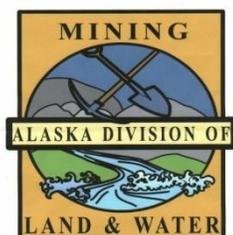


**ANNUAL SUMMARY EVALUATION**  
of the  
**ALASKA ABANDONED MINE LANDS RECLAMATION PROGRAM**  
for  
**EVALUATION YEAR 2009**  
(July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009)



August 11, 2009



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction .....	2
II.	General Information on the Alaska Program.....	3
III.	Noteworthy Accomplishments .....	4
IV.	Results of Enhancement and Performance Review .....	5
V.	Accomplishments and Inventory Reports .....	12
Appendix 1		
	Coal Reclamation Accomplishments Since December 23, 1983, and Unfunded Coal Problems Remaining.....	16
Appendix 2		
	Coal Reclamation Accomplishments and Inventory Changes in the 2009 Evaluation Year.....	17
Appendix 3		
	Noncoal Reclamation Accomplishments Since December 23, 1983, and Unfunded Noncoal Problems Remaining.....	18
Appendix 4		
	Noncoal Reclamation Accomplishments and Inventory Changes in the 2009 Evaluation Year .....	19
Appendix 5		
	State Comments on the Report.....	20

## ACRONYMS

AAMLRP	Alaska Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Program
AKSAS	Alaska Statewide Accounting System
AML	Abandoned Mine Land
AMLIS	Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System
AMLR	Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation
ARDF	Alaska Resource Data File (USGS developed and maintained)
ASAP	Automated Standard Application for Payments
BLM	Bureau of Land Management (of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior)
DEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
DFD	Denver Field Division (of the Office of Surface Mining)
DNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
DMLWM	Division of Mining, Land and Water (of the Alaska DNR)
FBMS	Federal Business Management System

MRDS	National Mineral Resource Data System (USGS developed and maintained)
NAAMLPLP	National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs
NPS	National Park Service (of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior)
NTTP	National Technical Training Program (of OSM)
OIG	Office of the Inspector General (of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior)
OSM	Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior)
PAD	Problem Area Description (in AMLIS)
SMCRA	Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, as amended
TIPS	Technical Innovation and Professional Services (of OSM)
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	Forest Service (of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture)
USGS	United States Geological Survey (of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior)

**Cover photo:** Willow plantings at the reclaimed Jonesville fire phase 1 project (foreground) and reclaimed areas of the Jonesville fire phase 2 area (background, left and right), near Sutton, Alaska, July 2009. Photo by Joe Wehrman.

## I. Introduction

Title IV of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA or “the Act”), as amended, provides moneys to States and Indian tribes from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund (the Fund) and the general Treasury of the United States. The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) administers Title IV of SMCRA on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior. The primary purpose of Title IV is to pay the costs of mitigating past coal mining effects, though it also allows certain noncoal problems to be addressed. On December 20, 2006, the President signed the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-432). That legislation included the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act Amendments of 2006 (the 2006 Act or the 2006 SMCRA amendments). The 2006 Act amended Title IV of SMCRA to make significant changes in the abandoned mine reclamation fee and the AML program. OSM published final regulations implementing the 2006 Act in the November 14, 2008, **Federal Register** (73 FR 67576). Those final regulations took effect January 13, 2009.

OSM awards grants to States and Indian tribes with moneys from the Fund and the general Treasury to pay their administration costs and reclaim abandoned mines. SMCRA puts the highest priority on correcting the most serious abandoned mine land (AML) problems that endanger public health, safety, general welfare, and property. As amended, it also allows certain lower priority problems to be addressed if they are in conjunction with, or adjacent to, higher priority problems. OSM, State, and Indian tribal AML programs work together to achieve the goals of the national program. OSM also works cooperatively with the States and Indian tribes to monitor their AML programs.

Directive AML-22 generally describes how OSM evaluates State and Tribal AML reclamation programs in “enhancement and performance reviews.” Following that

Directive, a team of State and Federal personnel has been evaluating the Alaska Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Program (AAMLRP) since January 1996. The team includes representatives of AAMLRP and OSM's Denver Field Division (DFD). It also includes other individuals on an ad-hoc basis as needed. Joe Wehrman, AAMLRP manager, participated in all the performance measure evaluations for the 2009 evaluation year. Diane Houston, AAMLRP, and Wanda Feela of the Alaska Division of Mining, Land and Water helped evaluate the 3(b) and 3(c) performance measures. Frank Atencio was OSM-DFD's reviewer for the 3(b) and 3(c) evaluations. Ron Sassaman, OSM-DFD, did the 2(e) and 2(h) evaluations and wrote this report.

This report summarizes our reviews and evaluations of the Alaska Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Program for the 2009 evaluation year, which included the period of July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009.

## **II. General Information on the Alaska Program**

On December 23, 1983, the Secretary of the Interior approved Alaska's AML reclamation plan ("State reclamation plan") under Title IV of SMCRA. That approval allows Alaska to reclaim abandoned mines in the State in non-emergency AML projects. Effective November 16, 1992, the Secretary approved Alaska's AML emergency response reclamation program. AAMLRP is part of the Division of Mining, Land and Water in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It administers Alaska's AML program under its approved plan. The Denver Field Division of OSM's Western Region works with AAMLRP to fund and approve AML projects in Alaska and to evaluate AML reclamation and other aspects of the Program.

