

2007 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards - Call for nominations, Standards and Criteria

History and Objectives of the program

The Surface Mining Law was enacted to ensure that lands mined for coal would be restored to original condition as part of the mining process, and to restore unreclaimed coal mined lands that were abandoned before 1977.

Today, abandoned mine land reclamation funded under the Surface Mining Law has eliminated thousands of dangerous health and safety problems resulting from abandoned mine lands throughout the country. Yet despite the country's significant progress in eliminating abandoned mine land problems, there is little public awareness that this reclamation has taken place. When there are highly visible scars at an unreclaimed landscape, most people recognize the legacy of past coal mining. But, after abandoned mine problems are eliminated and reclamation is complete, it is nearly impossible for any observer to see that health and safety problems once existed on the site. Ironically, the better the reclamation, the less apparent it is. Thus, the best reclamation is virtually invisible.

To give well-earned public recognition to those responsible for the nation's most outstanding achievements in abandoned mine land reclamation the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining began the annual Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards Program in 1992. The Program publicly recognizes outstanding abandoned mine land reclamation and publicizes exemplary reclamation techniques.

The process used to select the winners includes a team of seven judges composed of Title IV employees – state and federal reclamation program staff. Each state/tribal Abandoned Mine Land Program selects the best project within its state/tribal boundary. Nominations are posted on the Internet. Via the internet the seven judges score, rank in order and vote on the various nominations. Five award winners are selected using this process – three regional awards, one national award and one national small project award. The national award winner is selected first and is not eligible for a regional award. Nominations receiving the best score in each of the three coal regions are selected as "Regional Winners." The nomination receiving the best score for a reclamation project that totals approximately \$1 million and represents a state that receives approximately \$6 million in AML funding. is selected as the Small Project Award winner.

What projects are eligible for an award?

Abandoned mine land projects funded wholly or in part by the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund and completed by approved state or tribal programs are eligible for an award. This includes all coal, non-coal, high-priority, and emergency projects. Abandoned mine reclamation projects completed under the Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP) are eligible if completed jointly with state/tribal programs. Abandoned mine reclamation completed by citizen groups or other (non-state/non-tribal) organizations are not eligible for these awards and may be recognized by the Office of

Surface Mining under separate awards programs. One project may be submitted by each state/tribal program each year.

The nomination and judging schedule

The state/tribal Abandoned Mine Land programs (see footnote 1) provide nominations directly to the Office of Surface Mining Headquarters in Washington, D.C. by March 23, 2007, and judging begins on April 2, 2007.

The nominations will be posted in a special section of the Office of Surface Mining web site (including text, photos, maps, and diagrams) for review by all participants. A judging ballot listing all nominations will also be available at the web site. Participants will rank the nominations and return their completed ballots electronically to the Office of Surface Mining by April 27, 2007.

Required information and format.

(Nominations **must** use the following format)

A. Non-graphic (text only) cover sheet containing:

1. Name and location of the nominated abandoned mine land reclamation project.
2. Name, organization, address, phone number(s) and email address of those submitting the nomination.
3. Project start and completion dates, construction costs, and name of organization(s) responsible for the reclamation (including construction contractor(s)).
4. Date submitted.

B. Narrative description of the work that resulted in exemplary abandoned mine land reclamation.

The narrative should not exceed six single-spaced typewritten pages and should fully describe the abandoned mine problem including background and reclamation techniques used. The text should also contain photo captions and references to maps, diagrams, or other graphics.

C. Color photographs (including maps, diagrams, or graphics).

The photos should show both the specific activity and the surrounding conditions. When examined with the narrative description, the photographs should provide a clear understanding of the exemplary reclamation accomplishments. "Before and after" photos are desirable; but, not required. Each nomination is limited to six photographs or other graphics (including maps or diagrams). One of the six photos should be identified as the "cover photo" that will be used on the web page containing the ballot. Photos (or other graphics) may only be included with the text if the nomination is provided as one file in Adobe Acrobat format.

D. Format.

Each nomination package must contain the required information (described above) and be submitted in electronic format. The nomination package will be posted on the web in Adobe Acrobat format and may be submitted as one file in Acrobat (containing text and photos), or as a WordPerfect or Word format file containing text and separate files containing photographs (or graphics) in .jpg format. All nominations must include the cover photo in .jpg format in a separate file. The nominations may be submitted via e-mail (tgeoghegan@osmre.gov), or on CD or Zip disks.

Because the nomination text and photos are going to be downloaded by many people with slow computer connections it is important to keep the file size as small as possible. Photos should be no larger than 400 pixels on the largest dimension and be at screen resolution (72 dpi).

Selection process for the 2007 awards

Judging for the Regional and National Awards will be done by a team of seven judges composed of Title IV employees, one OSM employee, one state or tribe employee (appointed by the NAAML P) from each region plus one OSM employee from headquarters. Ballots will be accepted from directors of state/tribal Abandoned Mine Land programs and Office of Surface Mining field locations that deal with abandoned mine reclamation.

