



# NASLR

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
STATE LAND RECLAMATIONISTS

Summer 2025

<http://www.naslr.org>



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# A message from the President!

***Tyler Straight – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Mineral Resources, Mined Land Reclamation***

Greetings fellow reclamationists!

I am excited to report NASLR has been hard at work planning our 53rd Annual Conference which has been scheduled for September 30 – October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Alexandria Bay, NY. The conference will be held at the Riveredge Resort located on the banks of the scenic St Lawrence River in the world famous Thousand Islands region! NASLR has secured a block of rooms at Riveredge that you can reserve at the special conference rate by calling 315-482-9917 using “NASLR conference”. For those that might be interested in extending their stay to enjoy some free time in the north country the hotel has agreed to extend the discounted hotel rate to include Thursday night and will offer a 15% discount for conference attendees wishing to stay for the weekend. The online registration form is now live on NASLR’s website. As we have done for the past three years, this year will again be a “hybrid” conference with both in-person and virtual attendance options.

The New York Conference Planning Committee has secured most of the speakers for the conference, but a couple slots still remain. If you are interested in presenting a topic, please reach out now. The “Past, Present, and Future” of reclamation is the overarching theme of our presentations this year. Technical sessions are planned for the morning and afternoon Tuesday September 30<sup>th</sup> and the morning of Thursday October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our annual business meeting will be held after the conclusion of Thursday’s technical sessions. As usual the Coal and Non-Coal Reclamation Awards, the Dean Spindler Reclamationist of the Year Award, the Outreach Award, and the educational scholarship will be presented during our banquet dinner Tuesday night. Thank you to everyone that submitted award nominations this year!

The Field Trip is planned for Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. Planned field trip stops include an active zinc mine and processing facility, an active wollastonite mine, a reclaimed talc mine (2017 Non-Coal Reclamation Award winner), and a reclaimed dimensional limestone quarry (2024 Outreach Award winner). NASLR will provide transportation, lunch, drinks, and snacks for the field trip (be sure to indicate if you have any food allergies/preferences when you register!). You will need a hard hat, safety vest, and steel-toed boots for the field trip.

For those flying to the conference the closest airport (~35 minutes away) will be the Watertown International Airport which I understand receives regular connecting flights from Philadelphia and the hotel tells me there are rental cars and ubers available between the airport and Alex Bay. For those driving to the conference Alex Bay is located a short drive off Interstate 81.

Hope to see you all this fall!

# SAVE THE DATE



Join NASLR's 53rd  
Annual Conference  
Sept 30<sup>th</sup> – Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025  
At The Riveredge Resort  
in Alexandria Bay, NY

Featuring Field Trip Stops  
in the **Balmat-Edwards**  
Mining District and the  
Thousand Islands!



## CALL FOR PRESENTERS

Contact *Tyler Straight* @  
[Tyler.Straight@dec.ny.gov](mailto:Tyler.Straight@dec.ny.gov)  
518-357-2172



**NASLR**  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
STATE LAND RECLAMATIONISTS

[www.NASLR.org/conference/](http://www.NASLR.org/conference/)

**NASLR and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is please to welcome you to New York for the 53<sup>rd</sup>**

**Annual NASLR Conference**

**September 29<sup>th</sup> – October 2<sup>nd</sup>**



**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Conference and Hotel Registration Deadline is August 29<sup>th</sup>

Conference Fees can be paid online or by check.

In-Person Registration \$325 – Virtual Registration \$50

The Special Conference Rate is set at the Government Rate of \$107 for Monday-Thursday

Register at <https://naslr.org/conference/>





**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE LAND RECLAMATIONISTS**

**2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Alexandria Bay, New York**

***Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup> – Thursday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025***

***Riveredge Resort Hotel***

***17 Holland Street***

***Alexandria Bay, New York 13607***

**Monday, September 29, 2025 – Out-of-State attendee arrivals; Hotel Check-in.**

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm – NASLR Registration Table in Lobby

8:00 pm – 10:00 pm – Informal Gathering Hospitality Suite

**Tuesday, September 30, 2025 TECHNICAL SESSIONS**

6:30 am – 8:00 am – Continental Breakfast

8:00 am – 8:10 am – Conference Welcome

8:10 am – 8:20 am – Opening Remarks

8:20 am – 8:30 am – Logistics/Break Info

8:30 am – 10:00 am – Presentations #1 and 2

10:00 am – 10:15 am – Break

10:15 am – 11:45 am – Presentations #3 and 4

11:45 am – 1:00 pm – Lunch

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm – Presentations #5 and 6

2:30 pm – 2:45 pm – Break

2:45 pm – 4:15 pm – Presentations #7 and 8

5:30 pm – 8:30 pm – Happy Hour/Awards Banquet Dinner – Event Center 6:00 pm –

7:00 pm – Keynote Speaker

9:00 pm – 11:00 pm – Hospitality Suite Open

**Wednesday, October 1, 2024 – FIELD TRIP**

6:30 am – 7:30 am Continental Breakfast/Field Trip Check-In

7:45 am – Depart Riveredge

8:30-4:30 Field Trip (Agenda TBD) - LUNCH PROVIDED (sandwiches, snacks, drinks)

5:00 pm – Return to Riveredge

6:00 pm – 11:00 pm – Hospitality Suite Open

**Dinner On Your Own**

**Thursday, October 2, 2024 – TECHNICAL SESSIONS & BUSINESS MEETING**

6:30 am – 8:00 am – Continental Breakfast

8:00 am – 10:15 am – Presentations #9, 10 and 11

10:15 am – 10:30 am – Break

10:30 am – 12:00 pm – Presentations #12 and 13

12:00pm – 12:15 pm – Conference Closing Remarks/Invite to Attend NASLR Business Meeting

