



Office of Surface Mining
1951 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20240
www.osmre.gov

Office of Surface Mining

1998 Annual Report

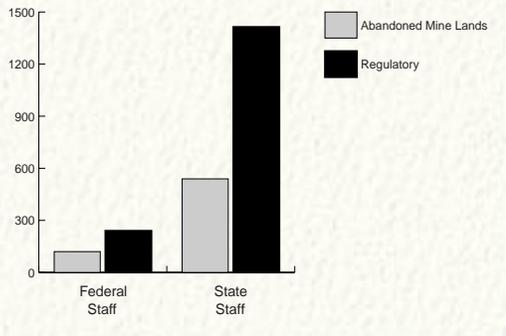


TODAY'S COAL MINE RECLAMATION

A look at the successful Office of Surface Mining programs and our new improvement initiatives that will make the Office of Surface Mining a model agency with *Better* Abandoned Mine Land reclamation, *Better* protection of people and the environment, *Better* service, and *Better* program operations.

Partnerships with states.

How can an agency as small as the Office of Surface Mining (about 650 employees nationwide) succeed in such a challenging responsibility? Only by partnerships with the states where coal is mined. The Surface Mining Law gives primary responsibility for regulating surface coal mine reclamation to the states themselves, a responsibility that 24 coal states have chosen to exercise. On federal lands and Indian Reservations (Navajo, Hopi, Crow), and in the coal states that have not set up regulatory programs of their own, the Office of Surface Mining or states with cooperative agreements issue the coal mine permits, conduct the inspections, and handle the enforcement responsibilities.

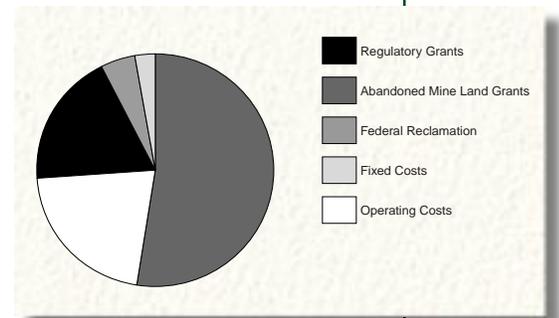


Citizen Participation.

The Surface Mining Law was written to ensure that coal is mined under stringent public safety and environmental protection standards. To help make sure there was compliance, the public was provided unprecedented citizen rights to participate at every step of the process. The architects of the law said, *"The success or failure of a national coal mining regulation program will depend, to a significant extent, on the role played by citizens in the regulatory process (H.R.95-218)."* Today citizens participate in mine permitting, inspection and enforcement during mining, review of Notices of Violation and Cessation Orders, and bond release. In addition, citizens report abandoned mine hazards and complete on-the-ground reclamation projects through the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative.

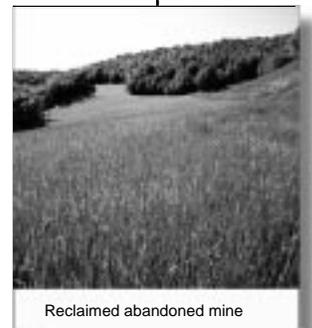
Funds for mine reclamation.

The Office of Surface Mining's current annual budget is approximately \$278 million. That sum enables the Office of Surface Mining to support the states' mining programs by matching their regulation and enforcement costs dollar for dollar. It also pays 100 percent of the costs for restoring abandoned mines that were left unreclaimed before the Law was passed in 1977. Funds for reclaiming abandoned mines come from tonnage-based reclamation fees paid by America's active coal mines.



On-the-ground results.

Past coal mining abuses have been halted. Coal mine operators now reclaim the land as they go. Mined lands are no longer abandoned without proper reclamation. More than 19,000 acres of pre-1977 dangerous abandoned mine waste piles have been restored to productive use. Over 2.7 million linear feet of dangerous cliff-like highwalls have been eliminated. More than 20,000 dangerous abandoned portals and hazardous vertical openings have been sealed.



The 24 primacy states.

Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Organization.

Functionally, the Office of Surface Mining is organized around the two principal requirements of the Surface Mining Law: regulating active coal mining and reclaiming abandoned mines. It is a field-oriented organization, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., three regional coordinating centers, 10 field offices, and six area offices.

