

EPCAMR and WPCAMR

Joint Abandoned Mine Reclamation Coalition Visioning Session

Final Report

11/18/2025

Introduction

Pennsylvania is unique in that it has two non-profit organizations specifically dedicated to Abandoned Coal Mine Reclamation (AMR), one for each of its coal regions.

The Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR) works primarily in the Anthracite region of Northeastern Pennsylvania and The Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (WPCAMR) working primarily in the Bituminous coal region of Western Pennsylvania. While both of these organizations are dedicated to improving environmental and health and safety issues related to abandoned coal mines in their respective regions, they do provide services throughout both coal regions and, on occasion, work together on statewide projects and with larger organizations on issues of national significance.

Both organizations were formed by a coalition of county conservation districts along with landowners, industry and state government agencies.

WPCAMR was the first to be formed in 1981 while EPCAMR formed in 1996.

The guiding principles of both coalitions continue to be similar in that the two organizations center their work around all things related to Abandoned Mine Reclamation (AMR) however, each organization takes a different approach based on their strengths and abilities.

In order to explore how the two organizations may be able to work together on joint projects, a visioning session was held in November of 2024 at the Penn Stater Hotel in State College. Funded by a grant from

the Foundation for PA Watersheds, this visioning session, the first of its kind between the two organizations, resulted in a list of potential projects for the *PCAMRs. The agenda and meeting notes are listed in Appendices A and B respectively.

Participants

Most of the participants were Board members from both EPCAMR and WPCAMR. Other partnering organizations/agencies were invited to participate. Deb Nardone, Executive Director of the Foundation for PA Watersheds served as the facilitator.

Our Work and the Lay of the Land

EPCAMR and WPCAMR made short presentations on their work to date. Threats/opportunities/needs were identified by the participants. Participants were also asked to state how they would describe EPCAMR and/or WPCAMR's work from their perspective.

Brainstorming Process

Participants were then asked to join work groups, each group tasked with specific opportunities that were identified. Work group members made suggestions on how the *PCAMRs can work cooperatively on these opportunities, determine who the partners could be, and where to get the resources (funding).

The top opportunities (buckets) along with suggestions on how to approach proposed projects in each opportunity were identified and recorded as potential projects below in “Outcome”.

Outcomes

The following are outcomes from the visioning session for future collaboration. These are the top 3 or 4 potential projects within each opportunity where the *PCAMRs can collaborate.

1. AMD Hub/Info Clearing House:

- Create an online forum (Similar to Rivernetwork) – being able to upload files (photos, pdfs) to share issues, discussion threads, subscribe to topics.
- Offer Quarterly Technical Webinars to the public – offer Professional Development Hours (PDHs).
- Publish Podcasts.

2. Advocacy, Legislation + Policy:

- Continue the education of new legislators and staffers on AMD/AML
 - Tell the story with good #s (downstream strategies approach)
 - Prioritize educating legislators (eg, Thompson, Capito in WV, McCormick, Bresnahan)
- Development of a consistent message.
- Joint Op-Ed with EPCAMR/WPCAMR signing off on it
- Opinion article development.

3. Technical Assistance:

- Create OM&R 1-page fact sheets – with staff turnover in Districts, it would be helpful to have a cheat sheet for new staff on operation and maintenance on the most common treatment systems.
- Have quarterly (or biannual) meetings to chat about treatment system ideas (5-10 minutes “what we do” presentations time for Q&A).
- Study on uses for mine pool water statewide (ex. potable water, flush water, or industrial process water). Making it attractive to industry. EMARR study on infiltration points into mine pools, Hazleton mandate on water use restrictions and potentially a second pipeline taking water out of Lehigh River (outside of the watershed). Brickwall at Hazleton Water Authority. General Electric have info on a electro-plating similar system (in a trailer). Stratified water...
- Energy development on AML/AMD and the NIMBY aspect. Hydroelectric. Geothermal. Solar. Wind. Technical symposium or track at the AMR Conference.

