

# News Release

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Indiana Program Wins Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Award for Second Year in a Row

*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 Indiana environmental agency with an award for abandoned mine reclamation.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) will honor the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Reclamation, Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Program during a national gathering of mine land reclamation professionals. The Indiana DNR won the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Mid-Continent Region Award for reclamation work at the Snow Hill Abandoned Mine Land Site 882 in Vigo County, Indiana.



Last year, the Indiana DNR won the Mid-Continent Regional Award for reclamation work on the [Sugar Ridge Fish and Wildlife Area 2 Project](#).

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.

Acid mine drainage and eroding coal refuse from the two refuse piles clogged the North Coal Creek channel and substantially degraded its water quality. In addition, the steep, eroding coal refuse on either side of the creek was unstable and posed a danger to the public.

The Division of Reclamation took the following actions to make the area safe:

- Placed impermeable liners and subsurface drainage structures on the tops of the two refuse piles and covered them with three feet of fill
- Constructed a three-stage aerobic wetland and settling pond complex downstream of the refuse piles to encourage oxidation of dissolved iron and remove suspended iron oxides from the water column
- Regraded and stabilized coal refuse embankments



## OSMRE News Release continued

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The Indiana DNR, Division of Reclamation, Abandoned Mine Land Program oversaw the project design completed by ATC Group Services, LLC of Indianapolis and project construction activities completed by general contractor Kerns Excavating, LLC of Bruceville, Indiana.

In FY 2018, Indiana received \$8.1 million in [AML funding](#) from OSMRE.

Indiana 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 DNR Division of Reclamation administers the surface coal mining laws for the State of Indiana. The Inspection and Enforcement Section permits and inspects active coal mines. The AML Program is responsible for eliminating threats to the public and environment remaining from coal mining activity prior to the enactment of current law. All activities are funded through fees collected from active coal mining production. From 1982 to present, the AML Program has restored 1,126 AML construction sites with approximately 10,000 acres of pre-law abandoned coal mine related impacts. For more information, contact the DNR Division of Reclamation.

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*

### Western Region Award

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

### Small Project Award

Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy  
Division of Mined Land Reclamation  
*Mid-Lothian Mines Park*



## OSMRE News Release continued

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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 U.S 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.

