

NAAML P

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ABANDONED MINE LAND PROGRAMS

NEWSLETTER
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UPCOMING MEETINGS

[WINTER BUSINESS MEETING](#)
 Jackson Hole, Wyoming
 Feb 28 - Mar 2, 2023

MISSION STATEMENT

1. To provide a forum to address current issues, discuss common problems and share new technologies regarding abandoned mine land reclamation;
2. To foster positive and productive relationships between the states and tribes represented by the Association and the federal government;
3. To serve as an effective, unified voice when presenting the states/ tribes’ common viewpoints; and
4. To coordinate, cooperate and communicate with the Interstate Mining Compact Commission and all other organizations dedicated to wise use and restoration of our natural resources.

NAAML P Members and Partners,

I am honored and eager to serve as the NAAML P President this year. I truly appreciate the relationships and friendships I have gained thru AML work and I always leave a conference or meeting impressed by how dedicated state AML managers and staff are.

It’s amazing how fast things have changed in AML over the past year. First off, I would like to thank outgoing association president Jeff Graves for amazing leadership and dedication through those rapid changes and developments. Jeff worked diligently with IMCC, OSMRE, and member states and tribes to try to shape the BIL guidance and implementation all while planning and hosting the fall conference and business meeting – quite the feat! The conference at Grand Junction was extremely well done with great speakers, tons of exhibitors, amazing tours, and beautiful weather in a great location.

BIL implementation is the biggest thing on everyone’s agenda and the association. Since the Spring newsletter, OSMRE published their final 2022 BIL grant guidance and made the grants available to states and tribes. I know many members feel like our comments in collaboration with IMCC, and submitted individually, for the draft guidance were not substantially considered when the final grant guidance was published. IMCC and states also provided comment on Federal Register notice regarding changes to OSM-51 form related to implementation changes in the grant application. This has led to some frank and heart felt conversations with OSMRE and Department of Interior (DOI) decision makers during the NAALMP and IMCC fall meetings. The result is a commitment from OSMRE & DOI to meet in person in Washington DC in January with NAAML P leadership to discuss our relationship and communication going forward, as well as a commitment to formalize some work groups around key implementation issues. Those of us attending are committed to expressing our concerns and working on solutions to make implementation more streamlined and effective as the 2023 grant guidance is developed. Many states have applied for and received their first grant. They are now in the process of getting AML projects ready for bid and construction. it’s important that we work these issues out now to make this program a success for the next 20 years, like it has been for the last 40+ as a partnership with OSMRE and the States/Tribes.

In a very recent development, the Omnibus budget bill was approved and enacted right at the end of the year. This law includes the STREAM Act as a rider that will now allow states and tribes to utilize the 30% Set-aside fund with BIL grant funds and in addition expand the fund to cover long term issues associated with mine fires and subsidence. This has major implications for many AML states and a special thanks to IMCC for working diligently with Congress to get this included in the final bill.

In recent years we have had so many great colleagues move on or retire. Recently Brian Bradely (PA) joined those ranks, he provided so



much to the association through committee participation and leadership in meetings and we wish him the best in retirement. We have also had some new leaders who have stepped up for the association this year: Steve Fluke (Utah) who is now the Secretary/Treasurer, Dustin Morin (Alabama) is Vice-President, Gwen Robson (Wyoming) who is the new chairperson of the Finance Committee, and Pat Webb (Pennsylvania) who is serving as Chairperson of the newly formed BIL Implementation Committee. Also, thanks to those of you who have agreed to continue serving or signed up to serve on committees and/or host future conferences/meetings.

Going forward, I am looking forward to the NAAML P Winter Business Meeting February 28th in Jackson Hole Wyoming! What a great winter location and hopefully everyone gets a chance to enjoy the area, skiing, sightseeing, etc.. I know I will not be passing up that opportunity.

Please feel free to reach out to me or any of the officers (Dustin Morin and Steve Fluke) with issues, concerns, or ideas that can make the association better and impact other States/Tribes positively. And hope to see you all in Jackson Hole in a few short months...

