



NASLR
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE LAND RECLAMATIONISTS

Summer 2019

<http://www.naslr.org>



SPECIAL EDITION:
2019 CONFERENCE
&
DEAN SPINDLER

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Letter from the President

It's getting to be that time of year!

By Danielle Duhé

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources



Our 47th annual conference is coming up September 8-12, 2019 and will be held at the Wyndham Grand in beautiful, downtown Pittsburgh, PA. We will be partnering with the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs

(NAALMP) for their 41st annual conference, and this year, the 21st annual conference on Pennsylvania's Abandoned Mine Reclamation (PA AMR) will also be joining us. All three organizations have a long history with mining and reclamation, and everyone is hard at work to make this year's conference a success!

Begin the conference early by joining one or all of the pre-conference tours provided to be an educational experience of all that Pittsburgh has to offer. These tours include trips to the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History, the National Aviary, the Andy Warhol Museum, sports complexes, and more.

With many people responding to the call for papers, we will have a full line-up of presentations in our Technical Sessions covering many different aspects of mining and reclamation. Tuesday's technical tours include trips to a variety of locations in Pennsylvania, many of which are linked to its history of mining and reclamation. These include tours of an underground coal mine, the Pittsburgh Botanic Gardens AML Pilot site, multiple

passive treatment systems, and the Flight 93 National Memorial, which was built on a reclaimed coal mine, just to name a few.

In addition to presentations, NASLR will provide additional training and hands-on learning at this year's conference. The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement will be giving a presentation on its AMDTreat software and will lead a training session for NASLR members at their nearby office. This year's schedule will also include an additional field day for NASLR attendants to observe and discuss the various challenges and successes of the Pennsylvania Title V Program. The day will include trips to view an active surface mine, a reclaimed mine, as well as a location to observe the shadow effects of long wall mining. Please continue reading the newsletter for more details of the training and field sites.

Last, but certainly not least, NASLR will be awarding individuals and industry organizations for their successes in the field of reclamation at our Awards Banquet.

Please go to the NASLR website, <https://naslr.org/>, and the conference website, <http://www.naamlp2019.com/>, for more detailed information about this year's joint conference with NAAMLMP and PA AMR.

Thank you all for being valued members of our organization, and I look forward to seeing many of you in Pittsburgh this September!

Upcoming 47th Annual NASLR Conference

September 8-12, 2019

Welcome to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania!

This year's conference will be joint endeavor between the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Program's ([NAAML](#)) Pennsylvania Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference ([PA AMR](#)), and the National Association of State Land Reclamationists' ([NASLR](#)).

These three organizations share common goals and interests focused on successful reclamation and environmental restoration of previously and currently mined sites including the abatement or treatment of mine drainage. The multi-organization focus will provide conference attendees a broader range of mining and reclamation topics and issues as well as increased opportunities for both networking and sponsor & exhibitor outreach.



The conference will be held at the recently renovated Wyndham Grand Downtown Pittsburgh Hotel and will run Sunday evening, September 8, through Wednesday September 11 ([View the preliminary conference schedule](#)). The conference will kick off with a welcome reception Sunday evening. Monday, September 9th, will begin with the opening plenary session followed by technical presentations and will conclude with the awards banquet. Field trips on Tuesday, September 10, will feature a variety of AML, AMD and unique Pennsylvania

historical and cultural stops that are sure to both educate and entertain. Tuesday will conclude with a dinner cruise on Pittsburgh's three rivers aboard the [Gateway Clipper Fleet's Empress Riverboat](#). Wednesday, September 11, NASLR will provide a bonus full-day field trip of the southwestern Pennsylvania coalfields for our members. The AMDTreat Workshop and NASLR Business Meeting will be held the morning of Thursday, September 12.

The technical sessions will provide a valuable exchange of information on issues specific to those involved in mine reclamation, mine drainage abatement/treatment, and mine reclamation policy and current issues. The networking opportunities between federal, state and local government officials; design consultants; watershed groups; NGO's; contractors; equipment manufacturers; and suppliers are sure to be key components of the Conference.

