Guide for Judging 2012 Director's Award for Excellence In Surface Mining Awards:
"Excellence in Stream Restoration"

Overview:

Scoring for this award is based on seven "Success Categories," which are highlighted below.
The Director's Award for Demonstrated Excellence in Stream Reclamation requires a summary of physical, biological, hydrological, and water quality monitoring data spanning a minimum of five years. This data should be logically organized and detailed enough to allow efficient analysis of the current state of the restored stream and any positive or negative trends.

Success Categories:

1. Clarity and Completeness of Nomination Package – (for specifications, please see "Rules and Regulations" for the overall Excellence in Surface Mining by clicking on the following link)
http://www.osmre.gov/topic/awards/docs/2012NomActive.shtm
Is the nomination package complete? Is there enough data to evaluate all Success Categories below? Are claims of success by the nominee clear and supported? Did the nominee provide a clear description and summary of the project and its monitoring results?

Points:
(10-15) Package is clear, easy to evaluate, and complete
(5-10) Package is lacking in some details and/or clarity but is otherwise complete
(0-5) Package is not compete, lacks some required information, and/or too unclear to evaluate

2. Hydrological Success:
Is the current flow regime similar to the baseline if a stream(s) was undisturbed or to a reference i.e., undisturbed or least disturbed reach of similar morphology to the pre-mining condition of the restored stream if previously disturbed? Does this project carefully consider the hydrology of the local watershed in its design?

Points:
(10-15) Very close to baseline or reference
(5-10) Somewhat close to baseline or reference
(0-5) Not close to baseline or reference

3. Water Quality Success:
Is the current water quality on site similar to the pre-mining baseline? Judges will evaluate the following: temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, iron, manganese, sulfate and any other required parameters.

Points:
(10-15) All or most water quality parameters are at or better than baseline conditions and data trends show improvement
(5-10) All water quality parameters meet current state and Federal water quality regulations and most data trends show improvement
(0-5) All water quality parameters meet current state and Federal water quality regulations but most data trends do not show improvement

4. Physical success:
Are the current physical features of the stream(s) similar to baseline if the stream(s) was undisturbed or to reference if previously disturbed? The judges will evaluate the following for the stream: plan and

profile, cross-section, riffle/pool ratio, particle size, habitat features, substrate embeddedness, and sediment transport.

Points:

(10-15) Very close to baseline or reference, no major negative changes expected

(5-10) Somewhat close to baseline or reference, no major negative changes expected

(0-5) Not close to baseline/reference and/or major negative changes expected

5. Biological Success:

Is the biological community on site similar to pre-mining baseline? How does the stream(s) score on the State's macroinvertebrate and/or fish bioassessment protocol? Are there data trends showing improvement? What is the quality, diversity, and size of the site's riparian zone? What is the expected success rate for the quality and number of trees planted? What is the vegetative coverage rate? Does exotic vegetation exist in significant amounts?

Points:

(10-15) Bioassessment scores at or better than baseline, riparian zone improved or enlarged by reclamation

(5-10) Bioassessment scores and riparian zone quality and size resemble baseline

(0-5) Bioassessment scores lower than baseline and/or riparian zone degraded or reduced by reclamation

6. Site Protection and Monitoring:

Does the site have long-term protection in the form of a real estate instrument such as a deed restriction or conservation easement, or has the site been donated (or will be donated) to a non-profit conservation organization or government agency? Is there a plan for long-term monitoring of the site beyond the requirements of any state or Federal regulations? If so, what is monitoring plan's level of detail?

Points:

(5-10) Long term protection and monitoring established

(0-5) No long term protection or monitoring established

7. Overall On-site Success:

Considering all factors above or any others not previously mentioned, and in comparison to other stream reclamation projects on mine sites, how does this one rank?

Points:

(10-15) in the top 10%

(5-10) in the top 30%

(0-5) below top 30%