Sincerely,
Benny McCament
NAAML P President



Stan Barnard Award - Tom Clarke

Executive Director - Interstate Mining Compact Commission

Tom has put a lot of work into evaluating and understanding the impacts of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law on AML Programs. Over the last year Tom spent considerable time developing comments, and distilling our positions as an Association to better respond to OSMRE. Tom's legal acumen has been extremely beneficial to the association as we attempt to unpack guidance associated with the BIL, and build consensus amongst our membership. One of Tom's most important abilities is to figure out the unique needs of both large and small programs. While Tom's previous experience was in the Title V program in West Virginia, he has worked tirelessly to get up to speed on Title IV issues to best represent the Association. He has worked to build rapport with OSMRE through our bi-weekly meetings with the Program Support Directorate, and many other phone calls with Deputy Director Owens and DOI leadership. His thoughtful responses and probing questions have been essential in developing consensus. Whenever questions come up, Tom is always available to help.



Tom Clarke (left) and Jeff Graves

Dave Bucknam Award - Tom Hines

OSMRE - National Technical Training Program Instructor



(l to r) Jeff Graves, Tom Hines and Tom Shope

Tom began his career as an instructor in 1979 for the state of Ohio. After retiring from Ohio, he began as a Course Manager and Instructor for the National Technical Training Program Instructor Training Course in 1989.

Tom has taught multiple classes per year throughout his career as an instructor. These include many years as the lead instructor with the Principles of Inspection course, teaching new inspectors and others the basics of being a SMCRA field inspector; and, the Evidence and Testimony course, teaching the importance of obtaining and presenting good evidence during testimony when the job requires defending their actions. Tom has mentored many instructors throughout the years, and he enjoys watching those new instructors come into their own and go on to teach other courses, as well.

Tom has now been retired from OSMRE for several years and continues to teach with the passion he has always had to see others learn as students in the NTTTP courses as-well-as continue to mentor new instructors. As Tom continues to lead in this manner, he is leaving a legacy to all those who follow allowing the excellent quality of training provided by NTTTP to continue for generations to come.

Tom Henderson Award - Dr. Paul Behum

Hydrologist - OSMRE, Technical Services Branch, Alton Illinois



(l to r) Jeff Graves, Dr. Paul Behum and Tom Shope

Dr Behum is a Hydrologist in the Interior Regions 3, 4 & 6 and located in the Alton, IL office's Technical Services Branch. Dr Behum was nominated by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Surface Mining Unit for Title IV & V Programs. Kansas spoke highly of Dr. Behum's advanced level of technical expertise that supported their small, minimum state program by providing technical assistance, based on sound science and training, enhancing their ability to maintain an effective program.

Kansas stated that words cannot express their gratitude for all the trips and hours spent by Dr Behum, over a period spanning close to 7 years, not to mention enduring all weather conditions from blistering cold to scorching hot, at the Monahan acid mine drainage area, owned by Pittsburg State University (PSU) in Pittsburg, Kansas. During this time, Dr. Behum devised a system of weirs for field installation and equipped them with monitors so flow rates could be calculated. He made frequent site visits to

download collected information, as well as transport numerous water samples back to Alton for lab analysis. These water samples were compared to historical water samples, gathered by a PSU biology professor, so a proper passive treatment system could be designed. Few people saw the long hours or late evenings Dr. Behum spent on the tailgate of his vehicle fixing samples with the proper preservative.

The Monahan AML Reclamation project is currently under construction, which would not have been possible without the work of Dr. Paul Behum. The approach Dr. Behum took with the Monahan project was personal, as if it were his own, but he always gives credit to everyone.

NAAMLPScholarship Awards

Madeline Roanhorse Memorial Scholarship Recipient - Calli Veautour, Montana State University



Calli is a rising senior at Montana State University majoring in Environmental Science, with a concentration in Soil and Water Sciences. She's passionate about both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem restoration, with a focus in correcting/mitigating the impacts of mining on our natural resources. She has worked as an undergraduate research assistant to multiple graduate students over the course of her three years at MSU. This work cultivated and expanded her passion for science, no matter the field. She's an avid skier, snowboarder, and angler fostered by a love for the outdoors. During her summers she works for a fly fishing outfit in Northeastern Utah, studying the impacts of recreation and angling on one of the country's most popular rivers--the Green. Through her work, she hopes to instill an appreciation for the importance of preservation, conservation, and restoration of impacted lands.

Western Recipient - Matt Deyoe, Montana State University



Matt Deyoe received his B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Colorado-Boulder. During his time at CU Boulder, he volunteered on multiple restoration projects in New Mexico, Colorado, and Montana and continues these efforts today. He has seen the devastation that mine drainage can cause to a river such as the Animas River near Durango, Colorado where he learned how to fly fish.