4. Administration & Organization Capacity Needs:

- Be an admin hub for other organizations in need of help with their grant-funded projects (federal or otherwise):
- Provide project management and/or services through various hired contractors:
 - Legal needs
 - Policy assistance
 - Grant management
 - Accounting services/ Auditor services
- Need survey of what’s needed most by the community
- How to fund:
 - DEP Funding (specific to BIL)
 - Philanthropy (non-BIL)

Appendix A
Agenda

Joint Abandoned Mine Reclamation Coalition (*CAMR) Visioning Session
Agenda

Friday, November 22, 2024

- 1) Purpose of today
- 2) Lay of the Land
 - a) Threats + opportunities
 - b) What you've done to date
 - c) Where + who are our allies
- 3) What do you want to...
 - a) Accomplish between now + 2030?
 - b) What would our collective efforts achieve?
 - c) What will PA look like?
- 4) Outcomes:
 - i) Joint work – existing needed
 - ii) Priorities
- 5) Breakdown of top 2-3 Ideas:
 - i) What does it look like
 - ii) What needs to happen to accomplish this idea/goal?
 - iii) Who is our partner?
- 6) Resource Needs:
 - i) What do we currently have?
 - ii) What do we need?
 - iii) Who will fund it?
 - iv) Who is lead?
 - v) How will we check in?

Appendix B
Meeting Notes

Purpose of Meeting

Bring together our community to develop a shared strategy that lays out the work ahead. This is not meant to add a significant amount of work on top of what the *CAMRS already do. It's meant to focus on common, joint strategies for collaboration and funding.

Lay of the Land

Current collaborative projects between the *PCAMRs

Question 1: How has a *CAMR assisted you?

1. Technical knowledge NTTP training program (chemistry heavy)
2. Seeing how different projects work in other counties
3. Quick Response fixed a treatment system after hurricane damage (class A trout stream)
4. Liaison and information to partner with and reach out to a larger group of NGOs
5. Bringing projects to the table for funding
6. Local interface with public and landowners (Ex. Shamokin Creek Tour)
7. Email requesting underground mine mapping research
8. Landowner easements to Catawissa Creek (post cleanup fishing)
9. Fiduciary for funds from FPW
10. Policy aspect and share information about policy with NGOs and stakeholders
11. Collaborated on projects (Ex datashed, POWR CWO study)
12. Crucial to networking Pennsylvania in particular
13. SGL has many treatment systems and help with coordination, rehab and sampling.
14. Helpful to have staff on other boards to help coordinate
15. Tire cleanups with community.
16. Institutional knowledge is key in helping put things on the ground
17. ARIPPA and Quick Response is helpful to have access to those funds
18. Video production
19. Still looking to get to NTTP training
20. Networking opportunities at the annual conferences
21. Like having personable staff to relate to and help with Watershed Specialist job in general.

22. Ability to meet with funders and government employees via the CAMR connection.
23. Networking to provide good designs for treatment systems to the AML/AMD community and industry
24. Getting to know the mix of groups CAMRs are connected with.
25. Mentoring the next generation
26. Reclaim as much AML and treat as much AMD as possible. CAMRs are a good starting point to get to the different projects. Roughly 17 years left for BIL funding. We need to spend it. Taking full 30% for long-term OM&R, minefires(?), and subsidence (after BIL).
27. Help to improve upon subaward process and property owner interest
28. Access to WCAP funding through OSMRE
29. Emerging technologies to watch develop
30. Policy work for STREAM Act to become law
31. Asking the right questions and approach at the right angle to reach favorable terms for everyone in PA
32. Understand the definition of perpetual treatment. Needs to be maintained
33. Land reclamation is a part of water reclamation as well. Things can be done to reduce AMD. (Classes offered by NTP. Another class?)
34. Communications with people in Harrisburg and DC what to ask who to talk to. Funding is important to local groups success. On the other hand legislators want to know what is being done with “their” money
35. Quarterly meetings are important for relaying feedback on projects and funding flow
36. Help with engineering with respect to hydraulics of mine pools (ex. HECRAS(?) modeling that wasn’t making sense).
37. Looking at the mines for MSI at the landowner level.
38. Help with advocacy and support for ARIPPA
39. Working thru CAMRs as partners for cleanups via the ARIPPA AMD/AML Award
40. Shared passion for cold clean water and brook trout.
41. Provided technical support on field work
42. Spread awareness of the issues
43. Plot posters for educational displays
44. Website help
45. Gives CAMR staff the reason to do what we do
46. Roundtable discussion about projects (watershed reports) at quarterly meetings lead to problem solving

Question 2: Name one thing you needed support for in the AMD/AML world that no one is covering.

