



About the Office of Surface Mining

The Office of Surface Mining is a small bureau (about 650 employees nationwide) of the U. S. Department of the Interior with responsibility, in cooperation with the states and Indian Tribes, to protect citizens and the environment during coal mining and reclamation, and to reclaim mines abandoned before 1977. Under authority of the Surface Mining Law¹, the Office of Surface Mining is organized around two principal requirements: regulating active coal mining and reclaiming abandoned mines. It is a field-oriented organization, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., three regional coordinating centers (in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Alton, Illinois; and Denver Colorado), 10 field offices, and six area offices.

The current annual operating budget is approximately \$315 million. That sum enables the Office of Surface Mining to support the states' mining programs by granting funds for their regulation and enforcement and providing training and technical support. It also pays 100 percent of the costs for restoring abandoned mines that were left unreclaimed before the Law was passed in 1977. Funds for reclaiming abandoned mines come from tonnage-based reclamation fees paid by America's active coal mine operators.

In addition, the Office of Surface Mining operates programs to: eliminate environmental and economic impacts of acid mine drainage from abandoned coal mines, encourage reforestation of reclaimed mine land, develop techniques that can ensure reclamation of prime farmland soils, and publicly recognize outstanding reclamation by communicating the experience to others.

1. Public Law 95-87, Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA)

On-The-Ground Success...

Page Contents

- 2. **I. Introduction**
- 3. **II. Director's Letter**
- 4. **III. Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation**
An update on the reclamation of abandoned mine lands affected by mining that took place before the Surface Mining Law was passed in 1977
- 18. **IV. Regulation of Active Coal Mines**
A review of the shared federal-state-Indian active surface and underground coal mining and reclamation regulatory program
- 32. **V. Technology Development and Transfer**
A report on improvement through technical assistance, transfer of technology, and training
- 42. **VI. Financial Management and Administration**
A report on the budget, management, and operations of the Office of Surface Mining
- 48. **VII. Performance Goals and Results**
A summary of Government Performance and Results Act progress
- 51. **VIII. Directory**
A listing of contact information for Office of Surface Mining and state-Indian regulatory and abandoned mine land office locations
- 54. **IX. Financial Statements and Notes**

I. Introduction

This report describes the operations of the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining for the period October 1, 2000 through September 30, 2001 (Fiscal Year 2001)². This year the Annual Financial Accountability Report, compiled to meet the requirements of Section 306 of the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, is included and the two reports are combined.

This Annual Report was compiled to meet the specific requirements of Section 706 of the Surface Mining Law and includes a summary of results required by the Government Performance and Results Act. Included in this report are activities carried out under several parts of the Law: Title IV, Abandoned Mine Reclamation; Title V, Control of the Environmental Impacts of Surface Coal Mining; and Title VII, Administrative and Miscellaneous Provisions. Surface Mining Law responsibilities of other bureaus and agencies have been omitted. Those responsibilities include Title III, State Mining and Mineral Resources and Research Institutes program, which was administered by the now abolished U.S. Bureau of Mines; Titles VIII and IX, the University Coal Research Laboratories and the Energy Resource Graduate Fellowships, which are administered by the Secretary of Energy; and Section 406, the Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP) which is administered by the Secretary of Agriculture. Programmatic and financial information about those activities are reported directly to Congress by the agencies responsible for them.

This year's Annual Report contains updated tabular data corresponding to that found in Office of Surface Mining annual reports prepared since 1988. This allows a comparison of statistics from year to year. The report is organized in sections that correspond to the four principal activities performed by the Office of Surface Mining. The four principal activities are:

- Abandoned mine land reclamation
- Regulation of active coal mines
- Technology development and transfer
- Financial management and administration

Statistics in this report are presented in English units. To convert these numbers into metric units use the following conversion factors:

- Miles x 1.609 = Kilometers
- Acres x 0.40469 = Hectares
- Feet x 0.30473 = Meters
- Gallons x 0.13368 = Liters
- Tons x 0.90718 = Metric Tons

Principal distribution of this report is in electronic format. It is available on the Office of Surface Mining web site (www.osmre.gov/annualreport.htm) and CD-ROM. The CD contains all Office of Surface Mining Annual Reports (1978-2001), and a 15-minute video program showing award winning reclamation. In addition, active web links to more detailed information are available when using the electronic version of the report. Printed copies of this Annual Report are also available and will be distributed to the public upon request.