Matt is very passionate about river restoration and is developing a new river biological assessment and monitoring tool using carbon and nitrogen isotopes of aquatic invertebrates while earning a master's degree at Montana State University. He is testing this new tool on a mine reclamation superfund site at the headwaters of the Blackfoot River near Lincoln, Montana. He also enjoys being a teaching assistant for Dr. Tony Hartshorn as well as being advised by Dr. William Kleindl. Matt is very honored and thankful to be the graduate recipient of the 2022 NAAMLPScholarship and looks forward to giving back to his community.

Mid-Continent Recipient - Rebecca Lynn, Iowa State University



Rebecca (Becky) Lynn is going to be a junior at Iowa State University majoring in Forestry with a focus in conservation and restoration. She also is going to graduate with a minor in Insect Science and in Geographic Information Science (GIS). After she graduates she is planning on obtaining her master's degree in Restoration Ecology, specifically, the restoration of habitat critical to endangered species. Becky has been interning for the USDA where she is leading a research project focusing on River Birch seed viability and assists with native prairie plant seed collections. For her Honors project, she chose to research what mammal, birds, and aquatic insects had returned to a watershed which was restored near Roland, Iowa during the 1990s. Becky grew up on a family farm in Brighton, Iowa where her parents and grandparents stressed the importance of land stewardship and conservation- which is what got her started on the path of land restoration.

Eastern Recipient - Matt Berzonsky, Saint Francis University in Loretto, PA



Matt Berzonsky is a rising senior at Saint Francis University in Loretto, PA. He is majoring in environmental engineering with a minor in biology. As an undergraduate student he has worked as an assistant researcher for the Center for Watershed Research and Service at Saint Francis University, where he investigated the potential of mine drainage residuals as a fertilizer amendment. Matt has also worked as an REU student at the Pennsylvania State University where he studied agricultural carbon fluxes and as an intern at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory where he assisted in the development of algal bioreactors for bioplastic production. Currently, Matt is working as an assistant researcher at the Pennsylvania State University and is studying the impact climate change on water quality. His future research interests include biogeochemistry, ecosystem scale modeling and environmental remediation. He also serves as the President of the fly fishing club at Saint Francis University, which focuses on the conservation of cold-water fisheries and the development of fly fishing skills.

NAAML P Winter Business Meeting

Hosted by Wyoming AML in Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Registration - Registration is required to attend this event. Cost of registration is \$200. This is a new fee placed on the Winter Business Meeting by the Association. You may register and pay for up to 4 attendees.

Meetings will take place from Tuesday, Feb 28th- Thursday, March 2nd.

Committee meetings: Tuesday, Feb 28 from 12-5 pm.

Welcome Dinner Reception: Tuesday, Feb 28 from 6-9 pm.

Business meeting: Wednesday, March 1 from 8-5 pm (lunch will be provided) and Thursday, March 2 from 8-12 pm.



Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area - Pennsylvania

National Award Winner

The 88-acre project reclaimed six abandoned mine land features and constructed 6,600 feet of extreme rock-crawling and more than 9,000 feet of all-terrain vehicle trails. The rock-crawling trails include boulders that act as obstacles for modified four-wheel drive vehicles such as trucks, Jeeps, and “buggies” to traverse. The trails include pull-offs and mud pits to navigate. This AML project showed the best of reclamation practices by eliminating health and safety hazards, providing an innovative recreational resource for surrounding states and revitalizing the local economy through increased use of local businesses.

“It’s extremely exciting that Pennsylvania is being recognized for the National Award. As far as I’m aware, the project includes the largest man-made rock crawling feature of its kind anywhere in the country. The transformation from a hazardous AML site to a world-class attraction is already showing local job creation and improving economic conditions for this part of PA’s coal region,” said John Stefanko, deputy secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Active and Abandoned of Mine Operations. “The project is a testament to DEP’s partners at AOAA, the landowners, Morgan’s Excavating, LLC the on-site contractor, OSMRE, and the staff in the DEP and Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation that had a part in the project. It takes a team working collaboratively and cooperatively to achieve results like this.”



[Watch a video about the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area](#)

[Pennsylvania DEP
Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation](#)

Big South Fork Slide Repair - Kentucky Appalachian States Regional Award Winner

In the early 1900s, McCreary County was home to 18 mining camps built by the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company that helped power the country and provided jobs to the community. Today, the local economy is fueled by tourism. A large portion of the Big South Fork Scenic Railway had subsided three feet, rendering that section of the track impassible by train and endangering the tourism-based economy. For nearly 15 months, the Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands managed the slide abatement, which included a 400 linear foot steel piling wall seated into the bedrock. The work done by Kentucky's AML program will ensure the safety of more than 22,000 passengers who ride the Big South Fork Railway each year.

