



NASLR 2019 Conference: Tour Photo

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Farewell



Taking Pride in Our Work from the Outgoing President:

By Danielle Duhé

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources

What an amazing year this has been, and I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to serve as President of NASLR during this time. Beginning with our annual conference in beautiful Williamsburg, Virginia, and ending at our most recent conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, this year has been very rewarding, and I would like to thank all involved for their hard work in producing very successful conferences. The dedication of the NASLR Officers and Executive Committee is truly inspiring, and I cannot thank each of you enough for your hard work to ensure the organization's success over this last year. This success will only continue with our new leaders, NASLR President Halina Duda and Vice President Mike Haney.

I want to continue to encourage participation and involvement in NASLR for all of our members, not just at conferences, but throughout the year. Networking is so very important, and while I realize decreasing budgets may make travel difficult, that only increases our need to communicate and share our knowledge in other ways. Let us all take that additional step to share news of our challenges and successes between conferences as well by submitting articles to our newsletter. In addition to networking within our organization, NASLR has continued to grow our relationships this past year

with other organizations involved in mining and reclamation. This continued sharing of experiences and technology can only help us all to improve in our daily jobs.

Our annual conference is a great opportunity to meet other member state representatives and learn about different reclamation activities occurring across the country. It is also a chance for us to recognize numerous achievements through our organization's various awards. The highlight of my year was getting a chance to speak with each of our award winners to truly get an understanding of the dedication and effort they put into their reclamation to ensure success. Our award winners are exemplary models of effective reclamation procedures, community outreach, and scholarship. Take time this year to acknowledge exemplary work around you and submit award nominations so that we may also recognize others for their commendable work in the field of reclamation.

Once again, it has been my pleasure and honor serving as President of NASLR this past year. I look forward to seeing many of you October 18-21 in Latham, New York (The Capital District).

Welcoming Message from the Incoming President:

By Halina Duda

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation



As I transition into the role of President, I am honored to be included in a long list of State Mine Land Reclamationists, whose work and careers exemplify the mission of our organization. I was

first exposed to NASLR early in my career when New York hosted the 2001 NASLR meeting in Buffalo, which culminated in a field trip to the Niagara Peninsula in the Province of Ontario, Canada. That conference was memorable for many reasons. This was the first time I was with a group of professionals from all over the country who were dealing with the same issues of getting our operators to take reclamation seriously and put the same effort into reclamation as they do for the extraction of minerals? The technical presentations and the informal sharing of information in the hospitality suite were valuable learning experiences to a newcomer. I realized that the issues and resistance I was facing was the same for all mine reclamationists regardless of which state they were from. After that conference I was determined to try and make a difference and get our mining operators to take reclamation seriously. I truly believe that reclamation of mine sites is as important as providing the minerals for the public. Why? Because investing in reclamation is investing in the future of the community in which it is located and also for the future of the mining industry. We are all aware of the increasing resistance to new mine proposals and how difficult it is to change the public perception of mining. How many public meetings have we heard the statistic that a typical person utilizes 11 tons of aggregate per year? The public doesn't focus on the need for the minerals— they want to see the result of the mining operations reverting to productive use without post mining impacts. As our former President Sam Faith stated, “we are an organization moving forward”. I want to

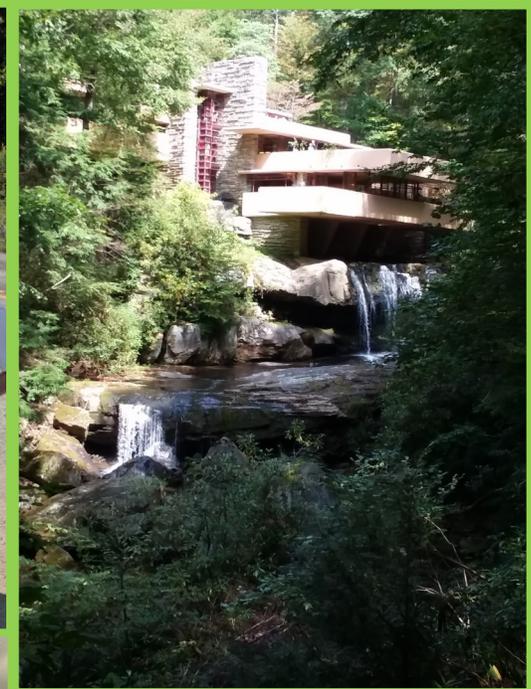
add to that and state “we are an organization moving forward and paying it forward with reclamation!” Reclamation matters! Now we must convince our operators!

