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Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**EMNRD's MMD presented with award for Mine
Reclamation and Safeguarding Work in New Mexico**

*The safeguarding work increases the safety of valuable recreation area
while highlighting governmental collaboration*

SANTA FE, NM – The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department's (EMNRD) Abandoned Mine Land Program (AML) recently received the Western Region Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Award. Each year, the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) presents awards to state and federal agencies for their work reclaiming and safeguarding abandoned mines in New Mexico. The Acting OSMRE Director, Glenda Owens, presented EMNRD with the Western Region Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Award on September 14, 2021. Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland provided opening remarks at the award ceremony, reiterating the Biden Administration's support for mine reclamation work throughout the country.

"This award highlights the important work of the Abandoned Mine Land Program within EMNRD's Mining and Mineral Division and also acknowledges the importance of our partnerships on the federal, state, and Tribal levels," said EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. "Safeguarding abandoned mines protects New Mexico citizens and the environment while boosting our local economies. We're proud to have this work recognized by OSMRE and Secretary Haaland."

The award recognizes exemplary State and Tribal reclamation projects that reclaim coal mine sites that were abandoned before the enactment of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). The Dutchman Canyon Reclamation Project, constructed by Kiewit New Mexico and 814 Solutions, reclaimed 11 acres of exposed coal waste and restored an adjacent stream west of Raton, New Mexico. The surface of the reclaimed area was contoured into a geomorphic configuration that blends in with the surrounding terrain. Sinuosity was added to the straightened stream channel to slow down water flow to reduce erosion.

Eligible projects are funded wholly or in part by OSMRE's AML Reclamation Fund. OSMRE's AML Reclamation Program addresses the hazards and environmental degradation posed by two centuries of coal mining that occurred before SMCRA was enacted. The fee on coal production,

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which funds the Program, expired on September 30, 2021. Reauthorization of the fee is part of the “Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021”.

Additionally, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was presented with the Hardrock Safety Award by the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs for their project in the San Pedro Mountains near Golden, NM. AML collaborated with the BLM on the New Placers Mine Safeguard Project by providing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance work. The project safeguarded over 140 dangerous mine openings in challenging terrain, while protecting bats, birds, and other wildlife potentially inhabiting the mines. A helicopter was utilized to mobilize construction materials to the inaccessible areas. The project made the area much safer for recreational visitors.

Link to award announcement:

https://www.osmre.gov/resources/newsroom/News/2021/FY21_AML_ReclamationAwards_8.13.2021.pdf

Link to award presentation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glbvsmi5734>



The Abandoned Mine Land group with the award, from left, Yeny Maestas, Laurence D'Allesandro, Richard Wessel, Mike Tompson and Lloyd Moiola.



Drainage and gob pile before construction.



Installation of a bat gate.



Drainage and gob pile after reclamation project completion.

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

<http://www.emnrd.nm.gov>