

# News Release

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 26, 2019

Contact: [news@osmre.gov](mailto:news@osmre.gov) (202) 208-2565

## Colorado Program to Receive Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Award

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

**WASHINGTON** – The [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement \(OSMRE\)](#) will honor the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, Inactive Mine Reclamation Program (IMRP) during a national gathering of mine land reclamation professionals. Colorado’s IMRP won a regional [Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Award](#) for reclamation work at the Wise Hill Underground Fire Mitigation project in Moffat County, Colorado.

One of the biggest underground mine fires in Colorado burned for more than 70 years, frustrating repeated efforts to contain or extinguish it. After several unsuccessful attempts to suffocate it, the fire migrated thousands of feet, grew in size, and threatened a nearby coal mine, and a town. The fire also generated toxic gases and heat that could have ignited surface vegetation, potentially leading to wildfires. Colorado’s program used methods learned from a previous underground mine fire project to mitigate the threat and contain the fire deep underground, minimizing the danger of wildfire and toxic fumes.

In FY 2019, Colorado received \$3.1 million in Abandoned Mine Land (AML) funding from OSMRE.

Colorado is among five recipients of the 2019 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards recognizing reclamation excellence. Awards are presented for the best reclamation project nationally, as well as the best projects from around the country, and for the project that costs less than \$1 million and is in a state that receives less than \$6 million in annual 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:

### Small Project Award

#### **Marvel Gob Fire**

Alabama Department of Labor

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program



# OSMRE News Release continued

---

## Regional Awards

### **Roger Cornett Slide**

Kentucky Department for Natural Resources

Division of Abandoned Mine Lands

*Interior Region 1*

### **Narrow Lake AML Site 1805**

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Abandoned Mine Land Program, Division of Reclamation

*Interior Region 3*

## National Award

### **Dessecker Mine Project**

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Abandoned Mine Land Program, Division of Natural Resources

OSMRE will present the 2019 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards during the annual conference of the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on Sept. 9, 2019.

The Abandoned Mine Land 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.

