

# 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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## Interior officials tour Deckers Creek Abandoned Mine Land Treatment Site near Morgantown, West Virginia

*Tour highlighted positive economic and environmental impact for the community*

WASHINGTON – [Deputy Secretary of the Interior Kate MacGregor](#), Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement [Principal Deputy Director Lanny E. Erdos](#) and [Representative David McKinley](#) today visited Deckers Creek, near Morgantown, West Virginia. The group toured the treatment site and observed current conditions and reclamation efforts underway. During the tour, they discussed the Trump Administration’s continued efforts of cleaning up legacy mine sites, [Abandoned Mine Land \(AML\)](#) sites that are near opportunity zones, impacts to local economies and the importance of American energy independence.

Deckers Creek is an active fishery until it reaches the abandoned Richard Mine where acid mine drainage is leaking into the creek. To remedy the problem, the OSM and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection are developing an active treatment system to reclaim this location.

“The Trump Administration is proud to work hand in hand with West Virginia to ensure AML sites are reclaimed for the people here in the heart of coal country. From the mine and its 500 employees we met yesterday to the sites we saw today - both demonstrate how West Virginia can support the coal industry and ensure the state has clean air and water,” **said Deputy Secretary MacGregor.**

Over the past 43 years, OSM has provided millions of dollars in funding to help remove acid mine drainage in West Virginia waters, most notably in the Cheat River watershed, once known as one of the worst impacted waterways in the nation. In 2019, [West Virginia received \\$22.8 million in Abandoned Mine Land Funds](#) to reclaim abandoned coal mine lands.

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.



## OSMRE News Release continued

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“Working with our partners at the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, we continue to show tremendous success in cleaning up these legacy sites,” **said OSM Principal Deputy Director Erdos**. “I am excited for the day when we can say Deckard Creek will support fishing and outdoor recreation from start to finish.”

Utilizing money from OSM’s AML Fund, WVDEP is constructing an active treatment system that will treat the discharge with a lime doser, a water clarifier, settling ponds and pumping devices to remove precipitant from the acid mine drainage into a nearby mine void.

“The AML program is beneficial to states like West Virginia where we have hundreds of abandoned legacy mines. Cleaning up these sites is vital in helping revitalize communities and spur economic development,” **said Rep. McKinley**. “Thanks to the program, people will now be able to enjoy fun activities at Deckers Creek right here in our backyard. I look forward to the future of Deckers Creek and its role in bringing economic opportunity to the region.”

OSM provides AML grants to the 25 coal-producing states and three tribes based on a congressionally mandated formula that evaluates past and current coal production by these entities. Each year, after the distribution is announced, eligible states and tribes apply for annual reclamation grants to access money in their allocations. OSM evaluates and verifies the requests and makes the award amounts available.

The AML grants are funded in part by a fee collected on all coal produced in the United States. Under the AML Reclamation Program, OSM has distributed billions in grants to states and tribes. The funds have directly contributed to AML Reclamation Program achievements including the closure of over 45,000 abandoned underground mine shafts and openings, the elimination of over 960 miles of dangerous highwalls and the restoration of over 850,000 acres of clogged streams and land.

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