



U.S. Office of Surface Mining

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OSM to Recognize 2010 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Award Winners

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSM) will recognize today five Abandoned Mine Land (AML) projects for their exceptional reclamation results.

Abandoned Mine Land programs in Maryland, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Virginia will receive OSM's 2010 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards at a banquet hosted by the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs in Scranton, Pennsylvania, this evening. The award recipients were determined by a panel of judges who selected one winning reclamation project in each of OSM's three regions, one small project award winner, and one project as representing the best reclamation project nationwide.

"These winners are to be commended for their remarkable success in eliminating the dangers these abandoned mine sites posed to the public and the environment," [OSM Director Joe Pizarchik](#) said. "The benefits that high-quality abandoned mine reclamation provides to surrounding communities are many: minimizing safety hazards, eliminating hazardous runoffs into streams, and turning eyesores into attractive landscapes. The AML Program demonstrates what state and Federal partnerships can achieve for communities," he added.

The winners of the 2010 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards are:

National Award: The project judged to be the best in the country is the Crellin Elementary School Environmental Remediation and Education Project located in Garrett County, Maryland. This project was submitted by the State of Maryland's Department of the Environment, Abandoned Mine Lands Division. The project team installed a treatment system that stopped acid mine drainage from continuing to contaminate a stream that flows next to an elementary school. The project enhanced 280 feet of stream bank and returned the five-acre site to more natural conditions. The reclamation team also provided an educational opportunity for students by building a walkway and vernal pool at the reclaimed site to allow students to access and observe wetland processes.

Small Project Award: This award is given annually to an exceptional reclamation project that costs less than \$1 million to complete. This year's award-winning project is the Cranes Nest Gob Pile project located in Wise County, Virginia. Submitted by the Division of Mine Land Reclamation, Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, the project involved remediating a gob pile, or coal waste, at an abandoned mine site that was damaging the

quality of Clinch River watershed. To help address this environmental hazard, the project removed the entire gob pile. The project also eliminated a 200-foot-long highwall on the site and restored the land's natural appearance. To further conform to the surrounding natural environment, 3,600 native hardwood seedlings were planted throughout the site.

Western Regional Award: The Western Regional Award is the Temple Mountain Project located in Emery County, Utah. This project was submitted by the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining's Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program. The project safeguarded more than 140 hazardous mine openings left by a century of uranium mining activity. Steel gates, masonry walls, earthen backfills, and foam plugs were used to block entry to the abandoned mine openings. The project emphasized the area's historic mining heritage by causing the least possible disturbance to the existing look of the mine sites.

Mid-Continent Regional Award: The Mid-Continent Regional Award-winning project is the 61st Street North S.W. AML Reclamation Project in Wagoner County, Oklahoma. This project was submitted by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission's Abandoned Mine Land Program. The abandoned mine site contained features that endangered visitors, including a 20-foot-tall highwall and a 20-foot-deep body of water. The reclamation project also created four acres of new wetlands to the site, adding to an existing, six-acre wetland. In addition, 2,000 bare-root trees specifically selected to correlate with the soil conditions were planted at the site, improving the habitat for wildlife.

Appalachian Regional Award: The Appalachian Regional Award is the Barnes-Watkins Refuse Pile Reclamation Project located in Cambria County, Pennsylvania. Submitted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation, the Barnes-Watkins refuse pile contained 1.3 million tons of coal refuse and covered 18 acres of land. Situated on the bank of and, in some locations, directly in the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, the refuse pile was causing significant water quality damage. In addition to dramatically improving the water chemistry of the West Branch Susquehanna River, this project also removed material burning within the refuse pile that posed air quality concerns for nearby residents.

Begun in 1992, OSM's Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards showcase exemplary reclamation techniques. AML projects funded wholly or in part and completed by approved state or tribal programs are eligible for the awards, which cover coal, non-coal, and emergency reclamation projects. A panel of judges, composed of directors of state reclamation programs and OSM managers, voted to determine the winners.

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OSM and its state and tribal partners are responsible under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) for reclaiming and restoring land and water degraded by mining operations abandoned before this law was passed. OSM administers a fund, which it collects from a fee on current coal production nationwide, that pays for reclamation work. In Fiscal Year 2010 alone, [OSM has allocated \\$369 million in AML funds](#). In addition to providing for funding to reclaim abandoned mine lands, SMCRA requires mine operators to protect citizens and the environment from the hazards posed by surface coal mining and restore mine lands to beneficial uses once mining is completed.