



U.S. Office of Surface Mining

# News Release



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## **National Mining Association (NMA), PA Coal Association Join Reforestation Initiative**

(Washington DC) - Leading organizations representing the nation's coal mining companies last week "took the pledge" to work toward planting more trees on mined lands.

In a ceremony during the annual awards for exemplary mine reclamation, OSM Director Jeffrey Jarrett welcomed the National Mining Association (NMA) and the Pennsylvania Coal Association to the growing list of mine operators, state regulatory authorities, academics, environmental and citizen groups who are combining forces to establish forests on mined land throughout Appalachia. The partnership is called the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI).

President and CEO Kraig Naasz signed for NMA and Gary E. Slagel of Consol Energy, Inc. signed as a member of the Pennsylvania Coal Association's board of directors.

The more than 100 signatories to the Statement of Mutual Intent have pledged to use proven techniques to promote ARRI's goal of planting high-value hardwood trees and ensuring their growth and survival. The partnership works through a cooperative process that secures landowner permission for forestry use, develops permits supporting proven forestry techniques and selecting tree species that will grow into the forests that existed before mining.

ARRI membership includes OSM and State Regulatory personnel from the seven Appalachian states along with forestry and reclamation experts from universities across the country. ARRI was formed in December, 2004 and through the cooperative efforts of members began planting trees on reclaimed land in the spring of 2005, drawing attention to the initiative.

"Over the last 50 years of surface mining in Appalachia, the vast majority of mined land was originally forest," noted Brent Wahlquist, OSM's Appalachian Regional Director, at the inaugural event. "It is our hope that through this initiative, perhaps 50 or 100 years from now, it can be forest again, and be virtually indistinguishable from the rest of the landscape."

For additional information on ARRI, its projects and other reclamation initiatives visit the OSM website at [www.osmre.gov](http://www.osmre.gov). The ARRI site is at <http://arri.osmre.gov/>

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