

# 2005 ABANDONED MINE LAND RECLAMATION AWARDS

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

United States Department of the Interior  
Office of Surface Mining



**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

## History and objectives of the program

The Surface Mining Law was enacted to ensure that lands mined for coal would be restored to original condition as part of the mining process, and to restore unreclaimed coal mined lands that were abandoned before 1977.

Today, abandoned mine land reclamation funded under the Surface Mining Law has eliminated thousands of dangerous health and safety problems resulting from abandoned mine lands throughout the country. Yet despite the country's significant progress in eliminating abandoned mine land problems, there is little public awareness that this reclamation has taken place. When there are highly visible scars at an unreclaimed landscape, most people recognize the legacy of past coal mining. But, after abandoned mine problems are eliminated and reclamation is complete, it is nearly impossible for any observer to see that health and safety problems once existed on the site. Ironically, the better the reclamation, the less apparent it is. Thus, the best reclamation is virtually invisible.

To give well-earned public recognition to those responsible for the nation's most outstanding achievements in abandoned mine land reclamation the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining began the annual Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards Program in 1992. The Program publicly recognizes outstanding abandoned mine land reclamation and publicizes exemplary reclamation techniques.

The process used to select the winners includes judging by those most closely involved with reclamation projects – state and federal reclamation program staff. Each state/tribal Abandoned Mine Land Program selects the best project within its state/tribal boundary. Nominations are posted on the Internet and using an electronic ballot, each director from state/tribal Abandoned Mine Land Programs and Office of Surface Mining Field Offices selected the winning reclamation by ranking the nominations. Four award winners are selected using this process – three regional awards and one national award. The nominations receiving the best score in each of the three coal regions are selected as "Regional Winners." The regional winner with the best score is selected the "National Winner." In addition, the public selects one project they think is best and the project receiving the most votes becomes the winner of the People's Choice Award.

COVER PHOTO: Abandoned 1950's and 60's mining in the Crabtree Fork watershed had caused sedimentation that completely filled this Dickenson County, Virginia stream channel. Rainfall caused frequent flooding of the roads and homes along the creek. When the award winning reclamation was complete, over 25,000 cubic yards of sediment were removed from 9,500 feet of stream channel. Today, with stream bank stabilization complete, flooding has been eliminated and the aquatic habitat is being restored.



Before reclamation at this Pennsylvania abandoned mine site, 10 deaths were reported. Today the dangerous hazards have been eliminated and the site reclaimed into a wildlife habitat that includes rich wetlands.

**Footnote 1. Organizations eligible to submit nominations:**

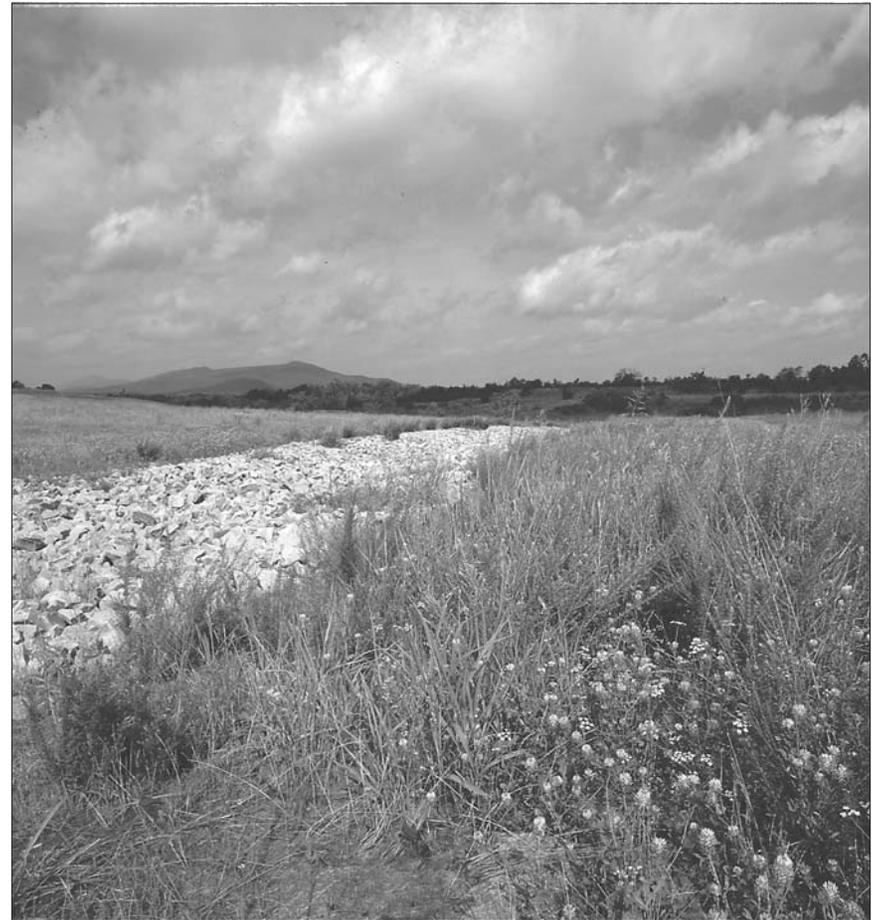
Alabama State Programs Division  
Alaska Division of Mining  
Arkansas Dept. Of Pollution Control and Ecology  
Colorado Office of Active and Inactive Mines  
Crow Tribe AML Program  
Hopi Tribe Abandoned Mine Land Program  
Illinois Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Division  
Indiana Division of Reclamation  
Iowa AML Program  
Kansas Surface Mining Section  
Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands  
Louisiana Injection and Mining Division  
Maryland Abandoned Mine Lands Section  
Missouri AML Section Land Reclamation Program  
Montana Abandoned Mine Reclamation Bureau  
Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Department  
New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division  
North Dakota AML Division  
Ohio Division of Mines and Reclamation  
Oklahoma AML Program  
Pennsylvania Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation  
Texas Surface Mining and Reclamation Division  
Utah Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program  
Virginia Division of Mine Land Reclamation  
West Virginia Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation  
Wyoming AML Program