"The Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands is humbled to receive this award. AML programs from across the region and the nation work diligently to protect citizens and abate hazards related to historic mining," said Justin Adams, director of Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands. "To have our work considered for recognition alongside so many wonderful efforts, is a great honor. A myriad of our staff were involved in the development and implementation of the Big South Fork reclamation project. I am proud of each of them and pleased to see their dedication recognized through this award."



[Watch a video about the Big South Fork Slide Repair](#)

[Kentucky DNR Division of Abandoned Mine Lands](#)



Sugar Ridge Fish & Wildlife Area - Indiana Interior States Regional Award

This project mitigated 2,165 feet of dangerous highwall ranging from 26 to 52 feet in height on Sugar Ridge FWA. The highwall was left by the Ayreshire #8 mine, operated by Ayreshire Collieries Group between 1934 and 1935. Prior to reclamation, the area had limited access and value as a wildlife habitat. Today, Sugar Ridge FWA stimulates the local economy as it pulls anglers, birders and hikers of all ages to explore the area safely.

“This project is a great example of how land that was mined and cast aside with no regard for future use can be enhanced to have wider positive impacts on the environment and economy of the surrounding communities,” said Kit Turpin, deputy director of the Indiana AML Program. “The Indiana AML Program thanks its partners in this project, including adjoining landowners, OSMRE, the Indiana DNR divisions of Fish & Wildlife and Forestry and Kerns Excavating, as well as the users of Sugar Ridge for their patience as the firing range was expanded.”



[Watch a video about the Sugar Ridge Fish & Wildlife Area](#)

[Indiana DNR Abandoned Mine Land Program](#)

Hanna Elementary School Project - Wyoming Western States and Tribes Regional Award

The football field and track and the adjacent elementary school building and parking lot are located atop mine workings of the Hanna No. 4 Mine. Subsidence—sinking of the ground because of underground material movement—would routinely appear in the football field and around the school.

In 2020, the Wyoming AML undertook the task of mitigating the subsidence risk in this area via voidfill grouting. Approximately 42,500 cubic yards of voidfill grout was injected into mine voids under the Hanna Elementary School, football field/track and surrounding areas, enough to fill 13 Olympic swimming pools. Upon completion of the mitigation, the football field, track, school parking lot and school playground were restored.

“This was a very difficult project due primarily to the strict, but necessary, time commitments made to the school district for completion prior to football season,” said Wyoming AML Administrator Don Newton. “The coordinated efforts between the Town of Hanna, Carbon County School District #2, Howard Concrete Pumping Co., Inc. and its subcontractors, and Brierley Associates resulted in an excellent outcome for this small community.”



[Watch a video about the Hanna Field and Track, & Elementary School](#)

[Wyoming DEQ Abandoned Mine Land Division](#)

AML Project TX000056 - Texas Small Project Award

In 2016, the Texas AML program was contacted regarding a sink hole that suddenly appeared within five feet of a residence in Center. In the late 19th and early 20th century, coal mining was a major economic driver in Texas. Mines in East Texas were dug beneath the surface using room and pillar mining techniques. The remains of mined-out “rooms” are typically 3-6 feet in depth and 6-10 feet in diameter. Following inspection, the residence and adjacent area were declared an emergency, authorizing the AML program to initiate reclamation under expedited procedures. Using the expertise of other AML programs allowed Texas to develop a scope of work that factored in flexibility in the field and to address unexpected developments. Texas’s AML program has been contacted by additional families living with subsidence undermining their homes’ foundations. Lessons learned from this project will be employed in subsequent projects.

“We are thankful for the Small Projects Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Award and OSMRE’s recognition of the outstanding effort our team provides to protect communities in Texas,” said Brent Elliot, the Railroad Commission’s Surface Mining and Reclamation Division director. “The Railroad Commission takes great pride in our work, and reclamation sites like this one —no matter the scale of the project— demonstrate our program’s dedication to environmental stewardship and ensuring public safety.”



