

Reforestation of US Mountaintop Mine Sites Gets UN Endorsement



Written by [Alex Felsing](#)

Published on March 28th, 2009

Posted in [Nature & Conservation](#)



With the help of conservation groups, the U.S. Office of Surface Mining launched the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative to attempt to rescue the thousands forest acres left barren by mountaintop coal mining.

The volunteer-based initiative, which hopes to eventually plant 38 million trees in Appalachia, received the endorsement of the United Nations Environment Program yesterday. The UN aims to plant 7 billion trees in the next three years across the globe, so every small project across the globe contributes.

“That’s a significant commitment, and we hope for much more to come,” said Elisabeth Guilbaud-Cox of the UN Environment Program. “Whatever effort is being undertaken to rehabilitate forests, we are happy about it.”

The Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative works against the common belief that trees cannot grow on former mine sites. The organizers cite research stating otherwise, so long as the soil isn't too compact for trees to take root.

Patrick Angel, working with the government office, said replanting the trees is much better than leaving the land to be used as pasture for cattle. Of course, planting trees will reverse global warming while cows contribute to it, but Angel also said that planting forest will prevent flooding disasters.

"If the mine soils are compacted like a Wal-Mart parking lot, where you have 100 percent runoff, zero percent infiltration of rainwater, you can imagine what kind of erosion and gulying will occur," Angel said. "There's no force in nature more powerful than running water. With this forestry reclamation approach, mine soils are very loose and porous, such that water is soaked up like a sponge."

[Via: [AP](#)]

Photo Credit: [ConspiracyofHappiness](#) on Flickr under Creative Commons license.

Planetsave is a [Green Options Media](#) Production. [Some Rights Reserved](#) 

 [Powered by Virgance](#)