I would like to take this time to thank outgoing President Danielle Duhe and Secretary/Treasurer Jeff Meitrott for all their hard work and dedication for our organization. They both have done an amazing job scheduling and coordinating the 2019 NASLR conference and field trip with NAAML. Although I was not able to attend the training and field trip, I heard it was quite informative and provided CE credits and certificates of completion to the participants.

I would also like to introduce our new Vice President, Mike Haney from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and our new Secretary/Treasurer, Simone Rodriguez from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Mike was previously on the PRE committee, and based on his coordination and re-scheduling of the 2019 NASLR field trip which fell through at the last minute, has shown that he is an outstanding clutch player! Simone was also on the PRE committee and contributor to our newsletter and has been a quiet force working in the background for the organization. Simone's attention to detail, positive attitude, along with her organizational skills, will benefit the NASLR community during her three-year term. I would also like to introduce Shawna Riddle of North Carolina as a new member of the PRE committee. Shawna is new to the organization. It is great to see new members.

Lastly, I would like everyone to mark their calendars for the 2020 NASLR conference which will be held in the Capitol District of New York. Come to New York State, October 18th through the 21st and enjoy our spectacular fall colors while attending the annual conference. I look forward to seeing all of you there!

NASLR 2019 Conference Photos



From left to right:

- Jeff Meitrott (PA) and Dan Koury (PA)
- Halina Duda (NY), NASLR's President and Mike Haney (PA), NASLR's Vice-President
- Photo of NASLR's conference field trip attendees during longwall mining visit
- Fallingwater—Frank Lloyd Wright
- Robert Toole (OK) touring the Carrie Blast Furnaces
- NASLR conference field trip attendees....*on the road again*...to PA California office

NASLR's 2019 Award Winners

Scholarship Award Winner



Nick Shepherd — University of Oklahoma

Nick is a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma (OU), pursuing a doctoral degree in environmental engineering. He began his mining reclamation research as a high school student in 2009 when he conducted independent science research projects at the Tar Creek Superfund Site in northeastern Oklahoma. He has earned both his bachelor's in environmental engineering and master's in civil engineering with an emphasis on water resources. While at OU he joined the Center for Restoration of Ecosystems and Watersheds (CREW) research group. His research interests are largely focused around mine drainage evaluation and treatment. His past projects include long-term water quality monitoring of existing passive treatment systems and mining-impacted watersheds at the Tar Creek

Superfund Site with CREW, leachability of spent media from vertical flow bioreactors, impacts of beaver recolonization on mining- impacted streams, and recovery of fish communities following the implementation of passive treatment.



Since high school and throughout his college career, he has conducted research in mining impacted areas, competed in multiple international competitions, and presented at numerous conferences. As a PhD student, he has continued his research at the Tar Creek Superfund Site under Dr. Robert W. Nairn, investigating: the chemical and biological environmental impacts from historic untreated mine drainage discharges; viable approaches to capture and treat historic untreated mine drainage discharges; and the supporting, provisioning, regulating, and cultural ecosystem services provided by mine drainage treatment through passive

treatment system implementation in specific sub-watersheds. Mr. Shepherd has excelled academically, and, anticipating graduation in 2022.

NASLR's 2019 Award Winners

Mined Land Reclamation Award—Non-Coal



Thelen Sand and Gravel, Richardson Pit — Antioch, Illinois

The Thelen Sand and Gravel, Inc., Richardson Pit was nominated by Rick Sterling from the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources, Office of Mines and Minerals. Thelen was approached by the Richardson Adventure farm to mine their property to provide revenue and create additional recreational uses of the property post mining. Thelen was selected by the Richardson Farm based on their reputation for concurrent reclamation and the fact that they have

won the state reclamation award for another mine site. The Richardson Pit was permitted for 185 acres and mining commenced in April of 2012 and was completed in June of 2018. Mining consisted of above and below water mining and resulted in the creation of two waterbodies: a 60-acre lake and a 5-acre lake with a heart shaped island. To reduce offsite impacts to the neighboring subdivisions, Thelen conveyed the material over 7,000 feet, crossing 3 properties and under two roads to the main plant for processing.

The final use of the property is agricultural and recreational as it is adjacent to the Richardson Adventure Farm which has plans to expand their operation onto the reclaimed area. The Adventure Farm has many kinds of outdoor activities: ziplining, corn maze, zorbing, wagon and train rides to name a few. With the addition of the newly created lakes, the family envisions adding fishing, paddle boating, and the creation of a wedding venue – hence the request for the construction of a heart shaped island.



Thelen received a letter of recognition from the Richardson Family which is a 6th generation active farm, the Village President of Spring Grove, and more importantly from a neighbor of the adjacent subdivision who was initially horrified at the prospect of an active mine being across from his house. The neighbors are thrilled with their new views of the lakes as opposed to the views of the corn field.