Section 405(f) of SMCRA authorizes State and Tribal AML programs to apply to OSM each year for a grant to support their programs and reclaim specific projects. OSM awards grants to AAMLRP to fund the Program's administration costs for the period of July 1<sup>st</sup> of one year through June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. The same grants award construction funding that is available to the Program during the same period for each of three years after the initial grant award date. Alaska has not yet certified under section 411(a) of SMCRA that it completed reclamation of its known abandoned coal mine problems.

Alaska's 2008 AML grant funding totaled \$1,750,000. The 2008 grant includes \$25,000 for emergency coal reclamation and supports program administration and 3.75 full-time equivalents. The State's grant funds two, and possibly three coal projects and possibly one or more noncoal projects included in the 2007 and 2008 Governor's 409(c) letters.

OSM awarded AAMLRP a total of \$1,723,541 in the 2009 grant. AAMLRP did not request emergency program funding in the 2009 grant. The 2009 grant funds 3.75 full-time equivalents and program administration and construction costs. It briefly described tentative work the Program would do at four abandoned coal mine areas and kept open the option of working on one or two abandoned noncoal mines included in past 409(c)

letters. The Governor's April 15, 2009, letter requests funding under section 409(c) for the Gold Stamp noncoal project.

No AML emergencies were reported in Alaska during the 2009 evaluation year.

Alaska does not have an OSM-approved subsidence insurance protection program.

### **III. Noteworthy Accomplishments**

AAMLRP continued to partner with other entities for AML reclamation, though some of the planned work is on hold. In 2007, the Program provided funding to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), National Park Service (NPS) to reclaim the Jumbo Mine subsidence feature in a popular hiking area of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Since that time, the subsidence closed naturally but is expected to reopen. The Program extended its cooperative agreement with NPS for another two years to keep the funding available if needed. During the 2008 evaluation year, the Program provided partial funding to the NPS to reclaim a portal and vertical opening in the Nuka Bay / Harrington Prospect project in the Kenai Fjords National Park. That work was completed by the end of August 2008. In the 2009 evaluation year, AAMLRP also provided additional funding to the NPS to safeguard one portal and a flooded winze adjacent to it at the Mullen prospect in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Also, AAMLRP met with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, near the end of the 2009 evaluation year to plan the Gold Stamp closure in the Chugach National Forest on the Kenai Peninsula near the community of Hope. The Program also enlisted the help of prison inmates to plant 7,800 linear feet of trenches with willows on the reclaimed Jonesville Fire phase 1 area near Sutton. That was a continuation of the Program's work to improve moose habitat in the area.

The Program promoted public awareness of AML hazards and its reclamation projects during the evaluation period. It kept the Sutton Community Council informed of the ongoing Jonesville and Eska Creek projects by attending Council meetings and providing written updates. AAMLRP solicited Community input when planning those projects and involved the local fire chief in the projects' access and water issues. The Program also participated in field visits with Community leaders on request. A representative of the Community Council attended part of the 2008 evaluation of the 1(a) performance measure at the Jonesville Fire Phase 2 project area. AAMLRP published an article in a local newspaper to inform the public of its Ester Dome project and asked the public for information on any other abandoned mine problems in the area. It also informed residents of the Healy area of the need, and its plan, to demolish the Suntrana tipple and conveyor to protect public health and safety.

Training figured prominently in the Program's activities. The DNR's computer training facility, which AAMLRP was instrumental in establishing, was in use on average about half the time and occasionally on weekends. It is modeled after OSM's TIPS training room in Denver. That facility saw the most use during winter months. On October 8, 2008, AAMLRP provided on-the-job training/technology transfer to the Bureau of Land

Management in the use of polyurethane foam to close a vertical shaft near Fairbanks. The National Park Service provided the foam for that work. By the end of the 2009 evaluation year, three AAMLRP staff members will have attended 11 different National Technical Training Program (NTTP) courses and two Technical Innovation and Professional Services (TIPS) courses that OSM sponsors. Those courses included: AML Design Workshop – Subsidence; Effective Writing; Historical and Archeological Resources; Coalfield Communications – How to Get It Right!; Principles of Inspection; Blasting and Inspection; Subsidence; Galena Slope Stability; Wetlands Awareness; Applied Engineering Principles; Introduction to GPS with Garmin e-TrexVistaC; Enforcement Procedures; and Advanced Carlson Mining for Permitting and Reclamation (SurvCADD).

#### **IV. Results of Enhancement and Performance Reviews**

We updated the “Alaska AML Evaluation Team Performance Agreement” to describe the principles of excellence and performance measures that we planned to review in the 2009 evaluation year. We finalized the updates on January 5, 2009.

Principles of excellence and performance measures emphasize on-the-ground or end-results as much as possible. Each general principle of excellence has one or more specific performance measure(s). Performance measures describe: Why we selected that topic; what the review population and sample sizes will be; how we will do the review and report the results; and our schedule for completing the review. The principles of excellence and specific performance measures we chose for our 2009 evaluation of the Alaska Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Program are:

*Principle of Excellence 1:* The State’s on-the-ground reclamation is successful.

- *Performance Measure (a):* Does reclamation meet the goals of the project?

*Principle of Excellence 2:* The State AML program procedures are efficient and effective.

