

Proceedings

***15th Annual National Meeting of the
American Society for Surface Mining and
Reclamation***

Mining--Gateway to the Future!

*1998 15th National ASSMR Meeting
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Proceedings

15th Annual National Meeting of the American Society for Surface Mining and Reclamation

Mining--Gateway to the Future!

Proceedings of a conference held May 17-21, 1998 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Co-editors:

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Jack Nawrot

John Mead

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25 Years of ASSMR

Twenty-five years ago, a small group met at the West Virginia Division of Reclamation in Charleston, West Virginia to discuss forming an organization to serve as a forum to discuss mined land reclamation research and practices. The West Virginia Steering Committee had reviewed current and proposed reclamation research that had attracted regional interest. At the same time, the public outcry regarding the environmental impact of surface mining was gaining momentum. The consensus was that should an organization representing a broad spectrum of interests be formed, it would have regional support. In 1973, five state regulatory agencies, four universities, five federal agencies, two industries, several industry-funded reclamation associations, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Interstate Mining Compact Commission met to form the Council for Surface Mining and Reclamation in Appalachia.

Between the spring of 1973 and the fall of 1978, the Council met semiannually at locations within the Appalachian region. The meetings consisted of well-planned technical sessions featuring prominent mined land reclamation specialists. The number of participants increased each year, and it became clear that the Council was providing an important service.

The geographical area served was extended to the 100th meridian in 1978 in response to the interest displayed by reclamationists from the Midwestern states. The name was changed to the American Council for Reclamation Research. Semiannual meetings continued at locations within the coalfields of the eastern United States. In addition to the technical sessions, field trips were organized to review reclamation practices. The National Coal Association and Bituminous Coal Research Inc. recognized the importance of the Council by issuing an invitation to contribute to their Research and Applied Technology Symposia on Mined Land Reclamation.

The number of mined land reclamationists from the western states participating in Council meetings increased as national recognition was gained. The decision was made in 1982 to become a national professional organization, and the name American Society for Surface Mining and Reclamation was adopted. The Society cooperated with Bituminous Coal Research Inc. in 1983 to publish the *Glossary of Surface Mining and Reclamation Technology*. A decision was made in 1984 to hold annual meetings and to rotate meeting locations between the eastern and western states. The first meeting was held in Owensboro, Kentucky in 1984 and proceedings of the meeting were published.

The next seven years were devoted to expanding services to the membership and developing programs to enhance information exchange nationally and internationally. An awards program was initiated to recognize individuals who had made outstanding contributions to reclamation technology. Student chapters were authorized at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and Montana State University. Technical divisions were formed to provide members with specific professional interests to meet and discuss topics of mutual interest. The Canadian Land Reclamation Association in 1988 invited the Society to cooperate in publishing their reclamation newsletter. The Canadians hosted a joint meeting with the Society in Calgary, Alberta in 1989.

International interest and representation at national meetings of the Society encouraged consideration of an international mined land reclamation organization. The response from potential members was favorable. The International Affiliation of Land Reclamationists was formed in 1991. The Canadian Land Reclamation Association, the American Society for Surface Mining and Reclamation, the British reclamation group REGRO, and the Minerals Council of Australia formed this organization to promote international information exchange relating to mined land reclamation.

The Society initiated other projects to expand its involvement internationally. A delegation visited Russia and Estonia in 1992, and the Society held a reclamation workshop in Estonia in 1994. A second joint meeting with the Canadians was held in Pittsburgh in 1994.

The small regional organization formed 25 years ago has grown into an internationally recognized professional society through the efforts of many dedicated individuals. The fundamental policy to encourage efforts to protect, reestablish or enhance the surface resources of land disturbances associated with mineral extraction has not changed. However, the Society now is interested in other land disturbances as reclamation practices are not determined by the cause of the disturbance. The challenges for the future are to continue to provide relevant services to the membership as the complexity and diversity of reclamation technology increases and to utilize developing technology to expand information transfer nationally and internationally.

William T. Plass
ASSMR Executive Secretary

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Instructor/Agency:

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