

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Welcomes Newest Affiliate, Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation



Mark Jones, AmeriCorps VISTA, Laura Rinehimer, EPCAMR Watershed Education and Outreach Specialist, Robert Hughes, EPCAMR Executive Director, Kylie McCutcheon, Affiliate Coordinator, KPB, Maria Gereda, GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist

Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR) has officially become an affiliate of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. Their mission is to encourage the reclamation and redevelopment of land affected by past mining practices. This includes reducing hazards to health and safety, eliminating soil erosion, improving water quality, and returning land affected by past mining practices to productive use, thereby improving the economy of the region. The new Affiliate's service area includes the counties of Carbon, Columbia, Sullivan, and Northumberland.

EPCAMR successfully completed Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's comprehensive Community Assessment. This vital process gathered crucial data across six key areas: residents' attitudes towards litter and community image, existing litter prevention programs, community and beautification leaders, current waste and recycling policies, past and ongoing community revitalization efforts, and active volunteer groups. The insights gained will be instrumental in shaping a local plan aimed at transforming attitudes and behaviors around litter, recycling, beautification, and related issues.

EPCAMR has frequently organized or collaborated in community improvement programming such as illegal dumpsite cleanups, tree plantings and other beautification efforts in Luzerne County, where EPCAMR is headquartered, but has also successfully completed projects on abandoned mine lands, such as Centralia, Columbia County, and in sensitive watershed areas across its 16-county territory. EPCAMR estimates it has been involved in 90 cleanup events

over the past 25 years, engaging more than 1,600 volunteers. Those cleanups have collectively resulted in the removal of nearly 8,500 tires and 402,000 pounds of trash.

“EPCAMR should have become an affiliate many years ago but lacked the capacity to coordinate the efforts. Over the years, some of my best colleagues and friends have come from getting to know them personally while picking up trash or slinging tires in our communities. We engage youth, who then inspire their parents, and before you know it, we have entire families and multiple generations working together on cleanups, fostering pride, stewardship and care for our waterways and land. EPCAMR looks forward to building new coalitions with Keep PA Beautiful Advisory Committee members to strengthen and expand our community-led environmental restoration efforts,” said Bobby Hughes, EPCAMR Executive Director.

Maria Gereda, GIS Watershed Outreach Specialist, will serve as coordinator for the EPCAMR affiliate programs. The affiliate can be reached at mgereda@epcamr.org or 570-371-3522.

“Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is delighted to congratulate and welcome EPCAMR to our network. We are grateful that EPCAMR recognizes the value of our programs, tools, and resources in supporting and enhancing its works and we look forward to collaborating to broaden its impact across the region. We warmly welcome EPCAMR to our Affiliate Network,” said Shannon Reiter, Executive Director of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

For more information about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s local affiliates, visit keeppabeautiful.org and choose Affiliate Network. To inquire about starting an affiliate, contact Kylie McCutcheon at kmccutcheon@keeppabeautiful.org or 724-836-4121 x114.

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About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s vision is a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has supported hundreds of thousands of volunteers across the state in their community improvement efforts. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's core programming focuses on litter and illegal dump prevention, cleanup, community greening, and proper waste handling and sustainable practices. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful works with many partnering organizations on the state and grassroots level to accomplish our goal of a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc., the nation’s largest volunteer-based community action and education organization. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keeppabeautiful.org.