to renovations which would not be complete until 2017. Other

comparable meeting facilities were available, but were in separate buildings spread throughout campus. We attempted to narrow down a specific portion of campus in consideration of our older or more distracted attendees that cannot walk distances efficiently, but had flashbacks to when we hosted the conference at other universities and the complaints that followed. We shared the info with the conference planning committee, who decided that this year was not a good year to go to Bucknell University, but said they would consider it in the future.

- Dropped off maps at the PA DEP Pottsville District Mining Office (DMO) as the final return of maps scanned from that office as per our Mine Subsidence Insurance (MSI) Program Scope of Work. Also provided electronic files on a hard drive from the National Mine Map Repository (NMMR) [MSI].

Technical Assistance:

- Sampled the pond near Concrete City near Nanticoke. The ponds on Earth Conservancy land were known as the Silt Ponds, but the chemistry and connections to the underground mines was unknown. The pH, temperature and iron levels were normal for surface water ponds and did not suggest a connection to mine drainage. Provided results to the Earth Conservancy [EC].
- Troubleshoot an issue connecting to QuickBooks. The program would no longer connect to the company file on the M drive. In the past there was a separate network connect tool that could be run, it was now built in to the program. It didn't seem to be a network access issue at first. Uninstalled and reinstalled the program to no avail. Intuit website was not helpful, but some user forums pointed to security setting with Windows 10 as the possible block. Had to download the QuickBooks File Doctor tool to "repair" the file, which also repaired the network connection.
- Overhead light fixtures were acting up and simply replacing burnt out bulbs was not solving the flickering. Bill Best, a member of the Huber Breaker Preservation Society (HBPS), stopped in for some maps that I had printed for him. Bill is an electrician and gave his opinion on a fix. The ballasts break often on these old lights and need to be replaced, but also he said we should pull down any burned out lights as they draw power which could eventually melt a ballast. We had always left burned out bulbs in the ceiling because only 2 out of the 6 lights in each fixture was sufficient light for the office. He gave us a pamphlet about our particular light fixtures. EPCAMR staff removed the old bulbs, cleaned the transparent panels and replaced a faulty ballast. The 1960's style light fixtures are so old that sometimes the price for a new fixture is less than the price of replacing the ballast. The 8' bulbs are also very expensive, but fortunately Earth Conservancy takes care of a vast majority of the maintenance for the building.
- EPCAMR staff finished organizing the NMMR maps by colliery and coal field in preparation for sending to the Pottsville DMO and the California DMO for the MSI Program [MSI].
- Georeferenced underground mine maps under the Hicks Creek Natural Stream Channel Design project. Also georeferenced Hicks Creek NSCD plans to find out where the new stream channel will be placed. Not all surface water loss areas can be avoided, but an area where a substantial amount of flow is currently lost will be filled in to a higher grade so the stream will go around it [Hicks].
- Troubleshoot the 56" Colortrac scanner which typically does not give us problems. It seems that when Kelsey plugs in her laptop and proceeds to scan maps, the scanner will "kick" maps before completing scanning. In the past when technicians serviced the scanners, they mentioned that the scanners are sensitive to feedback from USB ports. Updated drivers and made sure all Smart Works Programs were up-to-date, but it ended up being settings in the Smart Works Program that are set for the specific type of maps and requirements of the MSI program. The incorrect default settings would load automatically, and she would need to choose the correct saved settings in a drop down list every time. Other computers would remember settings from the last time they were used...
- Sampled the Askam AMD Treatment System for chemistry and flow at five monitoring points: at the borehole discharge, after the maelstrom oxidizers, after the pond, downstream after the

confluence with Espy Run and upstream of the confluence with the Susquehanna River. Provided results to the Earth Conservancy [EC].

- EPCAMR staff collaborated in making a map/brochure of potential ATV trails in Luzerne County. Luzerne County has no official ATV trails marked in any state databases available at the PA Spatial Data Access (PASDA) Server, but this was one of the deliverables promised in the POLARIS TRAILS grant. EPCAMR staff improvised with abandoned rail road lines and overlaid the ones that were being developed into hiking and biking rail trails. The remaining abandoned rail lines are potentially available for (and probably already are unofficial) ATV trails. A promotional video was also another deliverable promised which staff will begin work on even though the grant was supposed to be closed out by the end of the month.
- Began formulating a plan to scan maps from Earth Conservancy's Blue Coal Corporation Mine Map Collection. Learned the method as to how the maps were stored in EC's map room and discovered a "cipher" to coal mine vein nomenclature from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Era.
- Corresponded with Arielle Avashai, Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement (OSMRE) in Pittsburgh, to explain the mining feature symbology that EPCAMR developed for the Reclaimed Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System (RAMILS) GIS Tool. Arielle was tasked with creating similar symbology for the national eAMLIS website. Updated some layer files and transferred the files to her using Transferbigfiles.com. Provided an explanation on how to use "layer files" in ArcGIS.
- Ordered another set of black and yellow ink cartridges for the HP Plotter as printing the Mine Map Folios (predominantly colored black and yellow) for the various municipalities is using up ink relatively quickly. Attempted to troubleshoot a problem with some ink cartridges that the plotter would not accept. We assumed they were faulty and returned them to Staples where we ordered them.

[] - Denotes funding source where applicable.