One ballot will be accepted from each eligible office (see footnote 2). The selected judges will be emailed a Judging Score Sheet and a Rank and Order Sheet. They will also be posted on the internet. The judges will vote for the various projects posted to the internet. Each judge will email and fax or mail a signed copy of their Judging Score Sheet and Ranking and Order Sheet to the Office of Communications staff. Based on responses as reflected in the Rank and Order Sheet, all judges will participate in a conference call to discuss the votes. The judges will participate in a final vote via the internet and email and fax or mail a signed copy of their Judging Score Sheet (attachment A) to the Office of Communications staff. Judges and winners will be notified 2 to 3 weeks after the final vote. The Public Relations Committee will be notified of the winners 2 to 3 weeks prior to the awards ceremony. The nomination receiving the best average of the rank order scores on all the ballots received by April 27, 2007 will determine the winners. Regional awards will only be presented when two or more nominations are received from that region. In case of a tie, a coin toss will be used to break the tie. The announcement and presentation of the 2007 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards will be made during the Annual Conference of the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs.

Annual NAAML P Banquet and Awards Ceremony

The NAAML P Public Relations Committee will work with OSM, Division of Reclamation Support and the Office of Communications and the host state or tribe to produce the Awards Ceremony portion of the NAAML P Annual Banquet. The host state must assign a staff employee(s) to work with the Office of Communications staff. The employee(s) will be responsible for stage preparation, to include proper placement of podium, operation of lighting and video equipment during presentations, testing the operation of microphone and speakers and configuring seating arrangements to ensure that all DOI presenters are seated close to the front of the stage. The day of the banquet, the employee(s) must do a walk through with the Office of Communications staff to make certain everything is in place and functioning properly.

Address question regarding nominations or the award program to: Tom Geoghegan at the Office of Surface Mining, Washington, D.C. 20240, Telephone (202) 208-2838, e-mail: tgeoghegan@osmre.gov.

Footnote 1. Organizations eligible to submit nominations:

Alabama State Programs Division
Alaska Division of Mining
Arkansas Dept. Of Pollution Control and Ecology
Colorado Office of Active and Inactive Mines
Crow Tribe AML Program
Hopi Tribe Abandoned Mine Land Program
Illinois Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Division
Indiana Division of Reclamation
Iowa AML Program
Kansas Surface Mining Section
Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands
Louisiana Injection and Mining Division
Maryland Abandoned Mine Lands Section
Missouri AML Section Land Reclamation Program
Montana Abandoned Mine Reclamation Bureau
Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Department
New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division
North Dakota AML Division
Ohio Division of Mines and Reclamation
Oklahoma AML Program
Pennsylvania Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation
Texas Surface Mining and Reclamation Division
Utah Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program
Virginia Division of Mine Land Reclamation
West Virginia Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation
Wyoming AML Program

Footnote 2. Judges (one ballot accepted from each of the following):

AML Program Coordinator, Alaska Division of Mining
Director, Albuquerque Field Office (Albuquerque, New Mexico)
Regional Director, Appalachian Region (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)
Team Leader, OSM Appalachia Team (Ashland, Kentucky)
Director, Alabama Mining and Reclamation Division
Director, Arkansas Dept. of Pollution Control and Ecology
Director, Birmingham Field Office (Birmingham, Alabama)
Director, Casper Field Office (Casper, Wyoming)
Director, Charleston Field Office (Charleston, West Virginia)
Director, Colorado Office of Active and Inactive Mines
Manager, Pittsburgh Field Division
Director, Crow Tribe AML Program
Manager, Hopi Tribe Abandoned Mine Land Program
Manager, Illinois Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Division
Chief, Alton Field Division
Chief, Denver Field Division
Assistant-Director- Restoration, Indiana Division of Reclamation
Chief, Iowa AML Coordinator
Mining Section Chief, Kansas Surface Mining Section
Director, Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands
Director, Knoxville Field Office (Knoxville, Tennessee)
Director, Lexington Field Office (Lexington, Kentucky)
Director, Louisiana Injection and Mining Division
Supervisor, Maryland Abandoned Mine Lands Section
Regional Director, Mid-Continent Region (Alton, Illinois)
Chief, Missouri AML Section Land Reclamation Program
Chief, Montana Abandoned Mine Reclamation Bureau
Director, Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Department
AML Program Manager, New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division
Director, North Dakota AML Division
Natural Resources Administrator, Ohio Division of Mines and Reclamation
Director, Oklahoma AML Program
Manager, OSM Olympia Office (Olympia, Washington)
Director, Pennsylvania Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation
Team Leader, OSM Anthracite Team (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania)
Director, Texas Surface Mining and Reclamation Division
Director, Tulsa Field Office
Chief, Utah Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program
AML Manager, Virginia Division of Mine Land Reclamation
Regional Director, Western Region (Denver, Colorado)
Chief, West Virginia Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation
Administrator, Wyoming AML Program

Attachment A

2007 Excellence in Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards Score Sheet		
Nominee:	Judge	Category

Item(s) for Which Points are Given Points Assigned

1. Clarity and Completeness of Nomination Package (5pts.)

Points _____

2. Difficulty of Achieving Reclamation under Existing Conditions (20pts.)

a. Special and Unique Considerations (10 Points)

b. On Site Difficulty of the Project (10 Points)

Points _____

3. On Site Effectiveness (30pts.)

a. Effective/Innovative use of Technology (8)

b. Resulting Landscape Conforms to the Natural Environment (8)

c. Elimination of Significant Health and Safety Problem (14)

Points _____

4. Funding (12pts.)

a. Effective use of Funds (6)

b. Leveraging – use of partners for funding or technology(6)

Points _____

5. Benefits to the Community (15points.)

Community Support for the Project (5)
Long Term Benefits to the Community (10)

Points_____

6. SMCRA (18 Points)

Exceeds the Spirit and Intent of SMCRA (10points)

Increased public awareness of SMCRA (4points)

Transferability of practice to other AML projects (4 points)

Points_____

Total Points