- *Performance Measure (e):* Does the information the State entered into the Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System (AMLIS) beginning July 1, 2004, agree with information in its files?
- *Performance Measure (h):* What is the progress so far in developing the interagency abandoned mine land database?

*Principle of Excellence 3:* The State has systems to properly manage AML funds.

- *Performance Measure (b):* Can the grant application and report procedures be improved?

- *Performance Measure (c):* Are State procedures for property procurement, management and disposals of property effective?

Results of our 2009 evaluation are described below in Parts IV.A through E. We described our evaluation results in much greater detail in an enhancement and performance review report for each performance measure. Those reports are on file in OSM's Denver Field Division and are the factual basis of this report's summary of our evaluations of performance measures 1(a), 2(e), 2(h), 3(b), and 3(c).

#### **A. Summary Evaluation of Performance Measure 1(a)**

We planned to visit the Suntrana tipple/bridge demolition project, the Healy Creek wash plant demolition project, and the North Jones upper fire area drilling project for the 2009 evaluation. All three are coal projects. Though AAMLRP demolished the Suntrana tipple and bridge by July 20, 2008, work did not begin on the Healy Creek wash plant and the North Jones fire drilling by the end of the 2009 evaluation year. So, we decided to postpone our evaluation of this performance measure until the 2010 evaluation year. This change should make the 1(a) evaluation more comprehensive and cost-effective.

#### **B. Summary Evaluation of Performance Measure 2(e)**

In September 2004, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Inspector General (OIG), issued report number 2003-I-0074 based on its review of AMLIS data for four eastern States' AML programs. That report criticized the accuracy of data in Problem Area Descriptions (PADs), concluding that AMLIS data did not match data in the respective States' files. In part, the OIG recommended establishing "a quality control system that ensures that States, Tribes, and OSM, as applicable, review and certify the accuracy of data entered into AMLIS."

In response to that recommendation, we developed performance measure 2(e) to require an annual comparison of data in a sample of Alaska's AMLIS PADs to data in Alaska's files to ensure that they agree. AAMLRP uses data from the Alaska Statewide Accounting System (AKSAS) and its project managers to complete its project closeout reports and update AMLIS. We consider the project closeout reports to be AAMLRP's "system" for ensuring that completion data Alaska enters into AMLIS match data in its files. We compared data in AAMLRP's project closeout reports to data in those projects' respective PADs.

We also considered other AMLIS requirements for this evaluation. State and Indian tribal AML programs help OSM maintain an inventory of abandoned mine land problems. They are required to update PADs in AMLIS when OSM approves funding for individual reclamation projects and upon project completion. Those programs also are required to complete priority documentation forms to support the priorities they assign to AML problems in PADs.

The evaluation sample included two noncoal projects and one coal project and their AMLIS PADs.

Our review found the following:

1. AAMLRP updated AMLIS PADs with completion data for all three sample projects;
2. AAMLRP completed closeout reports for all three sample projects;
3. AAMLRP completed priority documentation forms for all three sample projects;
4. Completion data in two of the three sample AMLIS PADs matched data in their respective project closeout reports;
5. For one sample project, AAMLRP identified the shared cost in the closeout report, associated comments in the PAD, and in the PAD's linked performance measures. However, a data entry error resulted in showing only AAMLRP's costs and accomplishments in the problem summary. The National Park Service's shared cost and accomplishments were not shown.

We reached the following three conclusions based on our findings:

1. AAMLRP formatted information in the sample project closeout reports consistent with formatting improvements it made in the 2007 evaluation year;
2. AAMLRP updated sample AMLIS PADs upon project completion as required in 30 CFR 886.23(b), and;
3. AAMLRP's use of project closeout reports to ensure that data in its files match AMLIS PAD data improved in the 2009 evaluation year but was not completely successful for one of the three sample projects we reviewed.

Based on our findings and conclusions, we recommended the following:

1. AAMLRP correct AMLIS data as described in our evaluation for one sample project to match completion data in its closeout report for that project; and
2. AAMLRP include a quality control check in the process of updating AMLIS to ensure that the data it enters in PADs and performance measures matches data in the respective project closeout reports.

AAMLRP corrected the sample PAD on July 29, 2009, in response to findings number 4 and 5 and recommendation number 1. Data in that PAD now match data in the State's project closeout report.

### **C. Summary Evaluation of Performance Measure 2(h)**

This evaluation looked at the progress AAMLRP and its partners made in developing an interagency AML database. The purpose of the interagency database is to increase efficiency and cooperation between different agencies' abandoned mine land (AML) programs in Alaska. This effort to consolidate abandoned mine data can improve and/or increase agencies' ability to abate AML hazards and to promote public awareness and safety. Partners in this effort include: AAMLRP / Alaska DNR; Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC); the U.S. Department of the Interior – National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Geological Survey (USGS); the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service (USFS); and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

The USEPA funded this effort through the DEC. As a result, the DEC is developing and maintaining it as a new database housed with ARDF records that the partners would update by submitting data to DEC. The database still is in a test mode as of the date of this report. The database, called the DEC Abandoned Mines Database Application (the DEC database), is available to the public and agency employees online at <http://www.test.dec.state.ak.us/spar/Mines/default.aspx>.

The DEC Abandoned Mines Application enables a user to select sites (“site selection” tab) by searching for site names by numerical designation or the first letter of a site name. Site selection, in turn, includes site description, ARDF data, affiliates, actions, and environmental fields. Though public users have access to data already entered into the database, DEC staff record data in the system.