12:30 pm – 2:30 pm – NASLR BUSINESS MEETING & Working Lunch – All Full Members are Welcome and Encouraged to Attend

**PM – Out of State Attendees Begin to Depart**

## State of Indiana

### Items of Note:

- **State size:** 36,418 miles<sup>2</sup> (38th largest)
- **NASLR Membership:** 1993
- **# of Times Hosting NASLR Conference:** 0
- **Number of Permits:**  
Title V Coal — 60  
Clay/Shale — 8
- **Total Number of Staff:**  
Title V Coal — 21  
Title IV AML — 16  
Oil & Gas — 20
- **Total Value of Financial Security:**  
\$170,091,029.50 (Coal)
- **# of Permits Issued:** 378 since program inception (60 are still inspectable)
- **Producing Coal Mines:**  
Surface Mine — 6  
Underground Mine — 3

### Indiana At A Glance

The Indiana Division of Reclamation consists of 3 distinct sections: Title V Coal Regulatory, Title IV Abandoned Mine Lands (AML), and Oil & Gas. Our Title V program regulates the mining of coal, clay and shale in Indiana. The Title IV program oversees the reclamation of coal mining sites that were affected before the passing of SMCRA in 1977. The Oil & Gas section regulates the oil and natural gas industry in Indiana.

Indiana's first mining laws were passed in 1941 with amendments to that law coming in 1963, 1967, 1972, 1974, & 1977. The Division of Reclamation was established in 1973 to



enforce state mining laws already in place. Between the passing of SMCRA in 1977 and the year 1982, the Division of Reclamation worked on creating our own regulatory procedures that would be as stringent as the federal law. Indiana gained state primacy on July 29, 1982. With an initial focus on

coal, clay, and shale mining, the Division of Reclamation merged with the Division of Oil & Gas in 2021.

Indiana's coal region encompasses 25 counties in the southwestern part of the state.

### Other Minerals

Indiana is home to various minerals that are mined for use in the U.S. and abroad. The most famous of these minerals being limestone. Indiana is also a producer of the following

industrial minerals: cement, clay & shale, crushed stone, sandstone, gypsum, lime, peat, sand & gravel, and slag (byproduct of steelmaking).

Since Indiana is the leading producer of steel in the U.S., it would make sense that they are also one of the nation's leaders in slag production.

# Where are they now?

## 2024 Scholarship winner

Mohsen Rabbani is a PhD candidate in metallurgical engineering at the University of Nevada, Reno, where his research focuses on sustainable recovery of rare earth elements (REEs) from mine tailings through phytomining. Originally from Afghanistan, Mohsen brings a global perspective to environmental conservation and mine reclamation, with a strong commitment to developing greener solutions for mineral extraction.

His work combines soil engineering, REE recovery, and thorium stabilization to create scalable strategies for remediating mining waste. Mohsen has supported his studies through teaching and research roles while also interning at big companies, such as MP Materials. Despite financial challenges as an international student, he remains deeply dedicated to advancing ecological engineering and inspiring others from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue careers in STEM and sustainable mining.



# Notes From the Field

Be a “plus” not a “minus”

*By: Dean Spindler*

Working in reclamation is a very diverse occupation. Within the field are all the fundamental sciences, biology, chemistry, engineering, geology, and computer science. Within that we have, wildlife biologists, foresters, agronomists, soil scientists, geochemists, hydrologists, geohydrologists, mining engineers, civil engineers, surveyors, landscape architects, GIS specialists, network specialists and program developers. Program complexity and staff size determines how many hats we might have to or better yet, have the opportunity to wear. In the 1980's and for twenty years, the US Army used the slogan “Be all you can be.” That fits this well.

In overly simplistic terms, employees can be a “plus,” a “minus,” or a “neutral.” A “neutral” will do the job, no more, no less. A “minus” will need constant supervision to ensure the job requirements are completed. This employee will instill no confidence that the job is getting done. A “plus” is an employee who will get the job done with minimal supervision, use common sense, will strive to do more or find ways to make the job better and more efficient, or will volunteer to do more than required. Part of being a “plus” depends on how much we are willing to learn after we get out of school and start working in reclamation. OSM offers a myriad of classes in a wide variety of fields to enhance your education. In addition, learning technical skills, such as GPS, or enhancing computer skills on your own (some agencies will reimburse additional education if it is to the agency's benefit), allows an employee to become an indispensable asset to their agency. Going to professional conferences and participating in professional organizations, such as NASLR and ASMR, also increases your education. I have seen numerous inspectors develop these skills, either with assistance from their agency or on their own, who have advanced their careers and benefited from greater job satisfaction as well as financial gain.

Any employee who wants to be viewed as a “plus” has to remember that administrators will look to the “pluses” to do more or take on a special task when significant regulatory issues or personnel shortages are pressing. This is the worst time for a “plus” to complain about doing more than their share, as this is part of what it takes to be a “plus” and be viewed as a “plus.”

# Notes From the Field cont.

From experience, I have heard a less-than-optimal agency head tell their employees that, no matter how hard they worked, there was always another employee to take their place (the pipeline speech) or tell them their career had peaked even though they had consistently given the extra effort. Nothing was more demoralizing for the employees and the program quality suffered. Keep in mind poor administrators rarely last.

Being a reclamationist can be a very rewarding career, particularly for the “plus” employee. When a mine goes from start to finish, was responsibly mined with minimized impact to the environment during mining thereby producing an essential resource to society, and then reclaimed to a productive use, this accomplishment gives the reclamationist a sense of accomplishment that he or she was an important part of that process. Hopefully, along the way, your career goals as a “plus” will have been met as well.

# NASLR NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2025



To submit material for future newsletters:

Please contact

Jeff Meitrott

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Please use a

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