**Footnote 2. Judges (one ballot accepted from each of the following):**

Administrator, Alabama State Programs Division  
AML Program Coordinator, Alaska Division of Mining  
Director, Albuquerque Field Office (Albuquerque, New Mexico)  
Regional Director, Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center  
Team Leader, OSM Appalachia Team (Ashland, Kentucky)  
Director, Arkansas Dept. Of Pollution Control and Ecology  
Director, Big Stone Gap Field Office (Big Stone Gap, Virginia)  
Director, Birmingham Field Office (Birmingham, Alabama)  
Director, Casper Field Office (Casper, Wyoming)  
Director, Charleston Field Office (Charleston, West Virginia)  
Director, Colorado Office of Active and Inactive Mines  
Manager, OSM Columbus Team (Columbus, Ohio)  
Director, Crow Tribe AML Program  
Director, Harrisburg Field Office (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania)  
Manager, Hopi Tribe Abandoned Mine Land Program  
Manager, Illinois Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Division  
Assistant-Director- Restoration, Indiana Division of Reclamation  
Director, Indianapolis Field Office (Indianapolis, Indiana)  
Chief, Iowa AML Coordinator  
Mining Section Chief, Kansas Surface Mining Section  
Director, Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands  
Director, Knoxville Field Office (Knoxville, Tennessee)  
Director, Lexington Field Office (Lexington, Kentucky)  
Director, Louisiana Injection and Mining Division  
Supervisor, Maryland Abandoned Mine Lands Section  
Regional Director, Mid-Continent Regional Coordinating Center (Alton, Illinois)  
Chief, Missouri AML Section Land Reclamation Program  
Chief, Montana Abandoned Mine Reclamation Bureau  
Director, Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Department  
AML Program Manager, New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division  
Director, North Dakota AML Division  
Natural Resources Administrator, Ohio Division of Mines and Reclamation  
Director, Oklahoma AML Program  
Manager, OSM Olympia Office (Olympia, Washington)  
Director, Pennsylvania Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation  
Team Leader, OSM Anthracite Team (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania)  
Director, Texas Surface Mining and Reclamation Division  
Director, Tulsa Field Office  
Chief, Utah Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program  
AML Manager, Virginia Division of Mine Land Reclamation  
Regional Director, Western Regional Coordinating Center (Denver, Colorado)  
Chief, West Virginia Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation  
Administrator, Wyoming AML Program

## What projects are eligible for an award?

Abandoned mine land projects funded wholly or in part by the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund and completed by approved state or tribal programs are eligible for an award. This includes all coal, non-coal, high-priority, and emergency projects. Abandoned mine reclamation projects completed under the Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP) are eligible if completed jointly with state/tribal programs. Abandoned mine reclamation completed by citizen groups or other (non-state/non-tribal) organizations are not eligible for these awards and may be recognized by the Office of Surface Mining under separate awards programs. One project may be submitted by each state/tribal program each year.



