

# Message from the Acting Director



Fiscal Year 2009 was a year of change for the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM). The Obama Administration brought with it the charge of better protecting the environment and the public from environmental hazards associated with surface coal mining operations. OSM thus embarked on, among other things, the writing of new rules on stream protection and improving its oversight of state and tribal regulatory programs.

Other highlights in Fiscal Year 2009 include our Abandoned Mine Land grant program's distribution of more than \$298 million to state and tribal agencies, an increase of more than \$24 million from the previous year. These locally spent dollars maintained or created hundreds of well-paying jobs across the country. At the same time, our regulatory grants to states and tribes also increased to more than \$68 million — up more than \$8 million from Fiscal Year 2008 — helping states to better implement their regulatory programs under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.

In June 2009, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar signed an interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of the Army, committing to better coordination among Federal efforts to reduce the environmental impact of surface coal mining in the Appalachian region.

As part of that MOU, OSM announced new oversight initiatives in November 2009. Among other things, the initiatives described how OSM would increase the number of inspections and review more state-issued mining permits. OSM also announced it would promulgate a rule designed to improve stream protection during mining.

We plan to continue the momentum generated in 2009 as we build on our past successes and find new ways to better protect the environment from the adverse effects of coal mining and assist the states and tribes to better implement the Surface Mining Act while striking the balance between meeting America's energy needs and protecting the environment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Glenda H. Owens".

Glenda Owens, Acting Director,  
Fiscal Year 2009  
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.