



## Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Announces Winners of 2014 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards and 2014 National Awards for Excellence in Surface Mining

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) today announced the winners of the bureau's [award programs honoring top-quality projects](#) that reclaim surface coal mines.

Part of OSMRE's Congressionally mandated mission is to ensure that coal mines are reclaimed after mining is complete, including the reclamation of mines abandoned before the enactment of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). For decades, the bureau has recognized state agencies and coal mining companies with two separate annual award programs: one for high-quality reclamation projects at mines abandoned before 1977, the other for reclamation of mines that began operating after the passage of the law.



The Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards recognize outstanding abandoned mine land reclamation in the United States. Only projects funded wholly or in part and completed by approved state or tribal regulatory programs are eligible to win. A panel of judges, composed of directors of state reclamation programs and OSMRE managers, vote to determine the winners.

The winners of the 2014 [Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards](#) are:

**National Award:** AML Site 309, Mill Creek Highwall Project, in Pike County, Indiana, for addressing an extremely dangerous highwall adjacent to a heavily travelled road. The project also rebuilt the county road to improve public safety and implemented natural stream morphology to benefit the community and the environment.

**Appalachian Region:** The Aaron Run Watershed AMD Remediation Project, in Westernport, Maryland, for the project's help in reintroducing native brook trout to Aaron Run by eliminating acid mine drainage (AMD) inflow and raising the pH of the stream to meet Maryland's water quality standards.

**Mid-Continent Region:** The Goff AML Reclamation Project, in Marion County, Iowa, for eliminating dangerous highwalls, piles and embankments, pit ponds, and industrial/residential waste. The scope and complexity of the project meant that partnerships had to be forged among industry, landowners, and local conservation groups in order to succeed.

**Western Region:** Smith Hill Coal Mine Reclamation, in Crested Butte, Colorado, for helping to eliminate a significant amount of coal waste on Smith Hill Mine. The project improved the habitat, reduced the instability and erosion of the waste, and improved the functionality of the





land, which is used for recreational purposes and as a cattle load-out area.

**Small Project Award:** Big Ben Emergency Shaft Project, in Springfield, Missouri, for the project's help re-laying and stabilizing the foundations of two homes that were affected by a subsidence issue caused by an abandoned vertical mine shaft.

OSMRE will present the awards at the annual conference of the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs in Columbus, Ohio, September 21-24, 2014, during the AML Awards Banquet.

The [Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Awards](#) are presented to coal mining companies that achieve the most exemplary mining and reclamation in the country. Typically, winners demonstrate a commitment to using sound mining practices and executing effective reclamation plans designed to enhance post-mining beneficial use of the land.



The 2014 Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Award winners are:

**National Award:** Red Hills Mine, Mississippi Lignite Mining Company, in Ackerman, Mississippi, for its use of naturally available materials for reconstructed steam bank stabilization. The operator's reclamation efforts allowed the habitat to quickly recover to pre-mining health.

**National Award:** Antelope Coal Mine, Cloud Peak Energy, in Gillette, Wyoming, for the company's successful control of cheatgrass on reclaimed lands through innovative husbandry practices. Antelope Mine has successfully overcome the challenge of establishing and maintaining a sustainable native plant community that will meet or exceed criteria that an operation must meet in order for its reclamation bond to be released.

**Good Neighbor Award:** Alpha Natural Resources, Elk Run Coal Company, Inc., in Boone County, West Virginia, for its significant contributions each year to communities near Elk Run Coal Company. Alpha Natural Resources has donated to local charitable causes, provided numerous volunteer hours to the community, and provided equipment and resources for other projects.

OSMRE will recognize each company's achievements at the National Mining Association Awards Luncheon on October 27, 2014, at the Hyatt Regency in Washington, D.C.

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