

Selection of the 2012 award-winning operations

Nominations are due to the state regulatory authorities or the Office of Surface Mining field office in non-primacy states by February 15, 2012. Nominations will be screened by the regulatory authority, and the best entries (a maximum of four National Awards, one Director's Award, and two Good Neighbor Awards from each state), then forwarded to the Office of Surface Mining field offices by February 29, 2012.

Field offices will evaluate and forward the nominations to the Office of Surface Mining Headquarters in Washington, D.C., by March 20, 2012, for judging in April 2012.

Selection of winners consists of several steps.

A site visit by an OSM field office representative is made to ensure that:

1. On-the-ground performance conforms with the permit and is exemplary within that state or geographic area;
2. Information in the nomination accurately reflects current site conditions;
3. Other mining activities at the site do not detract from the award-winning activity; and
4. Each nominee's Surface Mining Law compliance record is examined to ensure that there are no outstanding violations and to determine that there is no past record of not abating violations.

A panel of judges composed of representatives of the Office of Surface Mining evaluates the nominations and selects the winners.

Judging Standards

Judging standards for the 2012 awards are as follows:

1. Clarity and Completeness of Nomination Package (5 points)
2. Difficulty of Achieving Reclamation under Existing Conditions (20 points)
3. On-Site Effectiveness (30 points)
4. Transferability of the Technique or Practice (12 points)
5. Increased Public Awareness of SMCRA (8 points)
6. Long-Term Benefits to the Community (15 points)
7. Exceeds the Spirit and Intent of SMCRA (10 points)



Nominations Due February 15, 2012

For further information, go to:
www.osmre.gov/topic/awards/Awards.shtm

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2012

Excellence in Surface Coal Mining

Reclamation Awards *Call for Nominations*



*U.S. Department of the Interior
Office of Surface Mining
Reclamation and Enforcement*

Surface Coal Mining Reclamation Awards

History and objectives of the program

The awards program is designed so that state and Federal regulators can transfer outstanding reclamation methods and techniques to the coal mine operators who work under the Surface Mining Law nationwide. The winners are the coal mine operators who developed innovative reclamation techniques or who have completed reclamation that resulted in outstanding on-the-ground performance. Today, active mines are turned into farmland, forests, parks, housing sites, and habitat.

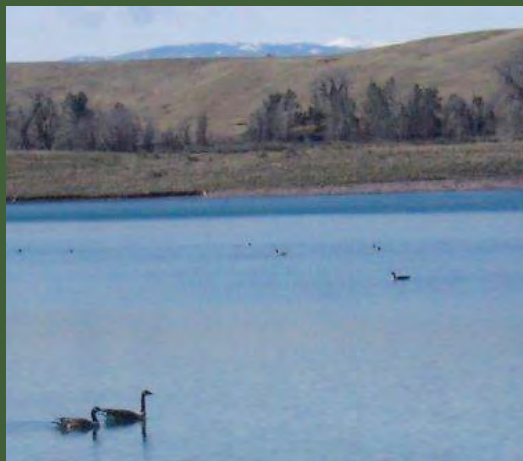
Nominations for an Award

Nominations may be submitted by coal companies, regulatory authorities, state or Federal mine inspectors, interest groups, or landowners. Company officials and employees may nominate their own operations.

National Awards. These annual awards are presented to coal mining companies for achieving exemplary mining and reclamation practices. A coal mining operation may be nominated for achievement in a specific aspect of reclamation, or for overall performance in meeting goals of the Surface Mining Law. All nominations should include on-the-ground results for however long the results have been in place. For example, a nomination for increased soil productivity on a reclaimed site would be verified with several years of crop yield data.

Director's Award. Each year, one coal mining operation in the country is selected to receive the Director's Award for outstanding achievement in a specific area of reclamation. The Director's Award for 2012 will be presented to a project that demonstrates excellence in stream restoration.

Good Neighbor Awards. Up to three mine operations could be selected to receive Good Neighbor Awards for successfully working with the surrounding land owners and the community while completing mining and reclamation. Nominations for this category should briefly describe the mining and reclamation operation (both narrative and photos), and include testimonial letters and/or other documentation of a successful good neighbor policy.



Rules and required information

Nominations should be submitted to the state regulatory authority, or in states without this authority (Tennessee and Washington), to the local Office of Surface Mining field office. Nomination packages *must* be developed using the following format:

A. Cover sheet containing:

1. Company name.
2. Name and location of the nominated mining operation.
3. Permit number(s) of site being nominated.
4. Award category (the same nomination may be submitted in the Director's Award, Good Neighbor Award, and National Award categories).
5. Name, address, phone number, and e-mail address of a company contact person (and of the person submitting the nomination if different).
6. Names and titles of all individuals directly responsible for on-the-ground reclamation at the nominated site.

B. Narrative description of the specific reclamation or environmental control techniques that resulted in exemplary performance under the Surface Mining Law. The narrative should be comprehensive, but not exceed six single-spaced typewritten pages, and should describe the mining operation and the specific activity nominated for an award using the following outline:

1. Brief summary of the mining and reclamation project. For example, successful handling of acid materials could be shown with water quality sampling data.
2. Description of the nominated activity or reclamation practice, including specific problems, solutions, and unusual circumstances.
3. On-site effectiveness of the work. This should be documented and quantified with data.
4. Transferability or value of the accomplishment(s) to other mining and reclamation operations.
5. Long-term benefits to the landowner and local or regional community.

C. Digital color photographs

The photos should show both the specific activity and the surrounding reclamation. Photographs should be 8" x 10" or smaller, and labeled to explain what the photo shows. "Before and after" photos are desirable but not required. Award winners will be asked to provide high-resolution photos (3.2 mega pixel .jpg photos).

D. Format

Each nomination package must contain the required information in one three-ring binder, plus five high-quality stapled copies. Additional supporting information may be submitted with the nomination; however, it must be separate from the information described above. Nominations judged at the national level will not be returned.

Who is eligible for an award?

Surface coal mining and reclamation operations that have been conducted under a Title V permit (1978 - present) may be nominated for an award. In addition, non-permitted mining and reclamation completed using Government Financial Reclamation Contracts under the Enhanced Abandoned Mine Land regulations is also eligible for nomination.

Although Abandoned Mine Land reclamation projects are not included in this program, this aspect of reclamation is eligible for a National or Director's Award if it is integrated with Title V permitted operations.

Director's Award

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