

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

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Virginia AML Program Receives Top Honors in 2017 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards

Bureau to Honor Five States at 25th AML Reclamation Awards Presentation

Washington, DC – The Federal bureau that regulates coal mining and aids in restoring abandoned mine lands is honoring a Virginia environmental agency with its highest national award for abandoned mine reclamation.

The [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSMRE) will honor the [Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy](#) (VADMME) Division of Mined Land Reclamation AML Program during a national gathering of mine land reclamation professionals. VADMME won the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Small Project Award for its *Hurricane Fork Gob Pile Project*.

OSMRE, through its Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Reclamation Program, addresses the hazards and environmental degradation created by the two centuries of U.S. coal mining that occurred before the signing of the [Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977](#). This will be OSMRE's 25th year of honoring exemplary state and tribal reclamation projects.

The *Hurricane Fork Gob Pile Project* reclaimed one of the single worst mine-related impacts to the southwest Virginia watershed. The Virginia team did remarkable, meaningful work that exceeded the spirit of SMCRA, used innovative new technologies and partnerships, and engaged large numbers of the community for the project.



In FY 2017, Virginia received \$3.8 million in AML funding from OSMRE. Only states that receive less than \$6 million in annual AML funding and spend less than \$1 million on a single project may receive the Small Project Award.

Virginia is among five winners of the [2017 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards](#) for their 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.

OSMRE News Release continued

The other 25th anniversary award winners are:

National Award

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Division of Abandoned Mine Lands

Huling Branch AML Reclamation/ATV Recreation and Watershed Improvement Project

Regional Awards – Honor the best projects in OSMRE’s three regions

Appalachian Regional Award

Kentucky Department for Natural Resources

Division of Abandoned Mine Lands

Bell Central School HP AML Reclamation Project

Mid-Continent Region Award

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Division of Reclamation AML Program

Sugar Ridge Fish and Wildlife Area 2 Project

Western Region Award

New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division

Low Impact Stormwater Project, Madrid

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 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards during the 39th 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.

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