

LIFE AFTER MINING



Abandoned coal mines are dangerous for humans, but can provide valuable habitat for wildlife.



Unpredictable and sudden ceiling collapses, along with oxygen-deficient air, make abandoned mines dangerous to enter.



The previous barricade over the old mine entrance did not allow bats to enter.

On April 29, 2000, the entrance to the Lusk Coal Mine was permanently gated.

Volunteers from the Indiana Karst Conservancy carried steel bars each weighing as much as 300 pounds down the steep hill behind you. They cut the bars to size with a cutting torch and welded them into place. The gate was installed at this site for two reasons: the safety of visitors and the protection of bats.



Volunteers prepare the site...



Welding the first upright to the sill plate...



Welding the final cross member in place...

Just as bars in a zoo protect you from the animals inside, these bars protect you from the potential dangers of an open mine.



Safe for visitors - Safe for bats

The gate on this mine is designed to allow bats to fly freely in and out, providing them access to the protected roosting habitat inside.



Bat photos used with permission, Martin D. Tuttle, Bat Conservation International



Bats play a vital role in our ecosystem.

They consume vast numbers of insects that rank among our most costly agricultural and forest pests. However, due to habitat loss, bat populations are declining at an alarming rate.