All fields have sub-fields and record a variety of information. The site description field includes fields for the site name, active or inactive status, mining district, production, watershed, and other identifiers. It also includes a location field and an additional location notes field. The ARDF field provides additional fields for detailed resource / mineral commodity data. It is based on the ARDF that the USGS created as a subset of the National Mineral Resource Data System (MRDS) to better meet the needs of local Alaska communities. ARDF is available directly online at <http://ardf.wr.usgs.gov>. Information about who investigated, explored, or mined a site is found in the affiliates field. Actions on or concerning the site appear in the actions field. This field can list as many as three agency actions, the action date, whether the BLM, DEC, DNR, or EPA are taking the action, and comments. The environmental field includes fields for potential contaminants of concern, comments, and the potential threat. Potential contaminants of concern includes a drop-down menu from which to select the affected / pathway media from a list of about 276 elements, chemical compounds, and particles. Based on that selection, the database will automatically fill-in the potential threat to human health and/or ecological receptors in the potential threat field.

Our review found the following:

1. The DEC database potentially could provide some background and resource information to AAMLRP for developing projects to address abandoned noncoal mine problems;
2. Development of the interagency database is an accomplishment in itself;
3. Work on the DEC database continues as the partners consider various issues;
4. Mineral resource, exploration, and mine-related data in the ARDF and DEC database are limited to noncoal minerals;
5. The DEC database supplements, but does not replace, AAMLRP's need to do file searches and field investigations of potential or actual noncoal abandoned mine problems; and
6. AAMLRP does not use the DEC database for its noncoal project planning because it finds the Alaska Mapper database much more useful.

Based on these findings, we reached the following conclusions:

1. AAMLRP actively participated in developing the DEC database with its partners;
2. As presently configured (and still being developed), the new DEC database is not what AAMLRP originally expected and does not meet AAMLRP's information needs for abandoned coal and noncoal mines;
3. AAMLRP will continue to use the Alaska Mapper database and ARDF for its information needs for the foreseeable future; and
4. Other than continuing its working relationships with other agencies' AML programs, there are no benefits for AAMLRP that we can report at this time related to using the DEC database.

Recommending actions to improve the DEC database to meet AAMLRP's and OSM's goals is outside the scope of this evaluation. We encourage AAMLRP to continue helping its partners develop the database as long as its help is needed and to continue sharing its abandoned mine information.

#### **D. Summary Evaluation of Performance Measure 3(b)**

This evaluation determined if Alaska's grant application and report procedures can be improved. We reviewed the current methods Alaska uses to apply for OSM grant funds. We looked at changes to the Federal Business Management System (FBMS) subaccount numbering schemes and their allowable use for the Alaska program. Our evaluation sample included subaccounts created as a result of the 2006 SMCRA amendments. We concentrated on funding available under the 2006 SMCRA

amendments, their identifying FBMS subaccount numbers, and any problems that Alaska's financial system may be encountering as a result of the changes. AAMLRP has worked through the uncertainty it experienced in grant management as a result of changes the 2006 SMCRA amendments and the November 14, 2008, regulation changes made in the AML Program.

Under the 2006 amendments and the revised Federal regulations implementing them at 30 CFR Part 886, Alaska is eligible to receive the following funding:

- prior balance replacement funds (SMCRA Sec. 411(h)(1)) to be granted in seven equal annual payments from FY2008 through FY2014;
- mandatory State share funds (SMCRA Sec. 402(g)(1)) and historical coal funds (SMCRA Sec 402(g)(5));
- minimum program make up funds (SMCRA Sec. 402(g)(8)); and
- emergency program funds (SMCRA Sec. 402(g)(3)).

AAMLRP received some funding from all five categories of funding mentioned above in FY 2008 and all but one in FY 2009. The Program decided to ask for all funding it is eligible to receive except emergency program funds in FY 2009.

Despite the need for grants training, AAMLRP is able to keep the financial aspects of the program going. With respect to the new fund types available under the 2006 SMCRA amendments, we determined that most FBMS subaccounts will show up on the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) Reports, though subaccounts for carry-over funds might not. ASAP is a Treasury Department program for funds draw-down and is not a part of the FBMS system. This makes it difficult to coordinate all aspects of OSM's funding program with the Treasury Accounting system.

There is a need to train State employees to use FBMS and the 2006 SMCRA amendments and other changes that have resulted from them. Alaska now cannot follow patterns from past practices; the subaccounts and how they are to be used changed. On the other hand, AAMLRP's problems with the changes are not as pronounced as they might otherwise be because it works primarily on coal and priority 1 noncoal projects. Nevertheless, under the new changes, AAMLRP must annually identify any funds it plans to use for noncoal reclamation and may not exceed the amounts specified for that purpose based on the funds' origin. Tracking how funds are being used caused some changes and difficulties in record keeping. OSM has not issued guidance on how specific time sheets, material and supply purchases, and other costs must be to distinguish between coal and noncoal work. So, AAMLRP will continue to use its multi-level co-allocation and program coding system to show if payment is being made for coal or non-coal expenditures for a particular period of time or for a work project. OSM still is revising its financial forms and developing new ones. There will be a need to train States on those changes when they are final. OSM will

ensure that the Alaska management and staff are included in any future training and are informed of changes to FBMS and grant forms. The OSM Grants Specialist will follow-up with the State on all questions and concerns raised during our evaluation.

