



U.S. Office of Surface Mining

News Release



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Contact: Peter Mali
(202) 208-2565
pmali@osmre.gov
Mike Robinson
(412) 937-2882
mrobinson@osmre.gov

Office of Surface Mining, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Coal Mining Company Fund Pennsylvania Mine Mapping Initiative

At an open house held today at the University of Pittsburgh, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) recognized a collaborative project that will make thousands of historical maps of closed or abandoned underground coal mines in Pennsylvania available to the public.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), OSM, and CONSOL Energy, Inc., have pledged a total of \$400,000 to the project, which will make available to the public more than 8,000 historical underground mine maps covering much of the coalfields in southwestern Pennsylvania. OSM's National Mine Map Repository is providing specialized staff and equipment in collaboration with PADEP and the University of Pittsburgh to create digital copies of the maps, which will allow the expansion of a publicly accessible Internet-based geographic information system. The mine maps — some of which date to the 1850s — are a donation from CONSOL Energy, which in 2000 donated its Pennsylvania collection to the University of Pittsburgh's library system.

“OSM is committed to supporting collaborative projects like this that improve public safety, protect the environment, safeguard miners, and improve economic development,” said Thomas Shope, Director of OSM's Appalachian Region, at the event. “This is another example of the work that OSM is doing to acquire, preserve, archive, and make abandoned underground coal mine maps available before they're lost forever,” he added.

Since 2005, OSM has provided over \$1 million to 32 underground mine map-archiving projects in 15 coal-producing states. OSM has also worked with states and other Federal agencies to develop approaches for acquiring mine maps and making them available.

OSM carries out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in cooperation with states and Indian tribes. OSM's objectives are to ensure that coal mining activities are conducted in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, to ensure that the land is restored to beneficial use after mining, and to mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.