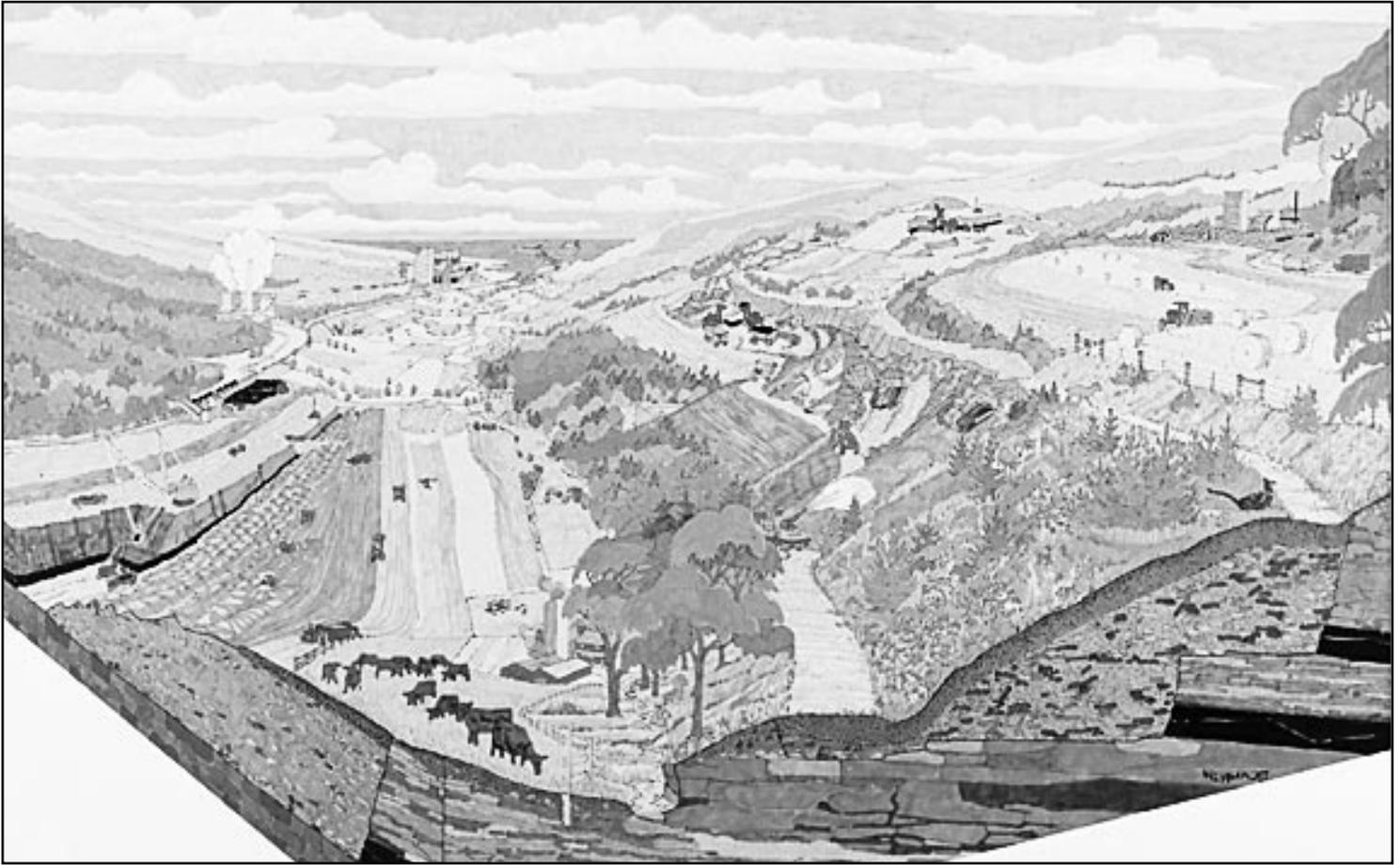


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Coal mining and reclamation under the Surface Mining Law



Mining and reclamation procedures that meet the Surface Mining Law's requirements are illustrated above for each of the three major surface coal mining methods: area mining, contour mining, and mountaintop removal mining. The three methods involve the same basic procedures: Clearing the land of trees and other vegetation, removing the topsoil and overburden, removing the coal, and reclaiming the land. Although all three methods would not likely be seen in one view such as this, the mining and reclamation methods can be compared to get a basic understanding of reclamation processes under the Surface Mining Law.

