

# News Release



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 31, 2017

Contact: [Christopher Holmes](#) (202) 208-7941

## OSMRE Announces Winners of the 2017 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards

*Bureau to Honor Five States During its  
25th AML Reclamation Awards Presentation*

**Washington, DC** – The [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSMRE) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2017 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation (AML) Awards. The AML 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 \(SMCRA\)](#).

OSMRE recognizes five categories of AML reclamation excellence. A panel of judges composed of directors of state and tribal reclamation programs and OSMRE managers voted to determine this year's awardees. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary award winners are:

### **National Award – Recognizes the overall highest-rated reclamation project**

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation  
*Huling Branch AML Reclamation/ATV Recreation and Watershed Improvement Project*

This AML reclamation project is responsible for the elimination of dangerous highwalls, removal of spoil piles and the reduction of acid mine drainage impacts on surface and groundwater. As a result the site is now open to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). The project team also used the [Forestry Reclamation Approach](#) to reforest the land.



### **Regional Awards – Honor the best projects in OSMRE's three regions**

#### Appalachian Region Award

Kentucky Department for Natural Resources  
Division of Abandoned Mine Lands  
*Bell Central School HP AML Reclamation Project*

This project stabilized a landslide area near a school access road and parking lot that posed a serious threat to student and staff safety. Reclamation was finally completed after previous unsuccessful attempts to secure funding.

# OSMRE News Release continued

---

## Mid-Continent Region Award

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Division of Reclamation AML Program

*Sugar Ridge Fish and Wildlife Area 2 Project*

This AML reclamation project fixed several dangerous highwalls and an eroding gob pile near a fish and wildlife area. The project was further complicated by excess water from a flooded underground mine near the site.

## Western Region Award

New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division

*Low Impact Stormwater Project, Madrid*

This AML reclamation effort brought together an assorted group of citizens living and working in a small historic coal town to address sediment-producing gob piles from a mining site dating back more than 180 years.

## **Small Project Award – Recognizes a project that cost less than \$1 million and is in a state that receives less than \$6 million in AML funds**

Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Division of Mined Land Reclamation

*Hurricane Fork Gob Pile Project*

This AML reclamation project leveraged new technologies and community partnerships to address one of southwest Virginia's worst mine-related watershed impacts.

Previous award winning projects have featured innovative reforestation techniques; geomorphic land restoration; and the creation of recreation space and wetlands to mitigate acid mine drainage.

OSMRE will present its AML Reclamation Awards during the 39<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs in Lexington, Kentucky on September 25, 2017.

###

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.

