

DIRECTOR JOE PIZARCHIK'S AERIAL TOUR OF WEST VIRGINIA COALFIELDS JANUARY 21, 2010

An OSM Photo Essay

While in West Virginia, Director Joe Pizarchik took part in a two-hour flyover of many of the area's mountaintop mining sites. All of the stakeholders stressed the importance of seeing the size and scope of the industry from the air, saying that would provide an important backdrop to the discussions about employment, economic activity, environmental impact and reclamation. The 21 photos in this essay were taken from the helicopter that trailed Director Pizarchik's.



West Virginia mountaintops near Yeager Airport



A few of West Virginia's homesteads.



West Virginia's prison near Charleston, which rests on a reclaimed coal mining site.



The town of Montgomery, WV.



Reclaimed and active mining sites.



Another reclaimed mining site. The white tank-like structures are natural gas wells.



A newly reclaimed site that still features the marks of earthmoving equipment.



A newly reclaimed site which features a tree topped peak, which aids in seeding the elevations below. It is believed leaving trees behind speeds the reforestation effort and aids in mitigating erosion below.



A reclaimed valley fill



An active site and on the left, a mining refuse area.



A coal storage and transportation area.



An active pit showing evidence of area, contour and auger mining, with a highwall and some reclamation efforts in the background.



Multiple sediment control impoundments at the foot of a large valley fill.



A very large valley fill.



A valley fill operation in progress.



Another large contour mining operation involving multiple seams.



A wider view of the same area, showing how far back the operator has worked the seam. Some reclamation and mitigation activity is seen in the immediate foreground.



A mountaintop mine with large seams exposed, and some medium-sized valley fills.



A large impoundment with a coarse refuse bank (dark colored area) in the foreground.



The West Virginia helicopter carrying Director Pizarchik.

(L-R) OSM Field Office Director Roger Calhoun, WVDEP Mining Director Tom Clarke, Director Pizarchik, WVDEP's Lewis Halstead, WVDEP Inspector Benny Campbell, and OSM Appalachian Regional Director Tom Shope.