Area Mining

The area mining method is commonly used to mine coal in the flat to moderately rolling terrain found principally in the Western and Midwestern States. This method is shown on the left side of the illustration where the overburden is excavated down to a coal seam and then the mining area is enlarged horizontally to expose and remove the coal. The area mining operation in the illustration is on land that was formerly used for farming. As can be seen, the agricultural use is being reestablished immediately following reclamation. The mining is proceeding across the land toward the left side of the area. The initial excavation was made far enough away from the stream along the right edge of the area to prevent damage to the stream. The coal under most of the area has been removed, and reclamation has been completed on some of the land. For example, some of the cattle in the foreground and those in the feedlot behind the silo are grazing on reclaimed land that was previously mined by this operation.

Contour Mining

The contour mining method is typically used in the mountainous terrain of the Eastern U.S., where coal seams are exposed in outcrops on mountainsides. This method can be seen in the center of the illustration. The contour mining operation in the illustration is removing multiple seams of coal. Reclamation has been completed in the foreground. Active mining is proceeding around the hill in the middle foreground. In the completed reclamation area shown in the center foreground of the illustration, seedling trees and shrubs were hand planted to enhance the wildlife habitat, stabilize the site, and provide a long-term economic return from the reclaimed land.

Mountaintop Removal Mining

The mountaintop removal method is used predominantly in the East to remove coal underlying the tops of mountains. Instead of mining along the contour around the perimeter of a mountain, the top of the mountain is area mined and either returned to its approximate original contour or removed entirely. Either procedure results in almost 100 percent removal of the coal seam. The flat or very gently rolling area on the right side of the illustration is land reclaimed after a mountaintop removal operation was completed. The illustration shows a mined area reclaimed for agricultural use in the foreground, and for the site of a new village in the background. In the far background to the left of this reclaimed operation, another mountaintop removal operation is underway on an adjacent hilltop.

A color poster of this illustration can be ordered directly from the Office of Surface Mining web site (www.osmre.gov/poster) or calling (202) 208-2719.

1998 IMPLEMENTATION OF STATUS OF ACTIVE COAL MINING

	Permitted Acreage	Disturbed Acreage	Mines Free of Offsite Impacts	Percent of mines free of offsite impacts	Acres of Phase I Bond Release	Acres of Phase II Bond Release	Acres of Phase III Bond Release
Alabama	90,614	NA	243	87	2,451	2,535	5,744
Alaska	8,393	1,189	6	100	0	0	0
Arkansas	1,395	1,387	12	75	0	0	0
California	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	192,849	22,010	56	92	3,985	484	5,203
Crow Tribe	5,439	2,655	1	100	0	0	0
Georgia	NA	141	4	67	0	0	0
Hopi Tribe	6,152	65	2	100	0	0	0
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	142,500	73,494	100	93	2,135	2,279	1,877
Indiana	266,100	147,633	224	92	8,549	8,080	5,500
Iowa	8,600	2,876	13	46	0	0	0
Kansas	6,200	4,801	15	94	0	0	3
Kentucky	1,617,513	NA	2,728	96	13,899	9,104	20,639
Louisiana	45,100	17,200	1	50	0	0	0
Maryland	6,500	6,253	60	94	85	244	257
Michigan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi	1,908	0	1	100	0	0	0
Missouri	13,900	13,788	62	93	879	1,312	411
Montana	59,012	26,061	10	100	0	0	0
Navajo Tribe	80,877	30,523	8	100	0	0	0
New Mexico	74,074	19,661	15	100	0	0	0
North Carolina	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Dakota	70,100	43,442	12	100	738	925	1,360
Ohio	134,800	79,300	535	94	6,546	9,069	5,778
Oklahoma	36,600	35,944	98	93	1,776	1,557	3,758
Oregon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	482,000	NA	2,194	91	9,023	15,032	19,065
Rhode Island	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	27,044	15,465	358	96	3,422	2,336	1,295
Texas	244,500	130,875	9	43	11,010	10,727	6,519
Utah	146,248	2,530	26	87	0	0	123
Virginia	59,410	40,837	603	89	800	598	2,306
Washington	14,582	6,774	2	100	0	0	0
West Virginia	286,400	NA	2,909	95	9,374	7,064	6,559
Wyoming	319,470	62,043	36	90	0	0	0
CERT ¹	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Total	4,448,280	786,947	10,345	93	74,672	71,346	86,394