The Wyndham Grand is located at the Point in the Golden Triangle of Pittsburgh where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers combine to form the Ohio River. While attending the conference, you will be able to experience all the excitement Pittsburgh has to offer. From museums, to outdoor activities, to cultural discoveries, to sporting events, Pittsburgh's bustling downtown landscape offers entertainment for all tastes. The Wyndham is located just 17 miles from the Pittsburgh International Airport and right across the street from the picturesque 36-acre Point State Park. The hotel is located within easy walking distance to Market Square, PPG Paints Arena (home of the Penguins), the Pittsburgh Light Rail station, and Pittsburgh's bustling North Shore where, among the many restaurants, shops and clubs, Heinz Field (home of the Steelers) and PNC Park (home of the Pirates) are located.



NASLR Conference Field Trip

This year's NASLR conference features a complimentary day-long field trip on Wednesday, September 11 and will include several stops over a 65-mile wide area, where we will see an active surface mine operation north of Ligonier PA, where remining operations have been permitted to extract from workings within the Pittsburgh coal seam in an area that is encompassed by completely reclaimed and successfully revegetated remining contract areas. From there we will proceed to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's California, PA office for a lunch stop, brief presentation, and preparation for the afternoon tour of Templeton Run, which is a stream overlying the Enlow Fork Mine located in Washington County, Pennsylvania. Templeton Run was a historically impaired tributary due to various anthropogenic impacts and has since been restored to a vibrant watershed thanks in large to multiple stream and wetland mitigation projects. Stream mitigation was required due to longwall mining subsidence related pooling in Templeton Run, and for stream and wetland losses resulting from the development of a coal refuse disposal facility at the Bailey Central Mine Complex. The Enlow Fork Mine is one of three mines operated by Consol Energy located in Washington and Greene Counties and is collectively supported by the Bailey Central Mine Complex. This complex is comprised of a coal preparation plant and several coal refuse disposal areas. The mines and associated complex are known to be the largest underground mining coal operation in the country.

Additionally, we will hear from the Department of Interior's Office of Surface Mining Regulation and Enforcement (OSMRE) about the new software suite product update and overhaul of AMDTreat, the Technical Innovation and Professional Services (TIPS) computer application for estimating abatement costs for pollutorial mine drainage, and a complimentary hands-on workshop in OSMRE's Greentree office computer lab on Thursday, September 12. The presentation will give a background and history and purpose of the original AMDTreat program, discussion of why it needed to be upgraded, description of the tasks and processes followed by the AMDTreat Team to begin the process, and a current status update on the re-write efforts. The workshop session at OSMRE's office in Greentree, PA will allow participants to use the partially completed AMDTreat program to go through a case study of an AMD treatment site where costs have been tracked so that users can get a "sneak peek" at the upcoming release of the AMDTreat software.

Be sure to register as a NASLR attendee to be included in the plans for these comprehensive and instructional tours across the historically important Pennsylvania coalfields. Specific itineraries for these activities are forthcoming and will be posted prior to the conference. In conjunction with the 2019 NAAMLPP conference located in downtown Pittsburgh you'll be sure to have a great week learning in a beautiful setting with lots to do! We hope to see you in and around Pittsburgh soon!

There is still a little time left
to nominate someone for the
Dean Spindler Reclamationist of Year Award
or
apply for the Scholarship!!!

**The deadline for these has been extended to July 15.
It's a great opportunity!**

*Have you met someone who tirelessly promotes
great reclamation?*

*Do you know a student working in the field of
mine reclamation?*

Award



NASLR is still seeking nominations for the Dean Spindler Reclamationist of the Year Award. Nominations must be received no later than July 15. For more information or to download the nomination form please visit our website.

<https://naslr.org/awards/the-dean-spindler-reclamationist-of-the-year-award/>

Scholarship



NASLR is seeking applicants for the 2019 educational grant. Applications must be received no later than July 15. The grant application can be downloaded from our website.

