

News Release

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 23, 2018

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

Alaska Program to Receive Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Award

*OSMRE to Honor Top Abandoned Mine Land
Reclamation Projects at Awards Presentation*

Washington, DC – The Federal Bureau that oversees the regulation of coal mining and restoration of abandoned mine lands is honoring an Alaska land and resource management agency with an award for abandoned mine reclamation.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) will honor the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Mining, Land, and Water's Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Program during a national conference of mine land reclamation professionals. Alaska's AML Program won the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Western Region Award for reclaiming the Hydraulic Pit, a 52-acre abandoned coal mine in the Healy area about 110 miles south of Fairbanks.



The Hydraulic Pit, mined in the late 1950s and 1960s, is one of several abandoned coal strip mines that operated in the Healy Valley between the 1920s and early 1970s. DNR's goals for the Hydraulic Pit reclamation project were to:

- Eliminate human health and safety hazards
- Improve water quality in receiving streams
- Enhance wildlife habitat
- Create additional recreational opportunities on state land

The Hydraulic Pit was more than 1,600 feet long with vertical highwalls, some exceeding 265 vertical feet. Approximately 805,000 cubic yards of material were regraded to eliminate the highwalls. The project area was revegetated with an approved seed mix and improvements in water quality have been documented downstream of the project. DNR will continue an intensive tree planting program to ensure long-term success.

DNR is continuing work to reclaim the remaining abandoned mine pits in this valley. Funding for these and other AML projects in Alaska are made possible by annual OSMRE grants. In FY 2018, Alaska's AML Program received \$2.8 million in OSMRE [AML funding](#).



OSMRE News Release continued

Alaska is among five recipients of the 2018 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards given for reclamation excellence. Awards are presented for the best reclamation project nationally, as well as the best project in each of OSMRE's three regions, and for the project that costs less than \$1 million and is in a state that receives less than \$6 million in AML funds. A panel of judges composed of directors of state and tribal reclamation programs and OSMRE managers voted to determine this year's awardees.

The other award winners are:

National Award

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Mines and Minerals Bureau, Division of Soil Conservation
Logan Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Project

Appalachian Region Award

Kentucky Department of Natural Resources
Division of Abandoned Mine Lands
Joan Bernat Slide Reclamation Project

Mid-Continent Region Award

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Reclamation
Abandoned Mine Land Site 882 - Snow Hill

Western Region Award

Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Abandoned Mine Land Program, Division of Mining, Land and Water
Hydraulic Pit Reclamation Project

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 September 10, 2018.

The AML Reclamation Awards, established in 1992, 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 US coal mining that occurred before SMCRA.

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.