[Watch a video about the Texas AML Project](#)

[Railroad Commission of Texas
Surface Mining and Reclamation Division](#)

Hardrock Awards

Trout Unlimited - Atlas Mill Project

Remediation of Contamination Impacting the Environment or Human Health

The environmental cleanup of the Atlas Mill was completed through construction activities in October 2020. Of the approximate 8.8 acre Atlas Mill footprint, approximately 5 acres are federal land managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 3.71 acres belong to patented claims owned by OSMI making Atlas Mill Reclamation a mixed-ownership project. Trout Unlimited evaluated multiple amendment test plots over the course of one year with the best results being extrapolated for full-scale implementation during reclamation actions.

“This approach allowed Trout Unlimited to amend consolidated tailings in-place with the goal of native vegetation establishment that would reduce mobilization of contaminated material off-site. In total, 4.2 acres of tailings were consolidated and reclaimed, 1,689 feet of run-on/run-off channels were installed and 200 feet of Sneffels Creek was restored. This project also forged new ground by establishing one of the first Good Samaritan Administrative Orders on Consent between a non-governmental organization and the U.S. Forest Service,” said Jason Willis, Colorado AML Program Manager with Trout Unlimited, Inc.

Mining operations in the Uncompahgre watershed began in 1874 with the establishment of the Atlas Mine situated at the foot of Sidney basin near Ouray, CO in 1876. Atlas Mine operations included transportation of ore via arial tram to the Atlas Mill approximately 500 vertical feet below the mine opening. The Atlas Mill site features remnants of the historic mill structure, coarse-grained waste rock and fine-grained tailing deposits. The tailings were partly located within the riparian wetland associated with Sneffels Creek and presented concerns of mobilization of these contaminated materials off-site during rainfall or snowmelt events.



The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests



(l to r) Steve Fluke, Jason Willis and Jeff Graves



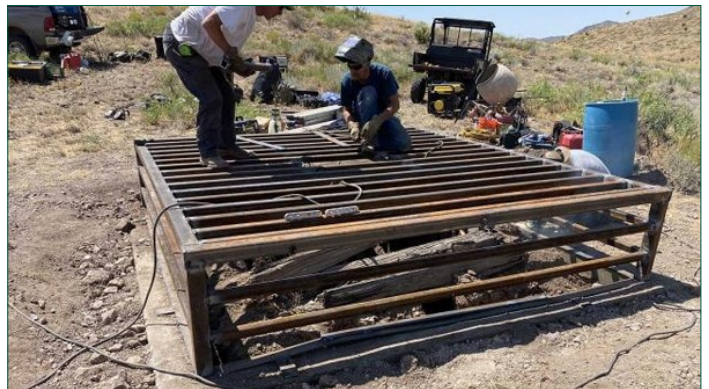
Cookes Peak Mine Safeguard Project - New Mexico

Remediation of Physical Safety Hazards

The BLM and the New Mexico State Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department's (EMNRD) Mining and Minerals Division (MMD) recently completed the final phase of work safeguarding abandoned mines on BLM-managed lands in the area surrounding Cookes Peak in southern New Mexico. Altogether, 300 dangerous mine openings were remediated on the north and east sides of the mountain from 2014 to 2021. Cookes Peak, at an elevation of 8,408, can be seen from miles around and is a popular recreational destination for hiking, hunting, rock hounding and bird watching. The safeguarding work increased the safety of valuable recreation areas while highlighting governmental collaboration.

"The area around Cookes Peak is a tremendous resource for the state," said MMD Director Jerry Schoeppner. "Our division takes pride in partnering with the BLM to make it a safer place to hike and camp while providing jobs to the private sector in completing the construction work."

The mine features left by the historic operations included pits, adits (horizontal mine openings), and shafts. The New Mexico Abandoned Mine Land Program and the Las Cruces District Office of the BLM reviewed the mine openings and determined which ones should receive safeguarding work as part of the National Environmental Policy Act clearance work. If animals such as bats and other wildlife were using the mine voids as a home, a steel gate was constructed at the entrance to preserve the habitat and keep humans from entering. Some of the smaller pits and shafts that were poor animal habitat were backfilled with the adjacent waste pile material.



(l to r) Mike Thompson, Chris Teske and Steve Fluke

New Mexico Bureau of Land Management

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SPECIFICATIONS

400 - 500 words. Articles subject to editing. Submit in e-mail or hard copy. Include author's name, title of article, captions for photos. Submit photos in TIF (preferred) or JPG format, and original photo size.

E-mail photos as individual files, not embedded.

Deadline for Spring Edition is May 15, 2023.

Email articles to **Justin Adams** (justin.adams@ky.gov) or

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