For information about Office of Surface Mining activities, news releases, publications, or to request printed copies of this report, visit the Office of Surface Mining web site at www.osmre.gov or contact:

Office of Surface Mining
1951 Constitution Ave., NW.
Washington, D.C. 20240
www.osmre.gov
(202) 208-2719
e-mail: getinfo@osmre.gov

2. Throughout this document "2001" refers to Fiscal Year 2001 (10/1/00 - 9/30/01) unless otherwise noted.

II. Director's Letter

Having worked with implementation of the Surface Mining Law since 1980, first in the solicitor's office, then as Deputy Director, and now Acting Director, I have seen first hand the dramatic success the Law has had. During these years successful land reclamation and environmental protection have become routine parts of the coal mining process. And, I'm happy to report, on-the-ground reclamation is better than its ever been.



During 2001, we have focused our efforts on completing long-standing issues and initiating new program operations. Some of the highlights include:

- In December 2000, final regulations were published in the *Federal Register* for the Ownership and Control Rules. These amended regulations implement the January 1997 and May 1999 federal appeals court decisions which limit blocking permits to cases where applicants own or control operations in violation. These rules provide new definitions of ownership and control and clarify the scope and applicability of those definitions.
- The Office of Surface Mining and The Conservation Fund have begun working together on joint projects that restore mine lands to beneficial uses. The Fund's Freshwater Institute develops and improves innovative and cost-effective techniques for acid water treatment which may be readily adopted to both active and abandoned mine settings. The development and transfer of effective water treatment techniques will significantly benefit mining companies, landowners, and citizens living in the coalfields.
- Contrary to their much-maligned image, bats are ecologically and economically critical to the well being of the nation, and yet, over half of the 43 species living in the U. S. are endangered or on the candidate list for endangered species. In 2001, the Office of Surface Mining, Bat Conservation International, and the Southern Illinois University cosponsored a Bat Conservation and Mining Forum that provided an organized format for discussion of issues about the protection of bats and their habitat associated with both underground and surface mining operations.
- As part of a 1998 settlement agreement in West Virginia federal district court, we continued several activities related to mountaintop mining during the past year. Joint permit reviews by the Office of Surface Mining and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection have continued for applications proposing to construct large valley fills. Activities arising from the reviews of the Surface Mining Law and Clean Water Act permits continue to be reported monthly to the West Virginia congressional delegation and the public (see www.osmre.gov/mtindex.htm for a complete listing).

We are also working with the Environmental Protection Agency, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection in the development of an Environmental Impact Statement on mountaintop mining and valley fills. During 2001, technical studies on aquatic and terrestrial impacts, valley fill stability, flooding, blasting dust and fumes, future mining, soils and forest productivity, seasonal stream flow, aquatic ecosystem enhancement, and fill hydrology were completed. Economic, fisheries, postmining land use, and cumulative impact studies are underway and should be finalized in 2002. A draft report is planned for publication in late 2002 or early 2003.

- This 2001 Annual Report is an example of a new direction for the Office of Surface Mining. For the first time the principal publication format is electronic. Although traditional printed copies are still available on request, by far the largest group will read this report on-line or from the CD-ROM version while connected to the internet so they can link to additional, more detailed information.

I would like to leave you with one last thought. The photographs in this report show examples of on-the-ground reclamation across the country. These pictures show no indication that surface mining ever occurred. They show landscapes typical of rural areas throughout the country -- the clear evidence that the basic intent of the Surface Mining Law has been achieved without compromising coal production.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenda A. Owens", written in a cursive style.