### **E. Summary Evaluation of Performance Measure 3(c)**

This evaluation determined if State procedures for property procurement, management and disposal of property are effective. We reviewed the Program's inventory records and the process it uses to track purchases. We also considered AAMLRP's procurements of \$5,000 or more under current, open AML grants and its property disposal records. The sample for our evaluation included: DNR's Property Inventory Data Sheet; 2008 property inventory records; Certification of Completion of the 2008 physical property inventory; the State-wide equipment fleet annual asset FY08 inventory list; procedures for the DNR's 2008 vehicle inventory; Inter-Departmental Property Transfer Authorization and Report documents; and forms used for requesting property salvage or destruction.

The Division of Mining, Land and Water inventories all equipment purchased with OSM AML grant funds regardless of cost. This list includes primarily computers, computer equipment, software, printers, cameras, and GPS mapping equipment. Alaska's coal regulatory program (also a recipient of OSM grants and part of DMLWM) shares the cost and use of some higher-priced items with AAMLRP.

The property inventory report tracks locations, serial numbers, prices, numbers of items acquired and the year items are purchased. The AML Program Manager reviews this comprehensive list and approves and signs off on the actual purchases. He is the Section Custodian for equipment AAMLRP and the Coal Regulatory Program use.

Vehicles are inventoried on the Statewide Equipment Fleet Annual Asset Inventory sheet. Among the identifying inventory features are vehicle ID, mileage, description, manufacturer and model year, and serial number. The inventory also lists the location where vehicles are kept. AAMLRP's Natural Resource Technician verifies the vehicle inventory and the AML Manager concurs.

Property is disposed of generally when it has exceeded its useful life or AAMLRP no longer needs it. The Alaska State Property Manager provides a Property Salvage/Destruction Request form to AAMLRP to complete for property that is no longer useful. The property custodian provides a statement of circumstances/rationale for disposal of such property. This form includes a description, the quantity, and the serial numbers of the items to be salvaged or destroyed. The Property Custodian, a supervisor, and the Division or Regional Director give final concurrence with such a request.

AAMLRP also uses an Inter-Departmental Property Transfer Authorization and Report to dispose of property that is no longer needed. This procedure allows other State agencies to use property or equipment that still is useful. This report includes the name

and address of the Property Officer and the department releasing the property. It also names the receiving Property Officer, the Department, location and the type of transfer. A description with property identification numbers, quantity and a rating of the property's condition also is provided. The releasing supervisor and the receiving agency's supervisor sign and date the report.

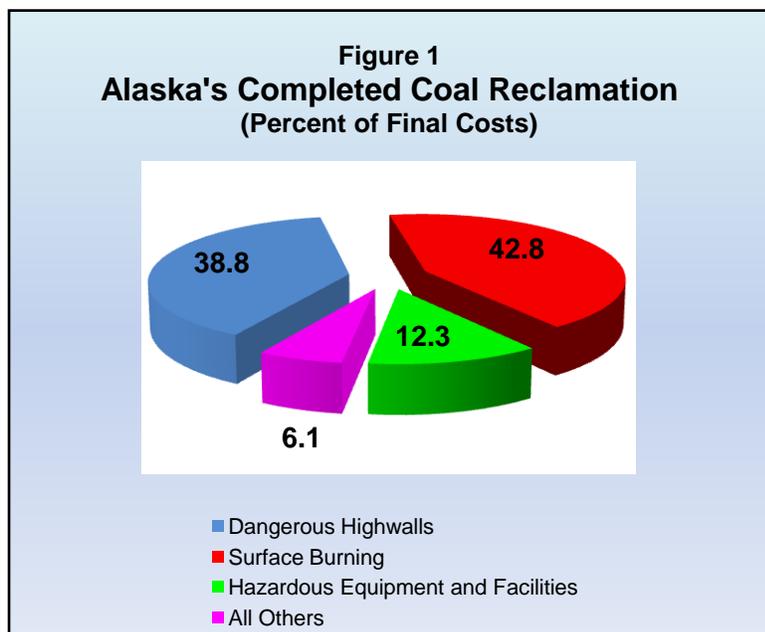
Adequate safeguards are built into the State's inventory and property disposal records. Property identifiers and signatures are required for every action DMLWM takes. An Annual Certification of Completion of Controlled Physical Property Inventory increases security. It includes vehicles the DNR registers as the property custodian. DMLWM's Property Custodian is required to verify that property inventories have been made, are up to date, and if any major changes occurred during the year such as sales, damage, or salvage.

Based on our findings, we concluded that Alaska's Division of Mining, Land and Water has effective procedures for property procurement, property management and for the disposal of excess property.

## V. Accomplishments and Inventory Reports

Title IV of SMCRA, as amended, emphasizes reclamation of abandoned coal mine-related problems in uncertified States such as Alaska while allowing limited noncoal reclamation as well. The State maintains an inventory of abandoned coal mine problems in AMLIS from which AAMLRP selects problems to reclaim. Alaska also requests funding to abate priority 1 noncoal mine hazards under section 409(c) of SMCRA.