NASLR's 2019 Award Winners

Mined Land Reclamation Award—Coal



Paramont Contura, Surface 88 Mine — Norton, Virginia

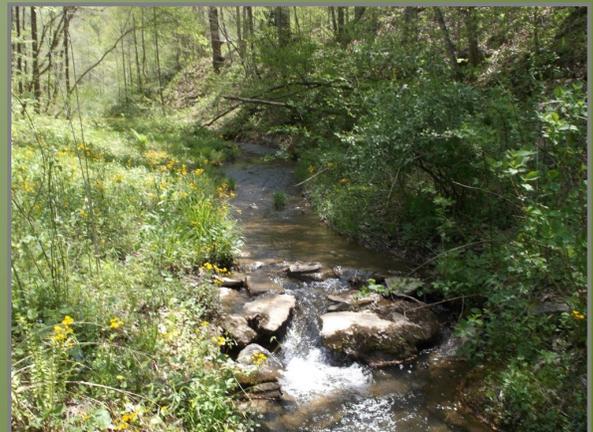
The Paramount Contura, 88 Surface is an active mine consisting of 2451 acres mining 10 coal seams. The site consists of surface area, surface steep slope and surface auger (highwall miner) operations. Mining began in 2006 and projections show the permit to extend mining into 2022. Post mining land use for this site is predominately unmanaged forest, light industrial, and public use. At this time the company has successfully reclaimed Phase 1 which consists of 340 acres.

The company faced numerous challenges including: Mining multiple seams while backfilling and eliminating highwall. The presence of old deep mine works impounding water. Poor water quality with high manganese. Calendar restrictions for bat habitat, coordinating tree and initial overburden removal. Mining beside five, 765-kilowatt high voltage lines (main lines for the east coast) onsite, and two others adjacent to the permit while protecting their structure and stability.



Experimental practices provided by Virginia Tech were used to reduce dissolved solids by identifying rock layers with lower metal concentrations and placed them in the fills designed to be in contact with water. Fills with higher metal concentrations were used in other areas. Using these practices showed a noted decrease in the TDS values of the fill drain and receiving stream. Virginia Tech is conducting a comparison study of the water discharges between Fill A and Fill B which were constructed with traditional techniques.

Over 5000 feet of stream was constructed which was inspected and approved by ACOE after 5 years. Native riparian trees and shrubs were planted, and the fish population has improved. After mining is complete a total of 15,000 feet of stream will be restored. The company relocated and constructed over 7000 feet of State Route 601 at a cost of \$1.5 million for materials, the company provided engineering services, labor and equipment. The site has 28 ponds with 18 monitoring points and no water quality violations have been issued since mining began in 2006.



Paramont Contura continues to be a model of compliance with state and federal regulators, and committed to environmental awareness while employing the highest quality of reclamation practices.

NASLR's 2019 Award Winners



Joseph Bucci, Jr. and William Glynn accepting the Outreach Award

American Rock Salt — Mt. Morris, New York

American Rock Salt (ARS) is located in the heart of the Genesee Valley in western New York state. ARS is a family owned business supplying rock salt to 12 northeastern states for de-icing roads, making it safer for millions of people to travel in winter. Founded in 1997 by local investors, ARS prides itself on its strong relationships with the local community.

Education is a large portion of their outreach program, and ARS encourages students to pursue careers in the mining industry and promote stewardship and sustainability. They sponsor an annual geology lecture at SUNY Geneseo, and provide internships for

undergraduate geology students to work closely with their engineering, geology, environmental, and health and safety staff. ARS staff visit local high schools, colleges, and organizations, sharing knowledge about the mine along with history of salt mining in the region. ARS holds an annual guest lecture at Rochester Institute of Technology's Environmental, Health, and Safety Management program, offering guidance to students interested in pursuing a career in mining and mineral resources management.



When plans to expand operations by an additional 1,700 acres were being drafted, ARS implemented a community engagement program to inform the public. They met with local business groups, community organizations, environmental groups, school districts, and media to discuss expansion plans and answer questions. Their willingness to discuss the process garnered them support from environmental groups and local community throughout the state's permit review process.

ARS supports many charities, believing it is important to give back to the community. They sponsor an annual bike ride, promoting wellness within the company and community. Donations to a local historical society, will expand the museum and include exhibits which focus on the history of salt mining in the region. American Rock Salt, LLC is a shining example of how a mining company can get involved with its local community, foster good relationships, educate future scientists, and promote the mining industry.