<https://naslr.org/awards/scholarship/>

*Ever wondered who Dean Spindler is?
Or wondered why NASLR named an award after him?*

*Wonder no longer, we are pleased to present:
Mr. Dean Spindler*



In 2008, the NASLR Reclamationist of the Year Award was renamed to honor Dean Spindler, in recognition of his many years of tireless dedication to NASLR and promotion of quality mine reclamation. Mr. Spindler, who holds a BS in Geology and an MS in Soil Science, retired in 2018 from the Illinois Land Reclamation Division after 42 years of service. Through his career, he served as soil scientist and manager of the GIS and Bond Release Sections. Mr. Spindler served as NASLR Secretary/Treasurer for 20 years and organized multiple NASLR conferences and field trips. Despite retirement, he continues to be the most prolific author of reclamation articles for the NASLR newsletter and unabashed promoter of NASLR and its mission.

Now you know who Dean Spindler is and if you continue to read through this newsletter, you will see and read a couple of articles penned by Dean giving us thoughtful advice.

Notes from the field



Mentoring the next generation of reclamationists

By Dean Spindler

As the saying goes, the best managers will always be on the lookout for their replacement and will serve as a mentor to them. The best managers also have a desire to imprint the qualities they value onto their replacement and instill in them the desire to continue to strive for excellence. It is obvious in the reclamation field that there are many things still left to learn. I have spent 40 plus years in mine reclamation and will always be the first one to say "I am still learning". The continued learning and mentor/student relationship is available in any field of reclamation, examples include field inspection, technical support services, management and admin services, mobile computing, and GIS.

Given the choice, the top qualities managers look for in a student include initiative, creativity, fair mindedness, and good old common sense. Many books and articles have been written on the issue, but here are the main mentoring goals:

1. Development of a good working relationship with the student.

The free exchange of ideas is enhanced by keeping the superior/subordinate relationship as informal as possible. You, as the mentor, can be more philosophical in your teaching. The student can feel more comfortable to question you by asking "why?" or introduce new concepts that you may not have considered.

2. Character over skill.

If you have the opportunity to choose who you mentor, pick a student who has the some of those qualities identified above. Skills can be learned, given the right attitude and opportunities to learn.

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3. Optimism over criticism.

A good mentor will present the job as an opportunity to solve problems and learn from our mistakes, and be slow to criticize the student's miscalls. It is also important to be slow to blame agency problems on other employees or superiors. This positive attitude is inspirational to the student and allows them to see a long and very rewarding career in reclamation.

4. Identify strengths and passions.

A good mentor will help the student identify their strengths and passions. During my years, I have seen empowered field inspectors or technical support staff become passionate about a particular aspect of their job. They worked hard to develop those skills and brought them to the attention of the agency. Many agency positive changes and enhancements have occurred due to strengths and passions that were honed into skills. Those enhanced skills have also resulted in agency appreciation, new job titles, and greater job satisfaction. A good mentor will also never claim credit for their student's ideas or accomplishments. In my day, I have seen 4 inspectors I mentored move on to be the heads of land reclamation or abandoned mine reclamation divisions in 3 different states. In addition, several other inspectors I mentored have moved on to become technical specialists. All were good inspectors but were also capable of doing more to benefit their agencies.

5. Create a strong sense of duty and responsibility.

Agencies may not always do the right thing for the right reasons. Even so, a good mentor will help the student understand the important role the agency serves and will instill in the student a sense of duty and responsibility to the citizens, the environment, and the regulated community.

6. Get the big picture.

A good mentor must also be an attentive listener and calming presence for the student. A student may feel frustrated with the speed of change, disagree about initiatives from other disciplines, or complain about lack of motivation of others. These are great times for a reminder of how the process works and reminding them that differing opinions from other professionals in our field is necessary for growth and learning. A student who has promise will need to be periodically reminded that not everyone in the organization will have an equal work ethic or drive. The mentor should continue to motivate the student to strive to make the organization better as a result of their efforts.