Alaska spent over \$16.5 million to reclaim abandoned coal mine problems since the

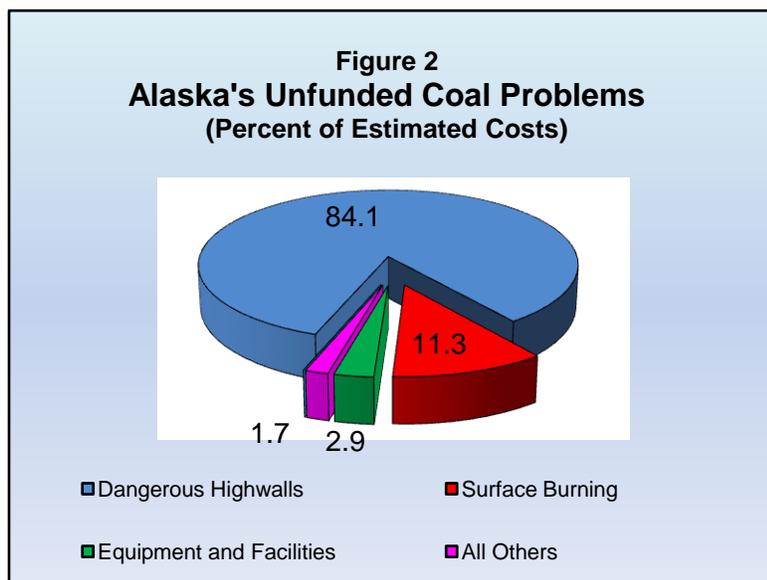


Secretary approved the State's program in late 1983. This is a decrease of \$792,799 from the \$17.3 million total completion cost reported in the 2008 period. The decrease reflects adjustments in AMLIS completion cost data for hazardous equipment and facilities and surface burning. The \$16.5 million is 94.3 percent of all the SMCRA grant funds AAMLRP spent on abandoned mine reclamation in that time, based on AMLIS data. Figure 1 (left) illustrates AAMLRP's completed reclamation of priority 1, 2, and

3 coal problems as percentages of final costs. To date, Alaska’s coal projects abated hazards associated with 10,220 linear feet of dangerous highwalls, 1,481 structures and pieces of equipment, 50.5 acres of spoil areas and 47 acres of surface burning. AAMLRP’s coal reclamation to date is dominated by abating surface burning (42.8%), dangerous highwalls (38.8%), and hazardous equipment and facilities (12.3%). Appendix 1 shows completed units and final costs of Alaska’s coal reclamation in greater detail based on AMLIS data. It also gives more detail on the ten types of coal problems that Figure 1 combines into “all others.”

AAMLRP worked on two coal projects during the 2008 evaluation period. It removed the tippie and horizontal bridge span in phase 3 of the Suntrana Tippie project near Healy. The final cost of that project is not yet reflected in AMLIS. The program also leveled and compacted a residual pile at the Jonesville fire phase 1 project area and planted it with willow cuttings to establish moose browse. Prison inmates helped plant the willows.

Figure 2 (below left) is an illustration of the unfunded coal problems Alaska has remaining. It is based on a comparison of their estimated reclamation costs as currently inventoried in AMLIS. The estimated cost of reclaiming Alaska’s remaining coal problems is \$59,478,609. That figure is a decrease of \$2 million from the estimated cost of abating the State’s unfunded coal problems since the 2008 evaluation year.



About 98.3 percent of Alaska’s remaining coal problems include dangerous highwalls (84.1%), surface burning (11.3%), and priority 3 equipment and facilities (2.9%). The remaining 1.7 percent, shown as “all others” in Figure 2, includes dangerous piles and embankments, hazardous equipment and facilities, hazardous water bodies, and lower priority mine openings and haul roads. Also, almost 96.9 percent of the estimated cost of reclaiming Alaska’s remaining inventoried coal

problems is associated with unfunded priority 1 and 2 problems. Unfunded priority 3 problems make up the remaining 3.1 percent. Appendix 1 shows Alaska’s remaining unfunded coal problems and the estimated costs of addressing them in greater detail.

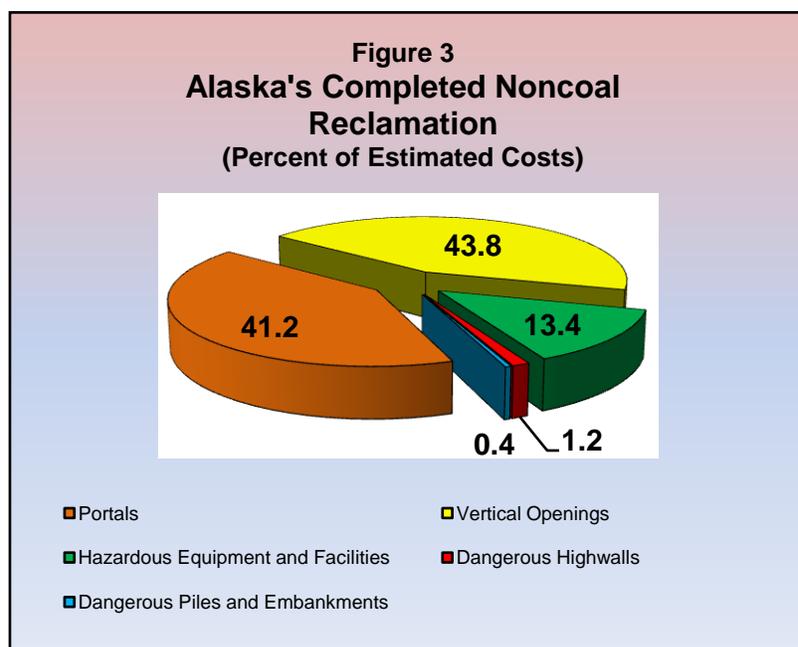
Appendix 2 shows the changes the Program made to AMLIS during the year. As mentioned above, one significant update decreased the estimated cost of Alaska’s unfunded hazardous equipment and facilities by \$2 million. That is offset by increasing the funded costs of hazardous equipment and facilities in AMLIS by the same amount.

