



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE LAND RECLAMATIONISTS

<http://www.crc.siu.edu/naslr.htm>

**Fall 2010**

## **President's Message**

*Joseph E. Hager II*

**West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection**

Traveling home from the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual NASLR Conference in Carbondale, Illinois, I took time to reflect on the association's previous meetings that I had attended. Each conference has had excellent presentations from reclamationists across the country that hold a shared vision: the preservation and restoration of our lands and waters for future generations. Environmental stewardship combined with the promotion of responsible economic development has, in part, allowed our nation to prosper.

Many challenges face the state agencies and public employees who comprise NASLR, an association in its fourth decade of existence. Budgetary constraints in many states have resulted in smaller attendance to our conferences recently. Further, it appears that much of the NASLR membership is nearing retirement without a significant influx from the next generation of reclamationists.

As President of NASLR, I look forward to working with the dedicated membership as we find new ways to promote our association and bring forth renewed awareness in our mission and purpose. The annual conference provides a forum to discuss the application of new technologic and scientific processes for land and water reclamation being implemented across the country. A valuable component of the NASLR meetings that is often overlooked is the excellent continuing education opportunities consisting of one and a half days of presentations combined with a day-long field trip for the attending delegates. A three-day learning experience at the cost of only one hundred and fifty dollars is a great value for member states' delegates.

All member states are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the reclamation award categories that NASLR offers and also to promote the academic scholarship grant that is given to a promising student annually.

The great State of Illinois graciously served as host to the 2010 NASLR Conference in Carbondale, Illinois. Sincere words of appreciation for a job well done go to Dean Spindler, Anna Caswell, and Cliff Johnson for their outstanding efforts with this year's meeting.

The 39<sup>th</sup> Annual NASLR Conference will be held September 25-28, 2011 in West Virginia. The Mountain State looks

forward to seeing old acquaintances and new ones coming to the hills and hollows where you will be welcomed with warm hospitality, scenic beauty, a great learning opportunity and memories for a lifetime.

## **Outgoing President's Message**

*Michael Smith*

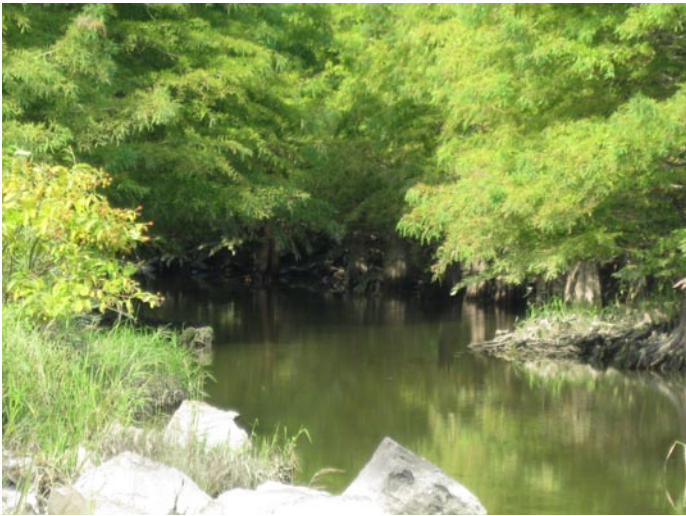
**Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection**

It's been an honor and privilege to serve as NASLR president for 2009 to 2010. My best wishes to incoming president Joe Hager from West Virginia. For my farewell message, I thought I'd share some photos and stories from the 2010 conference and field trip at Carbondale, Illinois.

First of all, I learned that Illinois is a state with diversified agriculture – both corn and soybeans are grown! During the field trip, we saw some outstanding examples of reclamation. I was particularly impressed with the reconstructed stream channels and post-reclamation lakes. The resulting wildlife habitat certainly was a pleasant diversion from the cropland and it was obvious that it was getting lots of public use. Unfortunately, with state travel budgets being what they are, many NASLR members were unable to attend this year's conference. So here are some photos of the field trip:



**Reclamation at Consol's Burning Star 4 mine featuring wildlife habitat and a lake formed by flooding the ramp leading into the final cut**



Reconstructed stream channel lined by cypress trees. The channel has abundant fish and macroinvertebrates



Anna Caswell takes a well-deserved catnap on the bus after months of hard work organizing the conference and field trip



Trip leader and tour guide Dean Spindler entertains the crowd on the bus with reclamation information and riveting stories

Many thanks go to Dean Spindler, Anna Caswell and the entire gang at the Illinois DNR Office of Mines and Minerals for putting together a great conference and field trip. As anyone who has put together one of our annual meetings knows, it is a lot of work. Also, thanks to the following conference sponsors for their generous support:

- Illinois Farm Bureau**
- Knight Hawk Coal Co.**
- Consolidated Coal Company**
- Peabody Energy**
- SIUC Coal Research Center**
- SIUC Professional Science Master's Program**
- Illinois Association of Aggregate Producers**
- Illinois Coal Association**

I'll look forward to meeting all of our NASLR friends next year somewhere in the great state of West Virginia.

## **NASLR Awards Presented for Excellence in Reclamation**

***Anna Caswell***  
**Secretary/Treasurer**

The 2010 Annual Awards Banquet of the National Association of State Land Reclamationists was held September 14 at the Holiday Inn and Conference Center in Carbondale, Illinois. The keynote speaker was Travis Loyd, Deputy Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. NASLR awarded two companies for exemplary reclamation in both coal and non-coal categories.

