

RESTORATION GOALS ARE A MOVING TARGET: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EXPERIENCES WITH TWO SEVERELY DISTURBED SITES¹

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Abstract. Approaches to articulating a desired future condition for severely degraded resources in National Parks has reflected a combination of program interests, level of scientific analysis and changes in attitudes toward resource management over time. The Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine, a ten acre site of tailings and remnants of structures in Prince William Forest Park has been the focus of management efforts for over 20 years. Long term uses for the site have ranged from interpretation of a historic (cultural) resource, scientific study of unassisted recovery, reclamation for water quality goals to a more comprehensive ecological vision. Shifts in NPS attitudes and capacity will be presented along with data assessing current condition of the spoils cover that will assist with park work in the future. The Palmerton Zinc CERCLA site section that affects the Appalachian Trail is managed pursuant to an Environmental Protection Agency 1987 Record of Decision (ROD). This ROD includes a desired future condition of eastern deciduous forest but cites a conifer-driven mining reclamation standard for woody stem density. Recent observations of native species responses and an analysis of alternative stable states at this site will be used to evaluate the vision of the 1987 ROD.

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