The decrease and offsetting increase reflects AAMLRP's estimate of the cost to fund the Healy Creek wash plant project. AAMLRP received authorization to proceed with that project on March 24, 2009, but that project has since been delayed. Another significant change in Alaska's AMLIS coal data decreased the cost of work completed on surface burning. That decrease reflects a \$900,187 adjustment in the completion cost data for the Jonesville fire projects. AMLIS updates also reflects AAMLRP reclamation accomplishments for the Suntrana bridge and tipple demolition, subsidence abatement in the Eska Creek projects, and surface burning abatement at the Jonesville fire.

Section 409(c) of SMCRA allows Alaska, as an uncertified State, to fund abatement of priority 1 abandoned noncoal mine hazards. The State reclaimed lower priority problems when necessary to abate a priority 1 noncoal hazard. Alaska routinely partners with other agencies

to address noncoal abandoned mine problems. This enables it to leverage its funding and abate a wider range of noncoal problems. Figure 3 (right) compares the final costs of noncoal abandoned mine reclamation AAMLRP completed since program approval based on AMLIS data. By the end of the 2009 period, expenditures from all funding sources accounted for abatement of 99.5 percent of Alaska's abandoned noncoal mine problems. Those problems included vertical

openings (43.8%), portals (41.2%), hazardous equipment and facilities (13.4%), and dangerous highwalls (1.2%). Reclamation of dangerous piles and embankments made up the remaining 0.4 percent of Alaska's completion costs. These percentages and problem types reflect adjustments in Alaska's completion data in AMLIS compared to those reported for the 2008 evaluation year. Appendix 3 shows Alaska's noncoal reclamation accomplishments to date in greater detail.



AAMLRP partnered with the National Park Service and BLM to address noncoal problems during this period. It safeguarded a vertical opening and portal in the Kenai Fjords National Park. The Program also provided funding that will enable NPS to address hazards at one mine in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and extended funding for another cooperative project in the same Park. It provided the funding extension after a natural slide temporarily closed a subsidence opening that both parties agree is likely to open in the near future. As noted in Part III of this report,



**Appendix 1**

## Alaska Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Program

**Coal Reclamation Accomplishments Since December 23, 1983, and Unfunded Coal Problems Remaining\***

Problem Type and Description	Unfunded		Funded		Completed		Total	
	Units	Costs	Units	Costs	Units	Costs	Units	Costs
Dangerous Highwalls	20,000 feet	\$50,001,109	0	0	10,220 feet	\$6,411,380	30,220 feet	\$56,412,489
Dangerous Impoundments	0 (count)	0	0	0	4 (count)	\$79,362	4 (count)	\$79,362
Dangerous Piles & Embankments	5 acres	\$150,000	0	0	3.5 acres	\$12,959	8.5 acres	\$162,959
Equipment & Facilities	7 (count)	\$1,750,000	0	0	0	0	7 (count)	\$1,750,000
Gobs	0	0	0	0	1.5 acres	\$7,500	1.5 acres	\$7,500
Hazardous Equipment & Facilities	6 (count)	\$175,000	40	\$2,000,000	1,481 (count)	\$2,032,851	1,527 (count)	\$4,207,851
Haul Road	5 acres	\$17,500	0	0	0	0	5 acres	\$17,500
Hazardous Water Body	1	\$500,000	0	0	2 (count)	\$123,640	3 (count)	\$623,640
Industrial / Residential Waste	0	0	0	0	4 acres	\$266,370	4 acres	\$266,370
Mine Openings	1 (count)	\$75,000	0	0	0	0	1 (count)	\$75,000
Portals	0	0	0	0	6 (count)	\$37,035	6 (count)	\$37,035
Subsidence	0	0	0	0	1 acre	\$60,712	1 acre	\$60,712
Spoil Area	0	0	0	0	50.5 acres	\$96,969	50.5 acres	\$96,969
Surface Burning	30 acres	\$6,750,000	0	0	47 acres	\$7,087,276	77 acres	\$13,837,276
Slump	0	0	0	0	25.0 acres	\$11,000	25.0 acres	\$11,000
Vertical Openings	2 (count)	\$60,000	0	0	13 (count)	\$293,673	15 (count)	\$353,673
<b>ALASKA TOTAL COSTS</b>		<b>\$59,478,609</b>		<b>\$2,000,000</b>		<b>\$16,520,727</b>		<b>\$77,999,336</b>

\* This table is based on a Problem Type Unit and Cost Summary Report from the Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System as of July 27, 2009. Coal accomplishments and costs shown are the same whether reported as SMCRA-funded only or as funded by all sources.