THE SURFACE MINING LAW COST TO RECLAIM REMAINING ABANDONED MINE LAND HAZARDS²

Dangerous Highwalls	Dangerous Piles and Embankments	Hazardous Water Body	Portals	Polluted Water: Human Consumption	Subsidence	Underground Mine Fires	Vertical Openings	
\$19,322,409	\$2,621,543	\$680,404	\$449,600	\$565,000	\$1,575	\$0	\$82,500	Alabama
38,108,815	0	0	0	0	0	0	56,100	Alaska
9,724,959	1,322,000	4,445,615	47,000	0	150,000	0	35,000	Arkansas
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,000	California
30,000	0	0	134,060	0	13,130,000	10,900,000	1,240,967	Colorado
0	70,100	0	125,000	0	80,000	0	0	CrowTribe
325,000	0	0	39,000	0	0	0	0	Georgia
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Hopi Tribe
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	Idaho
3,357,251	1,404,400	63,480	43,400	0	19,077,699	0	578,436	Illinois
1,055,123	175,000	376,500	24,000	0	3,199,632	0	112,000	Indiana
3,407,911	4,031,500	2,028,225	0	460,900	1,150,000	0	26,000	Iowa
2,327,839	8,912,889	36,000	0	262,500	55,801,950	0	510,800	Kansas
3,778,131	9,325,724	2,458,730	1,861,490	3,258,943	130,259,000	7,548,186	470,286	Kentucky
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Louisiana
416,854	3,482,160	357,140	58,000	188,000	35,000	2,750,000	28,400	Maryland
0	0	0	0	0	86,000	0	1,305,000	Michigan
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Mississippi
1,817,400	4,402,254	218,601	79,000	2,436,209	28,320,000	0	154,100	Missouri
150,000	140,000	0	18,000	0	0	260,000	12,000	Montana
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Navajo Tribe
0	121,000	0	491,716	0	100,000	0	157,000	New Mexico
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	North Carolina
18,732,150	105,000	0	50,000	7,500	14,045,563	0	75,002	North Dakota
3,809,698	270,300	499,029	228,443	4,372,751	7,796,390	0	515,943	Ohio
72,267,212	2,455,750	9,325,861	317,000	430,000	5,275,000	0	204,000	Oklahoma
0	0	0	119,000	0	5,000	0	35,000	Oregon
112,439,638	157,595,721	24,547,162	1,537,611	4,268,662	43,684,580	592,538,800	3,438,046	Pennsylvania
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Rhode Island
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	South Dakota
2,594,750	1,240,000	640,000	946,680	237,000	0	0	61,000	Tennessee
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Texas
990,000	231,000	0	222,356	0	1,215,000	21,095,100	2,433	Utah
11,050,406	6,887,736	1,005,502	3,670,000	4,086,487	1,600,000	4,037,500	21,609,246	Virginia
1,100,000	4,850	0	363,500	0	1,567,500	0	696,250	Washington
202,519,804	64,481,087	288,744	8,399,722	105,581,204	49,154,708	8,305,315	1,732,675	West Virginia
0	0	0	6,000	0	21,000	73,000	0	Wyoming
0	100,000	0	38,000	0	0	0	13,000	CERT ¹
\$509,325,350	\$269,380,014	\$46,970,993	\$19,268,578	\$126,155,156	\$375,755,597	\$647,507,901	\$33,166,184	Total

1. CERT - Council of Energy Resources Tribes.

2. This is only a partial listing of remaining Abandoned Mine Land hazards.

Answers to the 10 most frequently asked questions

1. How many acres of land were disturbed by mining and how many were reclaimed last year?

Answer: Disturbed acreage has not been compiled in the past; however, in 1998 it was collected in most of the states¹ and 786,947 acres were disturbed by coal mining. The number of acres permitted and released from bond are the statistics currently used to describe the coal mining and reclamation. During 1998, 4,448,280² acres were under permit, and 86,394 acres were released from Phase 3 (complete reclamation) bond.

