

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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Mining and Minerals Division Presents
2015 Excellence in Reclamation Award

Award Presented at the 2015 New Mexico Mining Association Conference

Santa Ana Pueblo, N.M. – The Mining and Minerals Division (“MMD”) of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department presented the 2015 Excellence in Reclamation Award to the Bureau of Land Management (“BLM”) Las Cruces District Office for its efforts to reclaim abandoned mines in the Cerrillos, Lemitar, and Florida Mountains mining districts, and for its ongoing work to inventory abandoned mines throughout New Mexico.

"The award this year recognizes this agency's extensive work in New Mexico to safeguard and reclaim abandoned mine features while still providing habitat for bats and other wildlife, and for taking on the important task of funding and conducting an inventory of mining features in New Mexico's more than 200 hard rock mining districts," stated Department Secretary David Martin.

The Bureau of Land Management Las Cruces District Office was honored for safeguarding and reclaiming 47 mining features including open shafts, adits, stopes, and deep pits or trenches during the 2014-2015 field season. The BLM adapted MMD's Abandoned Mine Land Program's ("AML") mining safeguarding techniques and designs to backfill mine openings and build bat compatible closures. After successfully completing several small closures, BLM staff expanded their capabilities to include building steel mesh, polyurethane foam, and larger square tube steel gates to protect humans from the hazards of abandoned mines while ensuring continued access to habitat for bats and other wildlife. Work continues on another 20 to 25 mine closures.

The BLM Las Cruces District Office undertook the task of funding and conducting an inventory of New Mexico's hard rock mining districts. With more than 200 mining districts located throughout the state, inventory efforts are expected to take several years to complete.

As of July 2015, BLM Las Cruces District Office staff, led by Chris Teske and Edward Montoya, have inventoried 21 mining districts and documented 13,338 mining features. This mine inventory has proved extremely useful for the MMD AML Program to plan abandoned mine closure and reclamation projects and complete the necessary archaeological and environmental assessment work for additional projects. As a result of the MMD AML Program and BLM partnership, several hundred mine features have been addressed during the past five years.



From Right: Secretary Martin with Chris Teske, Las Cruces District Office's Abandoned Mine Land Coordinator and Jacob Salas, Environmental Protection Assistant

Instituted in 1996, the Excellence in Reclamation Award recognizes excellence and innovation in coal, hard rock and aggregate mine reclamation and abandoned mine land projects, and for raising public awareness of mining issues through outreach projects conducted around the state. The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department presents the awards at the annual New Mexico Mining Association Conference.

Copies of the award presentation and information on previous award winners can be found on MMD's website at:

<http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/mmd/ExcellenceReclamation.html>.

The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.