**Appendix 2**

## Alaska Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Program

**Coal Reclamation Accomplishments and Inventory Changes in the 2009 Evaluation Year\***

Problem Type and Description	Unfunded		Funded		Completed		Total	
	Units	Costs	Units	Costs	Units	Costs	Units	Costs
Dangerous Highwalls								
Dangerous Impoundments								
Dangerous Piles & Embankments								
Equipment & Facilities								
Gobs								
Hazardous Equipment & Facilities	-40 (count)	-\$2,000,000	+40 (count)	+\$2,000,000	+2	+\$107,387		-\$92,613
Haul Road								
Hazardous Water Body								
Industrial / Residential Waste								
Mine Openings								
Portals								
Subsidence					+1 acre	+\$60,712	+1 acre	+\$60,712
Spoil Area								
Surface Burning					+5 acres	-\$900,187	+5 acres	-\$900,187
Slump								
Vertical Openings	-1 (count)					-\$60,711	-1 (count)	-\$60,711
<b>ALASKA TOTAL COSTS</b>		-\$2,000,000		+\$2,000,000		-\$792,799		-\$992,799

\* This table is based on a comparison of Problem Type Unit and Cost Summary Reports from the Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System as of July 22, 2008, and July 27, 2009. Coal accomplishments and costs shown are the same whether reported as SMCRA-funded only or as funded by all sources.

### Appendix 3

#### Alaska Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Program

#### **Noncoal Reclamation Accomplishments Since December 23, 1983, and Unfunded Noncoal Problems Remaining\***

Problem Type and Description	Unfunded		Funded		Completed		Total	
	Units	Costs	Units	Costs	Units	Costs	Units	Costs
Dangerous Highwalls	0	0	0	0	70 (feet)	\$13,350	70 (feet)	\$13,350
Dangerous Piles & Embankments	0	0	0	0	2 acres	\$5,000	2 acres	\$5,000
Equipment & facilities	1.5 (count)	\$100,000	0	0	0	0	1.5 (count)	\$100,000
Hazardous Equipment & Facilities	2 (count)	\$32,000	0	0	13 (count)	\$139,613	15 (count)	\$171,613
Portals	20 (count)	\$127,000	1 (count)	\$9,200	31.6(count): SMCRA	\$400,670: SMCRA	52.6 (count): SMCRA	\$536,870: SMCRA
					36.5 (count): all sources	\$427,670: all sources	57.5 (count): all sources	\$563,870: all sources
Pits	3 acres	\$200,000	0	0	0	0	3 acres	\$200,000
Subsidence	0	0	0.4 acre: SMCRA	\$14,000: SMCRA	0	0	0.4 acre: SMCRA	\$14,000: SMCRA
			1 acre: all sources	\$47,800: all sources			1 acre: all sources	\$47,800: all sources
Vertical Openings	30 (count)	\$202,000	2 (count)	\$69,200	41.2(count): SMCRA	\$434,606: SMCRA	72.9 (count): SMCRA	\$685,806: SMCRA
					42.5 (count): all sources	\$455,606: all sources	74.5 (count): all sources	\$726,806: all sources
<b>ALASKA TOTAL COSTS</b>		<b>\$661,000</b>		<b>\$72,400: SMCRA</b>		<b>\$993,239: SMCRA</b>		<b>\$1,726,639: SMCRA</b>
				<b>\$126,200: all sources</b>		<b>\$1,041,239: all sources</b>		<b>\$1,828,439: all sources</b>

\* This table is based on a Problem Type Unit and Cost Summary Report from the Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System as of July 27, 2009. AMLIS does not include a complete inventory of Alaska's unfunded noncoal problems.

**Appendix 4**

Alaska Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Program

**Noncoal Reclamation Accomplishments and Inventory Changes in the 2009 Evaluation Year\***

Problem Type and Description	Unfunded		Funded		Completed		Total	
	Units	Costs	Units	Costs	Units	Costs	Units	Costs
Dangerous Highwalls								
Dangerous Piles & Embankments								
Equipment & Facilities								
Hazardous Equipment & Facilities								
Portals			+0.5 (count)	-\$3,300	+0.5 (count)	+\$11,239	+1 (count)	+\$7,939
Pits								
Subsidence					-3 acres	-\$17,031	-3 acres	-\$17,031
Vertical Openings			+1.5 (count)	+\$62,200	+5.5 (count)	+\$30,793	+6.7 (count): SMCRA	+\$67,493: SMCRA
							+7 (count): all sources	+\$87,493: all sources

\* This table is based on a comparison of Problem Type Unit and Cost Summary Reports from the Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System as of July 22, 2008, and July 27, 2009.

## **Appendix 5**

### State Comments on the Report

The State concurs with the findings of the report. Making AMLIS entries exactly match individual project closeout reports can be problematic and hopefully will become simpler to achieve once the AMLIS update is implemented. The Alaska Abandoned Mine Land Program will continue its heavy emphasis and focus on coal problem mitigation projects with only very minor amounts expended on non-coal as Priority 1 non-coal sites are brought to our attention by user groups and land managers requesting assistance, regardless of ownership.

OSM staffs have always been most helpful and supportive of our program's efforts and that is greatly appreciated. That helps us stay on track and in compliance with OSM guidelines which is essential to the continued success of our program. Our grant administrative person (1/8 funded by the program) has moved on to another position within DNR and we have lost that knowledge base. It will be an additional challenge as we strive to fill that void and OSM in Denver has already taken steps to help us in that regard.

We look forward to maintaining a continued close and cooperative relationship with OSM in the future.

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