

News Release

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



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Contact: [Christopher Holmes](#) (202) 208-7941

OSMRE Announces Winners of the 2018 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards

Bureau to Honor Five States for Exemplary Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation

WASHINGTON – The [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSMRE) is pleased to announce the winners of its 2018 [Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards](#). This year's winning projects represent the nation's highest achievements in Abandoned Mine Land (AML) reclamation demonstrating innovative reclamation techniques and completing reclamation that resulted in outstanding on-the-ground performance.

"As the Trump Administration continues to help establish a new American conservation legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt, I am honored to highlight the best examples of abandoned mine land reclamation," **said Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke**. "It takes the work of countless engaged citizens and public servants to ensure that future generations can enjoy and use all of our lands, including those that were mined and then left behind without reclamation. The states, local governments and citizen groups honored here have made a significant contribution to their communities, and to their nation, and they deserve recognition."



Established in 1992, the AML Reclamation Awards recognize exemplary state and tribal reclamation projects that reclaim coal mine sites that were abandoned prior to the signing of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). Eligible projects are funded wholly or in part by OSMRE's [AML Reclamation Fund](#). OSMRE's [AML Reclamation Program](#) addresses the hazards and environmental degradation posed by two centuries of U.S. coal mining that occurred before SMCRA.

State and tribal reclamation officials and OSMRE managers voted on this year's awards. Winners are being recognized in five categories:

National Award – Recognizes the overall highest-rated reclamation project

Logan Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Project

Mines and Minerals Bureau, Division of Soil Conservation
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Prior to reclamation, the site's barren, eroded spoil piles and pits were concealed by invasive shrubs, stunted trees, and a small plot of pines. The Logan Reclamation Project provided



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several opportunities to adopt and refine new approaches to overcome technical challenges. The site was seeded with plants that attract pollinators, in particular monarch butterflies. The effort is already showing results. The vegetation is attracting local wildlife, including a goose nest and a beaver dam.

Regional Awards - Honors the best projects in each of OSMRE's three regions

Appalachian Region Award

Joan Bernat Slide

Division of Abandoned Mine Lands
Kentucky Department of Natural Resources

The Joan Bernat Slide High Priority Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Project was completed at the historic coal camp town of Hardburly, near Hazard, Kentucky. In May 2016, local residents reported that a slide had occurred on a hillside above multiple residences and feared that further movement would threaten their homes. Hazard KDAML Emergency Branch personnel hastily worked to reroute the drainage above the slide, controlling drainage and silt from the slide, and improving drainage structures near the homes. The actions of the state and partners brought peace of mind to the residents of Hardburly.

Mid-Continent Award

Snow Hill Abandoned Mine Land Site 882

Division of Reclamation
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

The Snow Hill Abandoned Mine Land project addressed public safety concerns and environmental damage caused by two large, coarse, coal refuse piles, with a total area of 40 acres on each side of North Coal Creek in Vigo County, Indiana. Acid mine drainage and eroding coal refuse from the two refuse piles clogged the North Coal Creek channel and substantially degraded its water quality. The Division of Reclamation took actions to make the area safe for the community by installing drainage structures, establishing a wetland, and regrading the coal refuse embankments.

Western Region Award

Hydraulic Pit Reclamation Project

Abandoned Mine Land Program, Division of Mining, Land and Water,
Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Coal mined in the first half of the 20th century by various companies created 3.5 miles of large open pits along the south side of Healy Creek. The highwall extended for 1,600 feet in length and stood as high as 265 feet. The reclamation project eliminated the dangerous high wall, improved safety, conserved and improved water quality, enhanced wildlife habitat, and augmented recreation opportunities.



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Small Project Award – Recognizes a project that cost less than \$1 million and is in a state that receives less than \$6 million in AML funds

Mid-Lothian Mines Park

Division of Mined Land Reclamation

Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy

The historic Mid-Lothian Mines abandoned mine land features the remains of the first documented mining in Virginia's Richmond Coalfields. Unfortunately, the features were in serious disrepair and disintegration. Open shafts, subsidence areas and falling structures were huge safety hazards to the surrounding residential areas. After the landowner donated the land to Chester County, the state was able to close two vertical openings, stabilize and close two hazardous equipment and facilities structures, close one subsidence area, and stabilize two pits and three slumps. Today, the Mid-Lothian Historical Mines Park comprises the 42-acre reclamation site and is the most visited park in the county.

OSMRE will present its Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards during the annual conference of the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs in Williamsburg, VA, on Sept. 10, 2018.

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.