This joint Natural Resources Conservation Service/Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality project resulted from a cooperative agreement to reclaim abandoned mine sites together. Groundwater degradation and a dangerously crooked stretch of state highway were eliminated. This was an excellent synergistic opportunity between federal, state, and county authorities that saved thousands of dollars.

## The nomination and judging schedule.

The state/tribal Abandoned Mine Land programs (see footnote 1) provide nominations directly to the Office of Surface Mining Headquarters in Washington, D.C. by March 18, 2005, and judging begins on April 1, 2005.

The nominations will be posted in a special section of the Office of Surface Mining web site (including text, photos, maps, and diagrams) for review by all participants. A judging ballot listing all nominations will also be available at the web site. Participants will rank the nominations and return their completed ballots electronically to the Office of Surface Mining by April 30, 2005.

## Required information and format. (Nominations must use the following format)

### A. Non-graphic (text only) cover sheet containing:

1. Name and location of the nominated abandoned mine land reclamation project.
2. Name, organization, address, phone number(s) and email address of those submitting the nomination.
3. Project start and completion dates, construction costs, and name of organization(s) responsible for the reclamation (including construction contractor(s)).
4. Date submitted.

### B. Narrative description of the work that resulted in exemplary abandoned mine land reclamation.

The narrative should not exceed six single-spaced typewritten pages and should fully describe the abandoned mine problem including background and reclamation techniques used. The text should also contain photo captions and references to maps, diagrams, or other graphics.

### C. Color photographs (including maps, diagrams, or graphics).

The photos should show both the specific activity and the surrounding conditions. When examined with the narrative description, the photographs should provide a clear understanding of the exemplary reclamation accomplishments. "Before and after" photos are desirable; but, not required. Each nomination is limited to six photographs or other graphics (including maps or diagrams). One of the six photos should be identified as the "cover photo" that will be used on the web page containing the ballot. Photos (or other graphics) may only be included with the text if the nomination is provided as one file in Adobe Acrobat format.

### D. Format.

Each nomination package must contain the required information (described above) and be submitted in electronic format. The nomination package will be posted on the web in Adobe Acrobat format and may be submitted as one file in Acrobat (containing text and photos), or as a WordPerfect, or Word format file containing text and separate files containing photographs (or graphics) in .jpg format. All nominations must include the cover photo in .jpg format in a separate file. The nominations may be submitted via e-mail ([cmeyers@osmre.gov](mailto:cmeyers@osmre.gov)), or on CD or Zip disks.

Because the nomination text and photos are going to be downloaded by many people with slow computer connections it is important to keep the file size as small as possible. Photos should be no larger than 400 pixels on the largest dimension and be at screen resolution (72 dpi).

## Selection process for the 2005 awards.

Judging for the Regional and National Awards will be done by those most involved in the abandoned mine reclamation work. Ballots will be accepted from directors of state/tribal Abandoned Mine Land programs and Office of Surface Mining field locations that deal with abandoned mine reclamation.

One ballot will be accepted from each eligible office (see footnote 2). Each person submitting a ballot may rank any or all of the nominations (including his or her own.) It is suggested that all the nominations be ranked; however, it is not required. Completed ballots will contain a rank order of the nominations – from most worthy of an award (scored by giving it a rank of 1) to least worthy of an award (scored by giving it the last number in the rank order). The nomination receiving the best average of the rank order scores on all the ballots received by April 30, 2005 will determine the winners. Regional awards will only be presented when two or more nominations are received from that region. In case of a tie, a coin toss will be used to break the tie. The announcement and presentation of the 2005 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards will be made during the Annual Conference of the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs.

The People's Choice Award will be selected by those visiting the Office of Surface Mining website and casting a vote for the one project they think is best. The nomination receiving the most votes will become the winner.

Address question regarding nominations or the award program to: Chuck Meyers at the Office of Surface Mining, Washington, D.C. 20240, Telephone (202) 208-7940, e-mail: [cmeyers@osmre.gov](mailto:cmeyers@osmre.gov).