2. How many Notices of Violation (NOV's) and Cessation Orders (CO's) were issued to mine operators last year, and how does this compare with the previous year?

Answer: During 1998, state regulatory authorities (and the Office of Surface Mining in the federal program states of Tennessee and Washington) issued 4,840 NOV's and 388 CO's. The Office of Surface Mining issued an additional 48 NOV's and 17 CO's under its oversight responsibility. This compares with 5,577 NOV's and 534 CO's plus 47 oversight NOV's and 26 oversight CO's in 1997.

3. How much coal was produced last year, and how does this compare with the previous years?

Answer: In 1997³ U.S. coal production was 1,055,673,147 tons, an increase of 23,482,017 tons from 1996.

4. How many acres of (specific) abandoned mine problems have been reclaimed since 1978?

Answer: Abandoned mine land reclamation accomplishments for the period 1978-1998 are not all measured in acres. For example, open vertical mine shafts are one of the most dangerous abandoned mine land hazards; however, in most cases they cover less than 100 square feet. As a result, abandoned mine land hazards are reported in units of linear feet and miles, acreage, gallons/minute, and actual count. A complete listing of accomplishments since 1978 is reported in Table 4 (pages 12 and 13) of this Annual Report.

5. How many oversight inspections did the Office of Surface Mining complete last year?

Answer: In 1998 the Office of Surface Mining completed 2,495 inspections (1,143 complete/1,352 partial).

6. What published information is available from the Office of Surface Mining that shows mining and reclamation under the Surface Mining Law?

Answer: The Office of Surface Mining has several publications that describe and illustrate mining and reclamation under the Surface Mining Law. All are available at no cost by requesting copies.

Mining and Reclamation Poster. An educational poster containing text and an illustration of mining and reclamation under the Surface Mining Law.

1998 Reclamation Awards (video). An on-the-ground look at the 1998 award winning coal mining reclamation throughout the country.

20th Anniversary of the Surface Mining Law. An illustrated booklet briefly describes the Law, its implementation, and presents seven illustrated case studies showing on-the-ground reclamation under the Law.

7. I think a mine operator is (mining on my property, changing the contour of the land, etc.), can I see the mine plan that is being used for this operation?

Answer: Yes. Once the complete permit application has been submitted by the mine operator it is public information. Copies can be reviewed at local public libraries in the county where the operation is located or the state regulatory office in primary states or Office of Surface Mining offices in Tennessee and Washington.

8. How many dollars are currently in the Abandoned Mine Land Fund, and how many have been spent for reclamation?

Answer: From January 30, 1978, when the first fees were paid, through September 30, 1998, the fund collected \$5,096,777,642 and the balance as of September 30, 1998 was \$1,351,564,994. Since 1979, when states began receiving abandoned mine land reclamation grants, \$3,745,212,648 has been distributed from the fund, including \$111,119,084 that was distributed to the United Mine Worker's Combined Benefit Fund. Reclamation projects completed by the Office of Surface Mining since 1978 total \$690,479,333. The remaining expenditures included: the Rural Abandoned Mine Land Program, the Small Operator Assistance Program, technical support for state programs, fund administration, and fee compliance.

9. My company has a new product that greatly improves reclamation. Does the Office of Surface Mining have a list of recommended products and name and address of mining company contacts?

Answer: Office of Surface Mining does not endorse products. In addition, product recommendations are not made (verbally or in regulations) to state regulators or mine company employees. Lists containing coal mining company personnel and address are commercially available (e.g., Intertec Publishing Company's Keystone Coal Industry Manual). These lists are the best source for identifying industry contacts.

10. I do not think the (specific mine operation) is following the Surface Mining Law, who should I contact to give me information on this specific situation?

Answer: If you think a mine operator is not following the law you should contact your state regulatory office (see page 68), or the Office of Surface Mining if you are located in Tennessee, Washington, or the Crow, Navajo, Hopi, or Ute Indian reservations (see page 67).

