

# TECHNIQUES FOR ENCOURAGING NATIVE PLANTS AND CREATING BOBWHITE QUAIL HABITAT ON DRASTICALLY DISTURBED LAND<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** A number of theories have been advanced as to why many native plants and early successional animal species such as Bobwhite quail do not occur on most lands reclaimed since the enactment of the Surface Mining, Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). Yet if most native plants and animals are not able to return to the land after it is reclaimed according to SMCRA, is that land truly reclaimed? This paper describes the most effective techniques for reclaiming land to a more natural state. Instead of one-shot revegetation techniques that often favor the seeds of plants that can survive a hydroseeder, the emphasis is on nurse cropping, relay cropping and similar techniques to favor the re-establishment of native plants and provide the diversity needed by butterflies, songbirds, Bobwhite quail, and other game birds. By describing a range of techniques and project results in one paper, regulators may be better able to modify existing regulations to allow improvements in revegetation of disturbed land. In the mean time, land reclamation specialists may be better able to apply for variances to misguided regulations and thus have the freedom and the means to achieve better results, such as reversing the decline of Bobwhite quail and other species dependent on good quality, early successional habitats.

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