



**Effects of Unregulated Mining**

Poorly regulated mining during its first 150 years of existence in Ohio left impacts on the environment and the social fabric of its citizens. By 1972 the problems included:

- 1,300 miles of streams polluted by acid mine drainage,
- 500 miles of streams affected by sediment deposition,
- Nearly 119,000 acres of land in need of major reclamation efforts,
- Hundreds of acres of land prone to deep mine subsidence,
- Polluted domestic water supplies, and
- Hundreds of acres of landslides, among other problems.

In recognition of these abandoned mine land problems, the federal government passed the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. Not only did this legislation mirror Ohio's effective reclamation law of 1972 for the regulation of active mining, it created an abandoned mine land program to address the highest priority public health and safety, and environmental problems associated with mining that occurred prior to August 3, 1977.

**DMRM MISSION:** To provide for the responsible development of Ohio's energy and mineral resources in a safe, environmentally sound manner.

**Abandoned Mine Land Program**

**REGIONAL OFFICES:**

2050 E. Wheeling Avenue  
Cambridge, OH 43725-8866  
740-439-9079

34 Portsmouth Street  
Jackson, OH 45640-1622  
740-286-6411

2207 Reiser Avenue SE  
New Philadelphia, OH 44663-3333  
330-339-2207

3601 Newgarden Road  
Salem, OH 44460-9571  
330-222-1527

**CENTRAL OFFICE:**

2045 Morse Road, Bldg. H2  
Columbus, OH 43229-6605  
614-265-6633

COVER PHOTO: Established grassland prevents erosion of slopes of a Gallia County reclaimed strip mine.  
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# Abandoned Mine Land Program

## Health, Safety and Environmental Restoration



Ohio's rich 200-year old mining legacy played a large part in fueling the nation's industrial development. More than 3.6 billion tons of coal have been extracted from Ohio's coal-bearing region since 1800. As a result, the state was left with nearly 450,000 acres of land that were surface mined for coal prior to Ohio's stringent 1972 reclamation law and 6,000 underground coal mines that exist below 600,000 acres of land.

Ohio's Abandoned Mine Land Program was created to abate the priority health and safety effects of past mining as well as to provide environmental restoration of degraded areas.

**BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS:**

Reclamation of an unreclaimed strip mine in Noble County reduced erosion of sediment that caused flooding and environmentally degraded stream habitat.

## Program Funding

The Abandoned Mine Land Program is funded by a federal severance tax on mined coal. On an annual basis, the Division of Mineral Resources Management (DMRM) applies to the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement for funds to investigate, design and construct corrective measures for the highest priority abandoned mine land (AML) problems.

## Problem Eligibility and Selection for Reclamation Funding

Any problem qualifies for funding if it meets the following conditions:

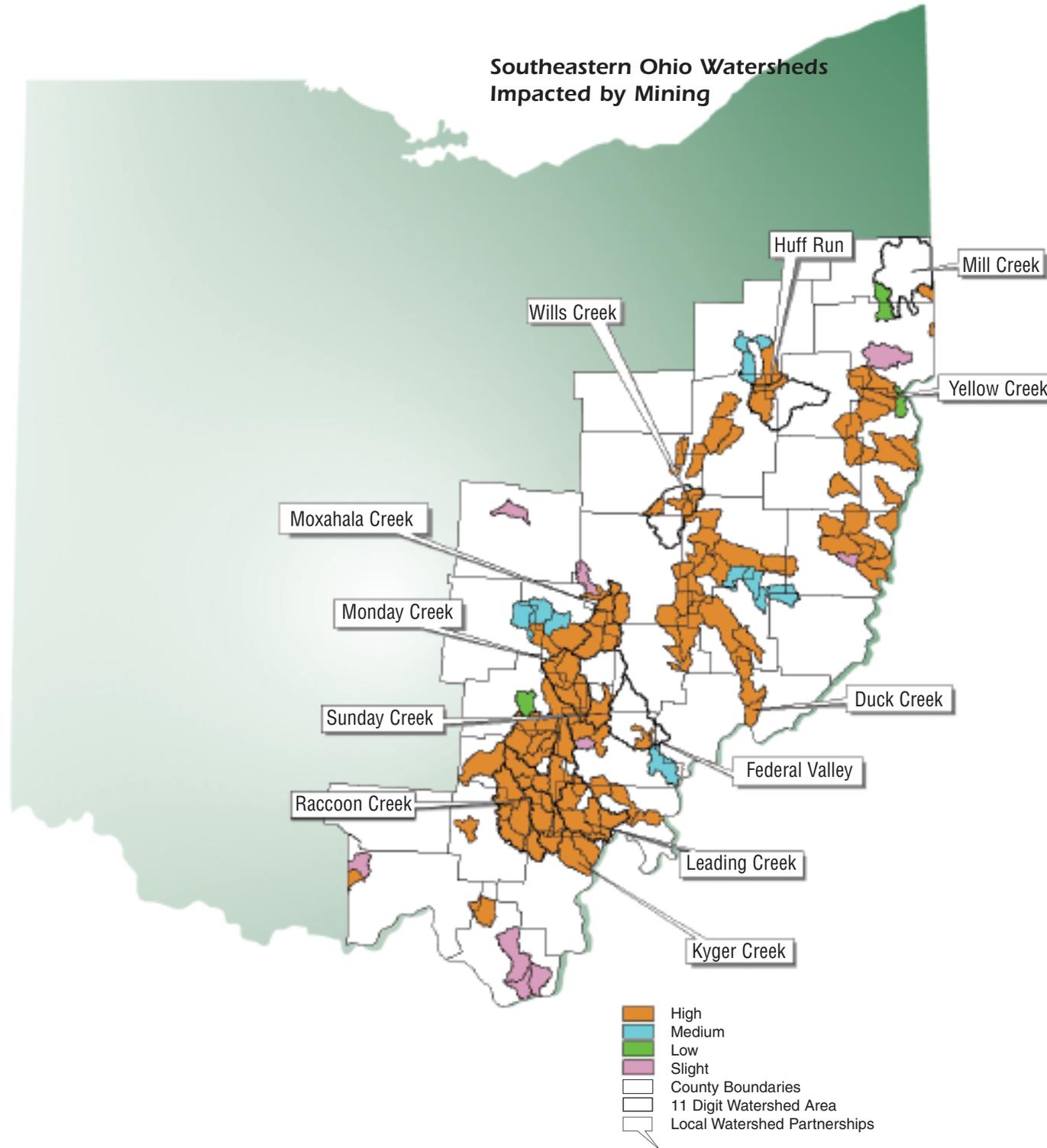
- The problem was caused by surface mining that took place before August 3, 1977 or underground mining that occurred before September 1, 1982;
- There is no existing reclamation bond on the mined site responsible for the problem; and
- The problem meets a priority health and safety or environmental designation.

Through observations, past records, and any documentation the landowner can provide, division experts determine whether the problem is eligible for funding and how serious the problem is.

Problems are classified in three categories:

- **Emergency Health and Safety:** An immediate and substantial threat to the safety of the public;
- **Non-emergency Health and Safety:** A high risk of personal injury or significant property damage; or
- **Land and Water Restoration:** Environmental problems associated with degradation of soil, water, recreational resources and agricultural productivity.

The Abandoned Mine Land Program cannot pay for channelizing streams or repairing structures damaged by mine-related flooding, landslides or subsidence. Further, AML sites that have been developed for residential or commercial uses are not eligible for reclamation funding, should mine-related problems occur.



An abandoned deep mine entry in Vinton County, considered a non-emergency health and safety problem, is closed in a manner that prevents human access without restricting movement of the endangered Indiana bat.

## MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FEDERAL AML PROGRAM

Abandoned strip mine land reclaimed	8,035 acres
Coal refuse reclaimed	353 acres
Deep mine entries sealed or gated	382 entries
Mine shafts sealed	294 shafts
Dangerous highwall safeguarded	19 miles
Sediment-choked streams restored	52 miles
Landslides stabilized	457 acres
Polluted residential water supplies replaced	272 supplies
Deep mine subsidence stabilized	150 acres