1. Facilitate problem solving all year round. Like a forum, database, resource hub... Searchable...
2. Keep treatment systems and organizations going in perpetuity
3. Telling the story of what clean water means.
4. How to meet federal guidelines and be compliant with 2CFR200
5. Mine insurance program?
6. Smaller groups that don't have the admin support to get the big grants. Capacity issues.
7. Legislative support for OSMRE BIL report in 2026 and questions need to be answered. To relay not only bean counting to legislators but economic impact (ex. property tax values). Tell the story to the public as well. Relates to #3
8. Getting funding for sampling AMD and treatment system sampling then also a good lab to take it to (ex. PACE is the only one now)
9. Common struggle with intakes for treatment system and maintenance. Relates to #1
10. Administrative capacity for all NGOs... an administrative HUB? Relates to #2
11. Unified policies (ex. procurement) across subrecipient requirements
12. Lost 2 important advocates in Congress. We need to get back to Congress and remind them of the issues.
13. Success stories through videography (ask PEC).
14. More local (county) success story tours invite locals and legislators.
15. AMLER (Economic Development on "other" AML Priorities vs. BIL (AML Priorities 1 & 2)
16. Unified voice for AML education and policy.
17. Rebranding? Co branding as the PA Coalition for AMR? Unified logos, website, resource hub, publications, mission and strategic plan.
18. Capacity building and resource sharing – evaluate strength of each org and utilize their strengths.
19. Fill gaps in story telling, sampling analysis, communications and resource sharing.
20. Statewide strategy development.

Break Outs: top needs and actions where CAMRs can coordinate over the next 2 years:

1. AMD hub - place for information and resources, central clearinghouse...
2. Advocacy, legislation and policy – tell the story about reclamation in PA...
3. Technical assistance and project support – GIS help, outreach to landowners, OM&R, fiduciary for grants...
4. Administration and Organizational Capacity of CAMRs and NGOs – internal operations and how to fund it...

Brainstorm discussion of potential projects for future collaboration (What and Why)

1) AMD Hub/Info Clearing House (Education + Outreach):

- a) Online Forum (RiverNetwork) – being able to upload files (photos, pdfs) to share issues, discussion threads, subscribe to topics
- b) Overhaul of all Websites: AML clearing house, wpcamr.org, epcamr.org
- c) Quarterly Technical Webinars – offer PDHs
- d) Storytelling – panels of successful projects (graphically)
- e) Virtual Fishing Derby w/Education focus
- f) Joint Rebranding of E/WPCAMRs
- g) Conference Growth
- h) Podcast

2) Advocacy, Legislation + Policy:

- a) Education of new legislators and staffers on AMD/AML
 - i) Federal and State Officials
 - ii) Tell the story with good #s
 - (1) Economic benefits + impacts
 - (2) Job creation
 - (3) Recreational
 - (4) Property value
 - (5) Wildlife habitat
 - (i) How do we quantify it? (downstream strategies approach)
- b) Development of a consistent message
- c) Joint Op-Ed with EPCAMR/WPCAMR signing off on it
- d) Opinion article development
- e) Prioritize educating legislators (GT, Shelly Mor Caputo, Braun, McCormick, Bresnahan)

- f) Become a part of the Choose Clean Water Coalition
 - i) Peter Marx
 - ii) Kristen Reilly
 - (1) 300+ organizations (Bay-centric)
- g) Find out more about similar efforts (ie. ORSANCO, Ohio River Watershed)
- h) Get AMD in the equation along with Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and sediment into Chesapeake Bay Model to receive nutrient reduction credits
- i) Target the Chesapeake Bay members of the Chesapeake Bay Caucus on AMD/AML
- j) Facilitate tours with legislators and state + federal officials to AMD/AML sites that are reclaimed, remediated, and restored
- k) Promote alternative clean energy projects (solar on AML, geothermal, metals recovery)
- l) **Get involved (do our own) in podcasts and video production**
 - i) On YouTube (for example) explain topics, successes etc. like our AML campaign
 - ii) Introduce/Interview key players, even do virtual tours
 - iii) Live Stream – to engage audience
 - iv) Commercials/sponsors
- m) Continue to educate the public, local watershed folks, on advocacy, legislation, and how to take action and connect to legislators as constituents (take them into the watersheds)

