



News Release

US Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM)



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For immediate release

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Risks from Abandoned Mines Reduced

OSM 2006 Annual Report Released

(Washington) -- At least 160,000 Americans living near abandoned coal mines are safer now than they were a year ago, according to a report issued by the US Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM).

OSM today released its annual report to the President and Congress on the status of enforcing coal mining regulations and reclaiming abandoned coal mines, many of which pose safety and health risks to nearby communities. OSM reported that a total of 6,984 acres of Abandoned Mine Land problems were reclaimed or lessened during Fiscal Year 2006, reducing risks for an estimated 161,297 Americans living nearby according to Census data.

Federal, State and Indian Tribe agencies have reclaimed almost 240,000 acres of high-priority abandoned mine lands since 1977, when Congress enacted the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. During the same period the coal mining industry has successfully reclaimed about 2 million acres of mined lands under the protective provisions of the Act.

OSM's Annual Report is available online at <http://www.osmre.gov/annualreports/annualreport06.htm>. The report covers operations by OSM and agencies of coal States and Indian Tribes during Fiscal Year 2006 (October 1, 2005-September 30, 2006).

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OSM Annual Report at a Glance

(As of October 1, 2006)

Regulation of Coal Mining

Since 1977, about 29.5 billion tons of coal have been mined under the protective provisions of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, providing power for an estimated 93 million American homes.

The coal mining industry has successfully reclaimed more than 2 million acres of mined lands.

OSM has provided \$1,251,573,305 in grants to the States to assist in funding the regulation of active coal mines.

Reclamation of Abandoned Mine Lands

Federal, State and Tribal agencies have reclaimed almost 240,000 acres of hazardous high-priority coal-related problems.

Since 1977 OSM has provided \$4.06 billion in grants to its partners in 24 States and three Indian Tribes to clean up dangerous abandoned mine sites.

Community Partnerships

Since 1999 OSM has awarded 161 Watershed Cooperative Agreements and amendments to existing agreements totaling \$14,068,665. Ninety two projects have been completed.

Emergency Response

Since 1977, OSM has addressed 5,099 Abandoned Mine Land emergencies, while the States and Tribes have dealt with 2,764.

By the Numbers

Sample of statistics reported for Fiscal Year 2006 (October 1, 2005-September 30, 2006)

Regulation of Coal Mining

85,745 – The number of full or partial mine inspections conducted by State agencies during Fiscal Year 2006.

1,458 – The number of mine inspection visits conducted by OSM staff during 2006.

2,775 -- The number of violation notices issued by State agencies.

91.5% -- The percentage of coal mines inspected during 2006 found to have no off-site impacts.

49,796 -- The number of acres of mined lands successfully reclaimed by coal operators and released from Phase III Performance Bonds during FY 2006.

Reclamation of Abandoned Mine Lands

161,297– The lowest estimate, based on Census data, of the number of Americans whose exposure to potential safety risks from Abandoned Mine Lands was reduced during 2006.

6,984 – Acres of Abandoned Mine Land problems reclaimed or mitigated.

548 – Miles of streams treated for Abandoned Mine Land problems.

\$302,991,805 -- Abandoned Mine Land fees collected from coal operators in FY 2006

\$1,556,475 – Dollar figure of new Watershed Cooperative Agreements funded to help communities in reduce Acid Mine Drainage from old mines in local streams.

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