More Notes from the field



Cooperation

By Dean Spindler

A recent experience working with a bonding company to do reclamation work in lieu of forfeiture highlighted the importance of interagency cooperation. After years of periodic, successful reclamation forfeiture projects, a sister agency threw a “wrench” in a current project. Based on their interpretation of changing federal policy, the sister agency imposed new requirements midstream during the process of the scope of work negotiations. The imposition of new requirements and the potential for additional liability triggered the bonding company’s decision not to proceed forward in those negotiations. The bonding company was concerned that the liability for the project could possibly go beyond the total bond amount held for the site.

As renowned commentator Paul Harvey would say, stay tuned for “the rest of the story” ...

It is not uncommon for mines to be regulated by multiple agencies with overlapping jurisdiction, for example the state RA, the state dam and floodplain agency, the state wildlife agency, and the state EPA. Likewise, federal agencies such as the USACE, USFWS, MSHA, and USEPA often have jurisdiction in the mine permitting process, mining operations, and/or reclamation. Each of these stakeholders have some aspect of legislative authority and some, like the state RA and state EPA, may have primacy authorization from OSM and USEPA. Some states operate under the luxury of the state RA also holding NPDES authority.

In the early days of SMCRA (the late 70’s) there were many controversies during the interim program, particularly with dual jurisdiction issues. Once a state obtained primacy, the cooperative role shifted to a federal oversight role. Now, 40 years later, programs have matured and many of these jurisdiction interpretation issues have been resolved. I have written past articles regarding cooperative professionalism between the state RA and the regulated industry to achieve the best reclamation and environmental protection. To refresh your memory, cooperative professionalism is based on mutual respect and upfront, honest discussions about issues, problems, and reasonable resolutions. The same principle is critical for interagency programs with overlapping jurisdictions.

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Cooperation

By Dean Spindler

With respect to the mine sites, cooperative professionalism is between the inspector and grading foreman or mine superintendent, or an agency/program head and the company liaison to achieve the best reclamation. With respect to agencies, cooperative professionalism occurs between agency/program heads or between technical and inspection staff. Over the years, OSM - state RA relationships have swung between "bad" and "good". These relationships are based not just on the pendulum of Washington's changing dictates of strong federalism vs. hands off states' rights (primacy) philosophies, but mostly with the one on one personal interactions and relationships to address and solve problems. The same relationships between state RAs and other federal agencies (USACE, USFWS) can work (or not), depending on the individual players at the time. Intrastate governmental relationships can be a bit trickier, as there is no "primacy" which defines the intent of the primary responsible party. However, there is usually a gubernatorial power that can resolve interagency issues.

And now, the rest of the story...

Although we were not happy about the complications imposed on the forfeiture reclamation project mentioned above, we recognized the circumstances of our sister agency. In this particular case, because of the time frames of the required reclamation work and the need for our sister agency to reach common ground with their federal counterpart, we could not totally resolve the matter. In the end, however, we managed to find some partial reclamation work for the bonding company to complete, with no potential for additional liability, in exchange for a partial bond forfeiture. More importantly the interagency relationship was not spoiled, and we can continue to move forward to reach that common ground and resolve other overlapping jurisdictional issues.



**Thank you
Dean!**

If you are not already a member or know someone interested in becoming involved with a group of reclamation professionals promoting excellence in reclamation please contact us or forward this newsletter to them. You are cordially invited to join NASLR, a group of member state reclamation agencies throughout the United States, as well as government reclamation professionals and industry associates that seek to develop resources and strive to restore mined lands to productive uses.

The four categories of membership are *State, Individual, Associate and Corporate Sponsor*. To join, see conference information or request additional information, please visit our website at: www.naslr.org



NASLR is looking forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh!!!

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To submit material for future newsletters please contact Jeff Meitrott jmeitrott@pa.gov.
Please use a [NASLR Newsletter Submission Form](#) (or [download here](#)).

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