

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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Iowa Program to Receive National 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 Iowa agency with one of its highest awards for abandoned mine reclamation.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) will honor the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), Mines and Minerals Bureau during a national gathering of mine land reclamation professionals. IDALS won the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation National Award for reclamation work on the Logan Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Project in Mahaska County, Iowa.



The Logan abandoned mine site is located in the rolling hills of Southeast Iowa. Prior to reclamation, the site's barren and eroded spoil piles and pits were only host to invasive shrubs, stunted trees, and a small plot of pines.

The Logan reclamation project provided several opportunities to adopt and refine new approaches to overcome technical challenges:

- The reuse of downed trees as wood chips and compost
- Extensive floodplain creation
- Use of a waste bi-product from water treatment facilities as a high quality soil neutralizer

The site was seeded with plants that attract pollinators, in particular the monarch butterfly. The effort is already taking effect. Vegetation is attracting local wildlife, including a goose nest and a beaver dam. In an effort to engage with communities and improve reclamation, IDALS also partnered with the Pathfinders Resources Conservation and Development in Fairfield, Iowa to accomplish the Logan reclamation project.

In FY 2018, Iowa received \$2.8 million in [AML funding](#) from OSMRE. Iowa has not had any active coal mining since 1994, but the state does have over 300 AML sites in the national inventory and has completed reclamation of 104 sites. IDALS partners on



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reclamation with community groups such as the Pathfinders Resources Conservation and Development in Fairfield, Iowa, who helped complete the Logan project.

Iowa 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:

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

Small Project Award

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

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.

