Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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August 2010 Progress Report

Highlights:

- Created 2 maps and 1 GIS data compilation for EPCAMR partners.
- Provided 5 letters of support for 3 organizations submitting grants & screened a video of and wrote a publication for the draft AMD Formation EE Directive
- EPCAMR staff attended a TIPS earthVision Training, hosted a NAAMLP site tour, sampled 3 discharges, certified 1 VISTA in water monitoring & sampled water levels in 15 boreholes.
- Transferred www.orangewaternetwork.org to www.epcamr.org and reformatted homepage. New "green" and free webhosting. Helped update www.huberbreaker.org

Education and Outreach:

- Provided a letter of support to the Columbia County Conservation District who resubmitted a proposal to the DEP Growing Greener Grant Program regarding a Catawissa Creek Monitoring Program.
- Aided EPCAMR VISTA, Wren Dugan, as she filmed Pollution Posse cartoon character Coal Face standing over the Espy Run Discharge. This video footage was sent to WPCAMR Watershed Outreach Coordinator, Anne Daymut, for the AMD Formation educational video.
- Created EPCAMR Program Manager Monthly report for the month of August, gathered other staff reports, posted them to www.orangewaternetwork.org and sent to PA DEP 319 program.
- EPCAMR staff collaborated on 2 letters of support to Eastern Middle Anthracite Region Recovery Inc. who resubmitted the proposals to the DEP Growing Greener Grant Program regarding a Nescopeck Creek Watershed Restoration Plan and a Treatment System to Remediate Black Creek.
- Provided 2 letters of support to Stream Restoration Inc. who submitted the proposals to the DEP Growing Greener Grant Program regarding an Operation and Maintenance Technical Assistance Program and a statement of collaboration on a Datashed.org Support Program.
- Made updates to the epcamr.org website based on a document called "Fire the Web Committee" by SpinWeb, a great document that lays out some common misconceptions and the building blocks of a good non-profit website.

  EPCAMR never really had a true "brochure website" (but have seen hundreds and created a few for partners with limited desktop programs). EPCAMR uses a database driven content management system (CMS), called CPG Nuke, which boasts quick page load times and supported flashy dynamic features. Back in 2002-2003 the homepage turned into a "What's New" page to get people hooked and join our cause. We started adding news scrolls and badges to connect to the "flavor of the month" and the history of our organization. We got a lot of good comments at first, but then it started to have way too much on the homepage and it became increasingly difficult to navigate to the real content. One person thought it was overloaded and looked like a TGI Fridays Restaurant.

Most of this was in response to some of the social networking sites that had been popping up and other group's success in recruitment / marketing with such web content. About a year ago, we made a fan page for EPCAMR on facebook and suggested that members go there for specific updates. We share news, project photos and use the list-serve features for upcoming events. There is a preview of the facebook fan site in a side bar on the EPCAMR.org site. Another plus is that EPCAMR staff share the updating responsibility for facebook now rather than 1 person whose responsibility (among many many other things) is to update the website.

So we have created a "happy medium" which displays our resources and content organized in less-colloquial categories with some text links to news, calendar, photo gallery and things that work better in a navigation bar. We like to think of our website now as clearinghouse and reference for issues that are important to our goals. We are working on possibly integrating more forms and an online store with instant payment, but are not setup to take credit card payments online and frankly do not want to after a little research. However, there is badge that hooks us up to accept funds through Network for Good.

- Created a web page to explain our "chalk board" style background. We acknowledge that our web pages may be in convenient to see and difficult to print off for some people, but there are inherent energy saving properties to the style. EPCAMR, being an environmental organization, just recently made the switch to Host Gator, a hosting company that derives some of its power from renewable "green" resources. This webhost is has also granted our non-profit with a year of free hosting through a Technology Grant.
- Printed and posted an article on "Writing content for the web" which explains the need for brevity and concise information, especially on the web. People will devote up to 15 minutes to reading something in print, however, attention spans on the web are measured in seconds. Paragraph structure is also different and should include bulleted points, double spaced line breaks and no indentation. Polished grammar is also a must. We will endeavor to follow these steps in future article and page creation.
- Visited the Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour in Scranton with EPCAMR VISTA to experience a room and pillar anthracite mine (I had not been on the mine tour since the AMR Conference in 2004).
- Screened the draft AMD Formation video that WPCAMR Watershed Outreach Coordinator, Anne Daymut, posted to youtube.com. Provided comments about what to update or change.