1. Alabama, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia did not report disturbed acreage.

2. Permitted acreage was not reported for Georgia in 1998.

3. Fiscal Year 1998 coal production statistics will not be available until the end of the first quarter of 1999 (January 1, 1999).

What does coal mining and reclamation look like?



Most people have never viewed an active coal mine or had a chance to see its similarity to modern highway construction or other major earth-moving operations. These photos show the sequence of steps that are found at most coal mines. The photos are all taken from the same viewing point over a three-year period.

It is September and the photo to the left shows the first step in the mining process. The land in the foreground was cleared of trees and shrubs. Topsoil was removed and stored for use during reclamation. Overburden was removed to expose the coal

seam. The cliff-like highwall marks the boundary of the initial mining operation. The next cut will remove another section of overburden as the mine progresses toward the background.

By May (right) the mine had moved across the area and piled the rock overburden where the coal had been extracted.



During May the next year (lower, right), the land was being regraded to its original topography. In the foreground the topsoil had been replaced and a grass cover crop planted. This step in the reclamation had been planned to coincide with the spring season, and grass will soon cover the reclaimed hillside.



In August the next year (below) a grain crop was harvested from the reclaimed land. Although still in the final stages of reclamation the land is already looking more like a typical rural Ohio landscape than a surface coal mine. Operating under the Surface Mining Law this mine has removed the coal and returned the land to productive use. This is a very different picture of coal mining and reclamation than people remember before the Surface Mining Law was passed in 1977.



Work of the Office of Surface Mining ensures that environmental standards are met and the land is restored to a condition that will support productive land uses in the future.

The Office of Surface Mining at a glance

Contact us for help or additional information

Olympia Office

Evergreen Plaza Bldg.
711 South Capitol Way, Suite 703
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 753-9538

Mid-Continent Regional Coordinating Center

(Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri)
Alton Federal Bldg.
501 Belle Street, Rm 216
Alton, IL 62002
(618) 463-6460

Indianapolis Field Office

(Indiana and Illinois)
Milton-Capehart Fed. Bldg.
575 North Pennsylvania St., Rm 301
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 226-6166, ext. 186

Columbus Team

(Ohio)
4480 Refugee Road, Suite 201
Columbus, OH 43232
(412) 937-2153

Casper Field Office

(Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Crow Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)
100 East B St., Rm. 2128
Casper, WY 82601-1918
(307) 261-6550

Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center

(Maryland)
Three Parkway Center
Pittsburgh, PA 15220
(412) 937-2828

Western Regional Coordinating Center

(Alaska, Colorado, Utah, Washington, and Indian Land)
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 844-1401

Harrisburg Field Office

(Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island)
Harrisburg Transportation Center
415 Market Street, Suite 3C
Harrisburg, PA 17101
(717) 782-4036

Headquarters

1951 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240
(202) 208-4006

Albuquerque Field Office

(Arizona, California, New Mexico, Navajo Tribe, Hopi Tribe, and Ute Tribe)
505 Marquette Ave., NW, Suite 1200
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 248-5070

Charleston Field Office

(West Virginia)
1027 Virginia Street, East
Charleston, WV 25301
(304) 347-7157

Tulsa Field Office

(Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and)
5100 E. Skelly Dr., Suite 470
Tulsa, OK 74135-6548
(918) 581-6430, Ext. 23

Big Stone Gap Field Office

(Virginia)
1941 Neeley Road, Suite 201
Compartment 16
Big Stone Gap, VA 24219
(540) 523-0001

Birmingham Field Office

(Alabama and Mississippi)
135 Gemini Circle, Suite 215
Homewood, AL 35209
(205) 290-7287, ext. 16

Knoxville Field Office

(Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee)
530 Gay St., Suite 500
Knoxville, TN 37902
(423) 545-4103

Madisonville Area Office

100 YMCA Drive
Madisonville, KY 42431
(502) 825-4500

Lexington Field Office

(Kentucky)
2675 Regency Road
Lexington, KY 40503-2922
(606) 233-2894

Johnstown Area Office

Richland Professional Bldg.
334 Bloomfield St., Suite 104
Johnstown, PA 15904
(814) 533-4223

