

2016 NASLR Award Winners

Scholarship:

Florence Miller
Land Resources and Environmental Sciences
Montana State University



The National Association of State Land Reclamationists awards a \$1,500 scholarship every year to a full time student at an accredited college or university whose focus is in the area of mined land reclamation or a closely related field. Applicants are evaluated on the basis of grades, quality and relevance of course work or research, a proposed special project (if applicable), information obtained from references, and other related considerations.

The 2016 NASLR scholarship is being awarded to Florence Miller who has just started her graduate work at Montana State University to pursue a M.S. Degree in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences. Florence conducted her undergraduate studies at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo and graduated with honors earning a B.S. Degree in Soil Science with a focus in Land Resources. Florence has identified that for her thesis she will be examining the potential sources of uranium that currently contaminate drinking water on the Crow Reservation in Montana. Her career objectives are to work in land restoration, including mined land reclamation, and examine and mitigate the impacts that soil and water contamination have on environmental and human health.

The Dean Spindler Reclamationist of the Year:

Daniel Kestner

VA Dept. of Mines, Minerals & Energy



The Dean Spindler Reclamationist of the Year award was established to recognize exemplary work done by state regulatory professionals in the field of mined land reclamation. The nominees are evaluated on (1) their performance, dedication, attitude, and commitment to timely and quality reclamation; (2) their effectiveness in implementing their state's program; and (3) how and to what extent the nominee performs activities that exceed the responsibilities of his/her job requirements.

The 2016 Dean Spindler Reclamationist of the Year award winner is Daniel Kestner with the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME). Daniel's nomination identified him as the consummate professional in GIS and mapping applications related to mine land reclamation with skills in technology that are widely recognized among state and federal agencies and the mining industry. Additionally, during the current year, Daniel effectively worked as the facilitator with the six divisions of DMME to come up with a department level strategic and operational plan that maps the goals, strategies, and objectives of DMME. Lastly, Daniel is not only an innovator of technology, but goes the extra mile and volunteers to assist with event planning, addressing agency issues, and responding to pressing Congressional inquiries.

Mined Land Reclamation Award

The Coal and Non-Coal Mined Land Reclamation Award was established to recognize companies and individuals who achieve outstanding and exemplary achievements in the reclamation of mined land and promote the awareness and exchange of information for quality reclamation and environmental stewardship. The award nominees are evaluated on compliance with applicable regulations, contemporaneous reclamation, implementation of drainage design and maintenance that results in an environmental benefit, establishment of reclamation that allows for the designated post-mining land use, and innovative practices in reclamation.

Mined Land Reclamation Award - Coal Reclamation

Paramont Coal Company Virginia, LLC
Smith Gap Surface Mine - Virginia



Paramont Coal Company's Smith Gap Surface Coal Mine was nominated for the Mined Land Reclamation Award by Richard Davis of the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, Division of Mined Land Reclamation. Paramont has a reputation for achieving excellent reclamation, and this operation is no exception. This nomination demonstrates the company's continued commitment to conducting surface mining and reclamation operations in a safe and environmentally sound manner. This mining operation also shows Paramont's dedication to the reclamation of abandoned mine lands through responsible re-mining techniques.

The Smith Gap Surface Mine consists of multiple surface coal mining and reclamation operations which include surface contour, area mining, and highwall mining. The company accomplished exemplary surface contour mining and reclamation on multiple coal seams in very steep and rugged terrain by effectively utilizing steep slope mining techniques. In order to maximize recovery of the resource, a highwall miner was incorporated into the mining plan. This site is an excellent example of the benefits of re-mining as this mining permit represented the third time mining had occurred on two of three coal seams. The reclamation operations successfully eliminated and reclaimed over 10,000 feet of previously existing highwalls that were created by the pre-SMCRA mining or were not fully eliminated by the operations occurring in the 1990's. Final grading and revegetation of the mined areas has complemented and enhanced the existing contours for a natural appearance that over time will ultimately blend with the original terrain. Additionally, three stream-channel reconstructions have been successfully implemented by Paramont at this mine.

Mined Land Reclamation Award – Non-Coal Reclamation

Amerikohl Aggregates Inc.

McMillen Quarry - Pennsylvania



Amerikohl Aggregates Inc., McMillen Limestone Quarry was nominated for the Mined Land Reclamation Award by William Edmiston of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Knox District Mining Office. The Vanport Limestone is the principal mineral being mined but some coal is also encountered and extracted incidental to the limestone recovery. The limestone is about 20' thick and is mined under cover ranging from 20' to 120'. The mining is accomplished using a block strip method which allows reclamation to be performed on a contemporaneous basis as the mining operation advances through the reserve.

One of the operator's goals from the initiation of this operation has been to accomplish as contemporaneous reclamation as practicable. This has been achieved and exemplified by the fact that hay crops were harvested the last 2 years on areas reclaimed over the previous 3 years. Reclamation, including planting, began in 2013 and has progressed every year since. Secondary to the goal of maintaining contemporaneous reclamation is to keep the active footprint of the operation to a minimal configuration that will allow them to mine efficiently, meet production goals, minimize their presence in the neighborhood, and, to the extent possible, make that presence as compatible as possible with the ongoing life of the surrounding community. This spring the operator built an outbound truck wheel washer to address a recurring problem of trucks tracking fine limestone dust from the site onto local streets where it would be dispersed into the atmosphere and eventually settle out on houses and cars. Those wheel washing efforts have proven successful in minimizing off-site impacts.