Technical Assistance:

- Aided the Huber Breaker Preservation Society (HBPS) in another update to their website since a recent mishap which deleted their new site from the web servers and no backup was created. The site was built on EPCAMR's Technical Assistance Center laptop that was taken from the office in June. Downloaded a backup of www.huberbreaker.org from NEPA Digital acquired the files from the company that previously hosted the site. Facilitated new website creation for the HBPS with Bill Frantz, BRF Designs, who built the website for the group in a WordPress.org format, a very easy CMS web page builder to learn and maintain.
- Updated the domain registrations for epcamr.org and huberbreaker.org to reflect the new information for each organization and new name servers to direct visitors to the new website hosting locations.
- Sampled 3 AMD Discharges and visited the Dundee Wetlands as a part of the Mine Drainage Field Monitoring and Stream Assessment Training and certification for Wren Dugan, EPCAMR VISTA. Aided VISTA with flow calculation back in the office with a flow calculator excel spreadsheet. Recorded these flow and chemistry values in an EPCAMR Sampling Database and uploaded them to Datashed.org.
- Filled out 2 forms on HostGator.com to transfer files from orangewaternetwork.org to epcamr.org. This will be the new domain and homepage for EPCAMR. The oragnewaternetwork.org site will become a redirect once ownership issues are straightened out.

- Sent a PDF of Bureau of Mines Technical Paper 727 to Carl Orechovsky, keeper of the archive site, www.oldforgecoalmine.com. Carl has just about all of the other reports and continually looks for more to archive with this site.
- Continued to find "hard coded" links within the EPCAMR.org website that referred back to www.orangewaternetwork.org and changed them to relative links that point to EPCAMR.org. Found and fixed some broken links with a tool provided in cPanel by Host Gator. Researched and fixed a security issue in CPG Nuke that locked me out of EPCAMR.org.
- Setup a projector and laptop for the National Association for Abandoned Mine Land Programs Conference Field Trip attendees who had just visited the Huber Breaker (behind our office). John Dziak, Greater Pittston Historical Society, presented information on the Knox Mine Disaster used the setup to show a video.
- Attended the 4 day Introduction to earthVision 2D & 3D Modeling Training at the Office of Surface Mining's (OSM) Appalachian Region Field Office Training Center in Pittsburgh as the only non-government organization in the Technical Innovation and Professional Services (TIPS) program. Learned some basics of the program and the use of certain tools within the software. Also got tips directly from Mike Dunn, the trainer, on how to get the modeler to properly display the gridded Buck Mountain vein along the Sharp Mountain in the southern anthracite coal field. Dynamic Graphics conceded that it has to do with the fact that the software improperly handles surfaces with more than a 45 degree dip. It may actually be able to grid slopes less than 90 degree if it was not connected to the rest of the data. Raw data along the Sharp Mountain should be clipped from the original dataset and modeled separately.
- Prepared a narrative report and associated expenses for the Mine Pool Mapping Initiative from July to September 2010.
- Created a map for Audubon PA showing the Important Bird Breeding Areas and AMD Impacted Streams and requested.
- Created a map for geologist Jim LaRegina showing mine pool elevations related to a project in downtown Scranton. This project also had wells that measured the depth of water but these measurements were different than borehole water level depths. There could be 2 reasons for this: there is a fault very near there which could be holding water at a different level at the BAMR borehole location or the fact that Jim's wells were dug in bedrock instead of mines.
- Requested borehole sampling maps from Kim Snyder and Todd Wood of the PA DEP BAMR office in Wilkes-Barre. The maps will be helpful in relocating the boreholes and knowing which ones are paved over.
- Showed the new www.HuberBreaker.org website to Ray Clarke, HBPS, for final approval and sat down with Bill Frantz to learn how to update / maintain the website and will pass this information on to HBPS volunteers.
- EPCAMR Staff raveled around Scranton to complete round of testing the water level in 15 boreholes in the Scranton Metropolitan Mine Pool with LRCA staff. Relocated the boreholes from a printed map that was developed from the Borehole Layer provided by PA DEP and memory of the route that was taken in the last 2 sampling events. Once close we used the field GPS setup with ArcPAD to lead us directly to the boreholes (within feet). Revisisted some boreholes that were paved over and might have missed one that was accessible, but a map with that information will be developed for future trips.
- Compiled a GIS files related to the Mine Pool Mapping Initiative for Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC), a project partner in the Anthracite Strategy Initiative. This data is still in draft format and will not be released to the public until a peer review has taken place.