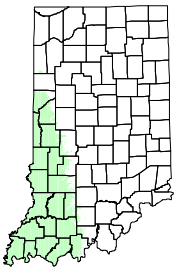
What is the Abandoned Mine Lands Program?



Since 1982, the Restoration Program of the Department of Natural Resource's Division of Reclamation has worked to protect the citizens of Indiana from the adverse effects of old mining practices. Mines that operated before 1977 were not subject to the same federal regulations as today and often left hazardous and unproductive lands behind.

Coal mining began in Indiana in the 1800's and by 1977 more than 170,000 acres of surface mines and 163,000 acres of underground mines with more than 2300 entries dotted the landscape of southwest Indiana. The Federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (P.L.95-87) of 1977 not only set standards for future mining; it resulted in the collection of fees on active mining to pay for these historical problems. With the adoption of the Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program in Indiana in 1982, work began restoring these lands to safe and productive conditions.

In the last 20 years, roughly 8000 acres of abandoned and derelict land has been reclaimed, including more than 142,000 feet of highwalls, more than 900 dangerous mine openings and subsidences, 300 structures, 160 acres of trash, and 3700 acres of environmentally threatening coal slurry and gob.

These figures currently represent 72% of the known problems that needed to be addressed in the coal region. It is estimated that another 8 years of full funding will be needed to clean up this backlog, and another $1.5 to $2 million in additional federal funds thereafter to take care of new problems that arise, such as subsidences and slope failures. Currently, the AML program and fee collection are scheduled to continue until September 30, 2005.

AML Reclamation Completed by County Through January, 2005

County	No.of Sites	Cost
Clay	128	5,670,087
Daviess	23	4,522,155
Dubois	11	40,174
Fountain	3	14,488
Gibson	7	191,438
Greene	93	6,326,913
Knox	26	10,831,218
Martin	5	1,202,018
Owen	5	17,289
Parke	17	442,766
Perry	7	367,936
Pike	82	23,742,713
Spencer	26	2,329,672
Sullivan	74	7,377,407
Vermillion	21	1,031,586
Vigo	88	11,094,685
Warrick	122	20,404,421
Total	**738**	**95,606,966**