***Outstanding Reclamation Award- Non-Coal***  
***Frozen Ropes Baseball Company***  
***Chester, New York***

Frozen Ropes acquired the New York State mining permit in September 2009 then proceeded to modify the currently approved final reclamation plan and objective for the site.



Thin seam miner operated by Knight Hawk Energy at the Prairie Eagle mine



Frozen Ropes reclamation objective was to provide a year-round sports training park/facility in the Town Chester, Orange County, NY. The goal for the training facility is to provide a venue for professional instruction in baseball, softball, football, and soccer and to provide field and facility rentals to other turf sports.

The reclamation plan called for the construction of artificial turf athletic fields that can be configured to accommodate 3 baseball and softball fields, a full regulation sized soccer and football field, multiple smaller soccer fields, as well as fields for lacrosse and any other turf sport activity. The plan also called for the construction of a 15,000+ square foot building for use as a 'state-of-the-art' indoor training facility and field house for winter and rainy day events. Frozen Ropes incorporated the existing quarry benches into the modified reclamation plan for use as additional natural seating areas and as a "fitness trail" along the upper bench.

What was unusual about this situation was that the new owners, Frozen Ropes, had the vision, determination, and mining/construction experience to purchase a mine that was essentially a "reclamation liability", and utilize the site to accomplish their goal of constructing a sports complex. The project has the full support from the Town of Chester as well as local and county politicians. It is hoped that this complex will be an economic and recreational boon to the surrounding community.



NASLR President Mike Smith presents the Outstanding Reclamation Award-non-coal for the Frozen Ropes Sports Park. New York representative Tom Gragg accepts on behalf of Frozen Ropes Baseball Company.

***Outstanding Reclamation Award-Coal  
Peabody Midwest Mining  
Cottage Grove Mine  
Equality, Illinois***

The Cottage Grove Mine has a permitted mining area of approximately 3,500 acres. The mine currently produces approximately 2.3 million tons of coal per year. Mining is

done as a truck/shovel operation with an overburden depth ranging from 50 to 120 feet. Approximately 85% of the mining area is prime farmland and 10% is high capability cropland.

The soils at this mine have significantly more clay than most surface mines in Illinois. The mine has dealt with this situation by improving its method of subsoil and topsoil replacement. They switched from trucks to Challenger tractors equipped with pans for handling the root medium and topsoil. This has proven to allow for more selective subsoil handling and better quality control over soil replacement.

Cover crop species are selected by considering which species will most rapidly accelerate the formation of soil structure in the root zone while controlling erosion on the reclaimed areas. Once ground cover is established, GPS technology is used to determine the land's soil fertility needs and the appropriate rate of soil amendments are applied using Variable Rate Technology. A proper crop rotation is then established to dry out the subsoil prior to deep tillage and the planting of the reclaimed areas to row crops. In 2009 the resulting crop yields exceed the required standard and in many cases resulted in yields significantly exceeding pre-mining crop productivity for the area.



The 2010 NASLR Outstanding Reclamation Award-coal was presented to Peabody Energy for their Cottage Grove mine site.



**Conference Wrap Up**  
*Dean Spindler*  
**Illinois Office of Mines & Minerals**

I hope everyone who attended the conference felt that they got their money's worth. We chose speakers who would cover the current issues of the day. The weather was perfect to see restored streams, farmland and forest. I had one more image that was left out of my education outreach talk that I thought would be of interest.



It is a 1:48 scale model of the support facilities of an underground mine. The next phase will have miniature mechanized underground equipment. It was almost done but, the builder passed away so I am going to try and figure out how to complete the wiring and program the items to move properly. Any help would be welcome.

Overall in Illinois, we will be reducing our outreach as staff is needed elsewhere.

**Special Thanks**

*Anna Caswell*  
**NASLR Secretary/Treasurer**

A special thanks goes out to all of our conference speakers & presenters. Additionally, we appreciate Joe Angleton, our Welcome speaker, and Travis Loyd, our keynote banquet speaker for taking the time to be with us. Conference presentations can be viewed in pdf format by following the links below:

**Scott Elrick, Illinois State Geological Survey, *Geology and Resources of Illinois***

**Dan Barkley, Illinois Office of Mines & Minerals, *Longwall Mining Issues in Illinois***

**Mike Wiant, Illinois State Museum, *Using GIS for Managing Archaeological Information***

**Robert Baker, The Ohio State University, *FGD By Product Utilization at Ohio Coal Mine Sites: Past, Present, and Future***

**Kim Vories, U.S. Office of Surface Mining, *Implications of the Occurrence and Spread of the White Nose Syndrome To SMCRA***

**Paul Behum, U.S. Office of Surface Mining, *The AMD Wetland Project at Tab Simco***

**John Coleman, U.S. Office of Surface Mining, *Creating Partnerships in Illinois and Iowa to Enhance Watersheds by Eliminating Small Acid Mine Drainage Using Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program Funds.***

**Shawn McKinney, Illinois Association of Aggregate Producers, *Education Outreach Partnerships between Industry, Communities and Agencies***

**Bill Hoback, Illinois Office of Coal Development, *Illinois Coal 101***

**Dean Spindler, Illinois Office of Mines & Minerals, *Education Outreach by the Illinois DNR- Office of Mines and Minerals***

**R.E. Dunker, et al. University of Illinois, *A System to Evaluate Prime Farmland Reclamation Success Based on Spatial Soil Properties***

**Jim Gregg, Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals, *AML experience at the Red Ember Mine – 500 ac of Coal Waste, A Coal Stockpile to market to investors, An environmental disaster to neighbors.***

**Jack Nawrot, Southern Illinois University, *Stream Restoration: Restoring the Functions and Values***