3) Technical Assistance - GIS help, outreach to landowners, OM&R, fiduciary for grants: Top 4 Ideas Highlighted

- a) **OM&R 1-page fact sheets – with staff turnover would be helpful to have a cheat sheet for new staff on operation and maintenance on the most common treatment systems.**
- b) Sub Reddit, having an AMD specific list serve like watershed specialist list serve from PACD is helpful (and regional ones)
- c) **Have quarterly (biannual) meetings to chat about treatment system ideas (5-10 minutes “what we do” presentations time for Q&A).**
- d) Funding to retroactively have a consultant make an O&M plan. Not with BIL, but with foundation sources or TU Technical Assistance Program for example.
- e) Use BIL funds to fund a position (person) to maintain a system.
- f) Maintaining institutional knowledge can be an issue. If previous WS still work at district it's good.
- g) Passive Treatment Protection Program (maintenance is a good idea, but not currently funded) Potentially funded by FPW or other foundations?
- h) Extra points if you have O&M plan and/or trust funding for a BIL. Follow Somerset model for OM&R trust fund

- i) Work with BAMR to setup an OM&R trust fund (going forward 2/3 of treatment systems they have decided to touch)
- j) Creating procurement template, solicitor on retainer... 2CFR200 assistance.
- k) Study on uses for mine pool water statewide (ex. potable water, flush water, or industrial process water). Making it attractive to industry. EMARR study on infiltration points into mine pools, Hazleton mandate on water use restrictions and potentially a second pipeline taking water out of Lehigh River (outside of the watershed). Brickwall at Hazleton Water Authority. General Electric have info on an electro-plating similar system (in a trailer). Stratified water...
- l) Energy development on AML/AMD and NIMBY aspect. Hydroelectric. Geothermal. Solar. Wind. Technical symposium or track at the AMR Conference.
- m) General development... Local land development ordinances within 1/2 mile of mining study needed to show how mines could impact your project. CAMRs could be a source to research and satisfy that ordinance (Charge a fee?).
- n) Continue Technical training and expand (like NTPP). Potentially invite consultants as well.
- o) Fiduciary to hold the funds is OK, but if it takes more administrative support CAMRs would need additional funding from that grant potentially.
- p) Education for NGOs on typical landowner issues. DEP BAMR likely has experience with that landowner of AML or AMD lands.
- q) Mine subsidence insurance education for insurance agencies.
- r) AMD staging assistance – how stage projects to implement and then maintain in perpetuity?

4) Administration & Organization Capacity Needs:

- a) Admin Hub:
 - i) Project management
 - ii) Legal
 - iii) Policy
 - iv) Grant management
 - v) Account + Auditor
- b) Need survey of what's needed most
- c) How?
 - i) DEP Funding (specific to BIL)
 - ii) Philanthropy (non-BIL)

Clear up direct/indirect issue for BIL

Discussion of current and future financial and staffing needs for the *PCAMRs (Who and How)

Who is lead, how is it funded, who is missing and who has stock in the discussion?

**This session was cut short due to an impending storm. More discussion needed...

1. AMD hub - place for information and resources, central clearinghouse...
 - How - engineering firms sponsor the forum/podcast (1h)
 - Who - OSM Hydrologists for guest speakers on forum/podcast (1h)
 - Look into separate group (online forum) created by River Network (ask PEC) (1a)
 - Promote <http://education.epcamr.org> is EPCAMR's EE Hub
2. Advocacy, legislation and policy – tell the story about reclamation in PA...
 - See “hows” in brainstorming section. More discussion needed...
3. Technical assistance and project support – GIS help, outreach to landowners, OM&R, fiduciary for grants...
 - Discussion skipped due to time. More discussion needed...
4. Administration and Organizational Capacity of CAMRs and NGOs – internal operations and how to fund it...
 - How – DEP funding, specifically for BIL funded projects, allows admin money and keep accountants, auditors and legal on retainer at one CAMR for both and NGOs (4c)

Another survey on specific needs in light of POWR CWO survey (4b)

