

News Release



Office of Surface Mining Reclamation & Enforcement
A Bureau of the U. S. Department of the Interior

Date: November 6, 2017
Contact: [Christopher Holmes](#) (202) 208-7941

Two Mining Companies, and an Association of Mining Operators, Livestock and Agricultural Interests Win 2017 Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Reclamation Awards

Washington, DC – The [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement \(OSMRE\)](#) today recognized the winners of its 2017 Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Reclamation Awards. The [Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Reclamation Awards](#) are presented to coal mining companies that achieve the most exemplary coal mine reclamation in the nation. Past winners have demonstrated a commitment to sound mining practices and effective reclamation plans that enhanced the beneficial post-mining use of the land. OSMRE has honored high-quality coal mine land reclamation since 1986.

For the first time ever, OSMRE honored a reclamation project that resulted from collaboration between mining companies and non-mining groups. That effort was recognized with this year's Good Neighbor Award.

All winning projects went beyond reclamation requirements to achieve superior results in returning a site to productive use after completion of mining. A team of judges reviewed nominations and voted on projects based on the following criteria:

- Difficulty of achieving reclamation under existing conditions;
- Effectiveness of the on-site work;
- Transferability of the on-site practice to other reclamation projects;
- Increase in public awareness of the [Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act \(SMCRA\)](#);
- Long-term benefit to the community; and
- Extent to which project exceeds the spirit and intent of SMCRA.

This year's honorees were:

National Award

[*Cloud Peak Energy*](#)

[*Spring Creek Coal, LLC – Spring Creek Mine*](#)

Decker, Montana

The judges chose Cloud Peak's Spring Creek Mine as one of two National Award Winners based on the company's innovative use of soil mixtures and a variety of planted and seeded vegetation over a large area. The growth of a large assortment of plants led to greater and denser habitat for threatened wildlife such as sage grouse, as well as songbirds, raptors, rabbits, mule deer and pronghorn antelope.

OSMRE News Release continued

National Award

[Arch Coal](#)

[Coal-Mac LLC – Pine Creek 2 Surface Mine](#)

Omar, West Virginia

The judges awarded Coal-Mac's Pine Creek 2 Surface Mine a National Award based on the development and use of multiple techniques to control threats to water quality, such as selenium pollution, total dissolved solids, and conductivity. The company isolated and treated spoil that might lead to higher selenium pollution. The company also developed bioreactor systems to control selenium from entering into water that leaves the mine site leading to a 90% reduction in selenium discharges. Coal-Mac also utilized alternate topsoil material for planting in reclaimed sites leading to better vegetation in those areas.

Good Neighbor Award

[Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association](#)

Arch Coal, Inc.; Cloud Peak Energy, Inc.; Contura Energy, Inc.; Kiewit Mining Group, Inc.; Peabody Energy – Five Coal Mining Companies in Northeastern Wyoming

Douglas, Wyoming

The judges selected the Thunder Basin association for its innovative collaboration between non-coal organizations and coal companies to enhance area-wide reclamation. The association began in 1998, as a collection of 24 livestock and agricultural producers. The first coal company joined the group in 2001. Two years later, five more coal companies joined the collaboration. Over 14 years, the group has worked to maintain responsible economic use of land and mineral resources and effective stewardship of land and wildlife. The conservation effort covers more than 13 million acres, and the mining companies were integral to developing and then completing a comprehensive reclamation strategy in the area.

The Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Reclamation Awards is presented in partnership with the National Mining Association.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) carries out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 in cooperation with states and tribes. OSMRE's objectives are to ensure that coal mining activities are conducted in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, to ensure that the land is restored to beneficial use after mining, and to mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.