Upcoming 48th Annual NASLR Conference and Technical Sessions October 18 - 21, 2020



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Join NASLR's
48th Annual Conference
at the
Holiday Inn Express & Suites
in
Latham, New York
The Capital District
October 18-21, 2020



SAVE THE DATE /
CALL FOR PAPERS

Please contact
Simone Rodriguez
(simone.rodriguez@dec.ny.gov
or 518-402-8493)



<http://www.naslr.org>

An *exciting* information packed conference is planned.

More information on conference speakers, field trip and continuing education opportunities will be forth coming. Be sure to check the [NASLR website](http://www.naslr.org) for up-to-date information.

Have you seen great reclamation work?
Have you met someone who tirelessly promotes
great reclamation?
Do you know a student working in the field of
mine reclamation?

How about nominating them for one of the
2020 NASLR Awards or
have them submit for the Scholarship:

Awards



July 1st is the deadline to nominate companies and individuals in your state for the NASLR Mined Land Reclamation Award, the NASLR Outreach Award, and the Dean Spindler Reclamationist of the Year Award. More information is available on our website.

- Mined Land Reclamation Award (Coal & Non-coal): <https://naslr.org/awards/naslr-reclamation-award/>
- Outreach Award: <https://naslr.org/awards/naslr-outreach-award/>
- Dean Spindler Reclamationist of the Year Award: <https://naslr.org/awards/the-dean-spindler-reclamationist-of-the-year-award/>

Scholarship



NASLR is seeking applicants for the 2020 educational grant. Applications must be received no later than July 1st. The grant application can be downloaded from our website.

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

What's going to be your legacy?

By Dean Spindler

Notes from the field

It doesn't matter if you are an inspector, technical staff, or administrator, each of us will leave a legacy behind when we retire or change employment.

A good inspector can make a significant difference by keeping a mine out of trouble through sharing state of the art reclamation information or offering advice to a cooperative operator on a better or possibly a more cost-effective way to achieve a higher quality of reclamation based on what they have learned at other operations, reclamation conferences or training classes. I have heard several good companies tell me they prefer to have a good and fair inspector or have an agency with good technical staff to help them keep in compliance or to offer them practical information regarding their operations than one who doesn't care about their job.

Similarly, a good technical staff person will make balanced decisions when approving proposed operations or reclamation options. It is not uncommon that a proposal will come in to vary or interpret a standard based on ill-conceived operations and very iffy outcomes. Approval of these type of proposals could end up in irreparable field situations with long term problems and no bond release ever possible, if not properly evaluated.

A good administrator will make fair decisions when considering the interpretation of the regulations and will pursue the best way to resolve problems when issues develop. With this it takes a good line of communication with the regulated community and their own staff. Without this, it is not possible to know when a problem has serious impacts to a mine, or if the timing of a permitting decision, particularly delays, will also have an impact. In the permitting world, everyone wants to be at the head of the line. In addition, the industry expects consistency of decisions between companies and equal fairness on processing times for permits. It is equally important when there are internal disagreements between staff as to the appropriate decision to make on a proposal. This way staff will have an explanation why decisions were made and respect for the administrator can be maintained.

A recent experience with an operator who was considering a new mining technique (of which he had little experience) was a good example to test the value of experienced agency staff. In this case, the operator asked to have meeting with the permitting and technical staff as part of their development evaluation. The purpose was not to avoid or minimize the application information, but to ensure adequate evaluations were being made by tapping into experienced professionals to learn about problems or issues where they had no experience and also to ensure that adequate information would be provided if an application were to be submitted. Having experienced agency staff participate involved in the conversation helped informed the operator's decision-making process on whether to move forward.

As we mature in our careers, our experiences will always play a part in molding our decisions. However, we need to periodically re-evaluate if those decisions are in the best interests of your agency in the long term for both the program and for the principles of the laws we enforce. The worst reason to approve something is if it is based solely on the fact you previously made multiple similar decisions. With the passage of time, changes in circumstance, and new information, a re-evaluation of your thought processes will help you make better decisions that will, ultimately, reflect on the legacy you leave behind.

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's Executive Board Member Jeff Meitrott and current Vice President Mike Haney presented a plaque of appreciation on behalf of the NASLR Board of Officers "to recognize the staff of the Pennsylvania DEP California District Mining Office for the exemplary support and expertise exhibited during the 2019 NASLR Conference Field Trip on September 11, 2019", where attendees toured southwestern Pennsylvania to see and experience surface effects and reclamation methods of longwall bituminous coal mining.

Pictured from left to right – Jeff Meitrott, Rich Verscharen, Jr., Mike Haney , Sam Faith, Bill Keefer , Craig Burda and Tyler Brown.

NASLR NEWSLETTER Winter 2019/2020

naslr.org

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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