London Area Office

P.O. Box 1048
London, KY 40741
(606) 878-6440

Pikeville Area Office

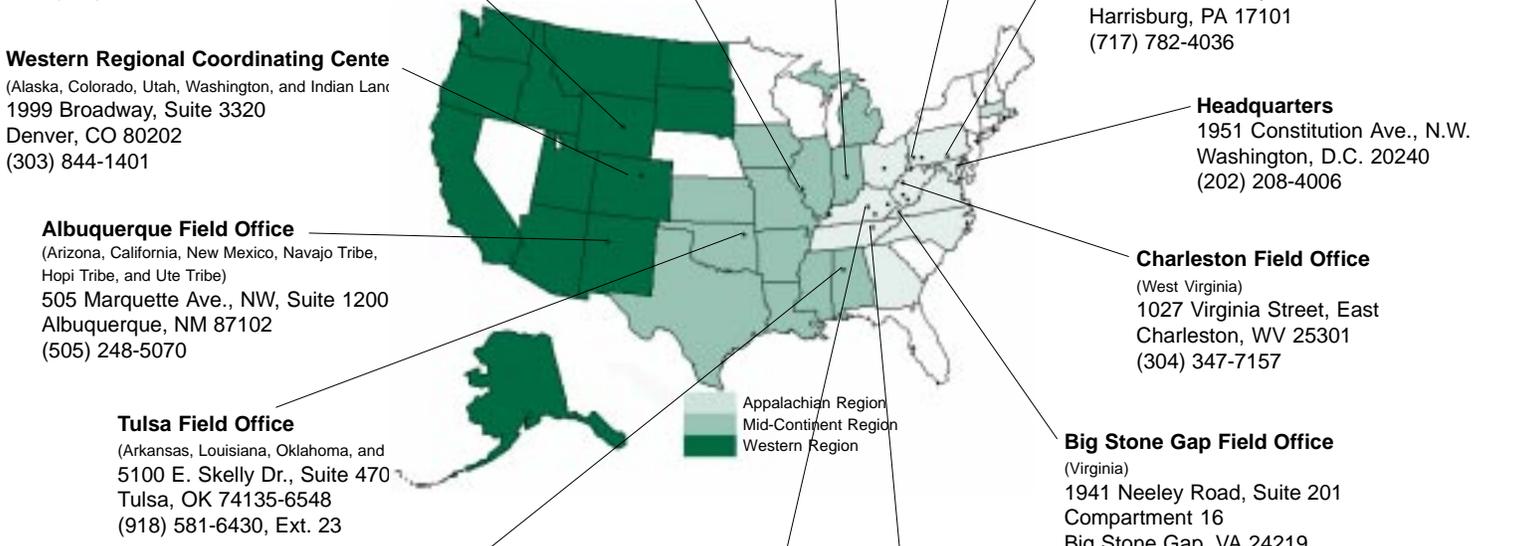
Matewan Bank Bldg.
334 Main Street, Rm. 409
Pikeville, KY 41501
(606) 878-6440

Beckley Area Office

323 Harper Park Dr., Suite 3
Beckley, WV 25801
(304) 255-5265

Morgantown Area Office

P.O. Box 886
Morgantown, WV 26507-0886
(304) 291-4004



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A look at mine reclamation

Twenty-one years ago, the Office of Surface Mining began its role of implementing the Surface Mining Law. Today, on-the-ground conditions are vastly improved in the coal fields and we are still focused on improving both the regulatory process and reclamation of abandoned mine hazards.

From its inception as a small regulatory bureau in the Department of the Interior, the Office of Surface Mining has struggled to change the way we thought about and accomplished coal mining and reclamation. It was difficult in the early years. The coal industry was required to prevent environmental degradation during mining and had to reclaim all mine sites. Citizens felt a sense of urgency and a need to quickly eliminate the traditional problems caused by coal mining. From this experience everyone learned and matured. And, today the idea of environmentally safe coal mining and reclamation is the accepted practice.

This report is not about the first 21 years of the Office of Surface Mining. It is about today and conditions at the active and abandoned mine reclamation sites throughout the country. In addition to the 1998 description of the activities, accomplishments, and finances, this report provides a picture of on-the-ground conditions at reclaimed active and abandoned coal mines that show the standard that is set for future operations.