

## Bureau of Land Management

# Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Program At-A-Glance

*Abandoned mines are important relics of the past, but can present unforeseen problems to human health and the environment unless properly handled.*



BLM

### What is the AML program?

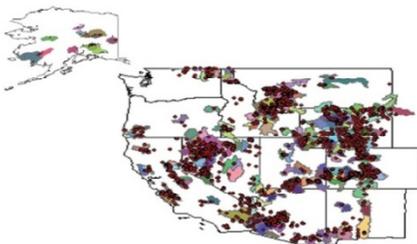
The AML program is a cooperative conservation program that cleans up abandoned hard rock mine sites in the Western United States. It supports the mission of public land conservation and water quality restoration through partnerships with government and non-government organizations. AML program activities are funded in the range of \$12 million - \$15 million annually.

### What is the objective of the AML program?

The AML program's overall objective is to support core BLM programs by mitigating physical safety hazards at abandoned mine land sites on or affecting BLM-managed lands, and by providing solutions to degraded water quality and other environmental impacts.

### Why is the AML program important?

The AML program works to eliminate or reduce the dangers to public health, safety, and the environment as a result of impacts related to abandoned hard rock mines on or affecting public lands. The AML program supports BLM core programs including land-use planning, water quality, fisheries and wildlife biology, recreation, hazard management, and resource restoration.



BLM's AML inventory and key watersheds

### How many AML sites are there?

As of September 30, 2008, the BLM AML inventory database contained over 18,700 sites and 56,000 features. Approximately 20 percent of the AML sites and features have either been remediated, have reclamation actions planned or underway, or do not require further action. The remaining 80 percent require further investigation and/or remediation.

- Approximately 20 percent to 30 percent of AML sites may pose safety hazards.
- Approximately 5 percent to 10 percent may pose environmental hazards.

Action plans that lay out the foundation for the BLM to mitigate and remediate hardrock AML sites are included in the BLM's *Cooperative Conservation Based Strategic Plan for the Abandoned Mine Land Program*.

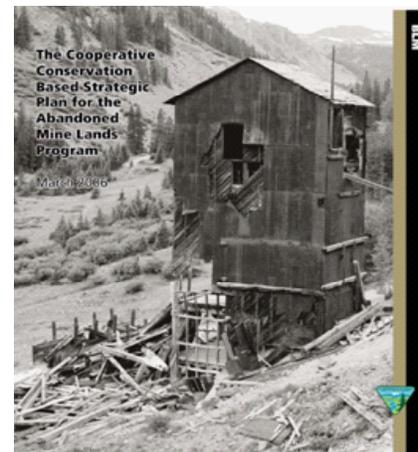
### What Hazards Are Associated with AML Sites?

- Physical hazards: Unsecured AML sites pose a risk of death or serious injury resulting from falls down open mine shafts.
- Human health hazards: Exposure to toxic gases and chemicals, cave-ins, explosives, and water hazards endanger human health.
- Environmental hazards: Water contaminated by mine tailings threatens nearby communities and destroys habitats.

### AML Program Accomplishments

During Fiscal Year 2008, the AML program:

- Improved water quality on 1,473 acres
- Remediated 468 sites with physical safety hazards
- Inventoried and mitigated 1,027 sites



Volunteers help with foam closure at mine shaft

## How are sites selected as cleanup priorities?

The AML program selects cleanup projects through a BLM program-wide collaborative process that occurs once a year through peer review by program leads. The selection process is determined by a risk-based watershed approach that reflects State government priorities. Priorities are coordinated with State and Federal partners and focus on priority watersheds and high-use areas. Decisions are made on a site-by-site basis, but typically the factors considered include safety, public use, accessibility, proximity to populated areas, and costs.



BLM field team completes bat gate installation

## BLM Partners for Success

- **AML Accomplishments Report:** In September 2007, the BLM and U.S. Forest Service published an accomplishments report entitled *Abandoned Mine Lands: A Decade of Progress Reclaiming Hardrock Mines*. A celebration event was held in Silverton, CO.

[www.blm.gov/wol/st/en/prog/more/Abandoned\\_Mine\\_Lands/AML\\_Publications.html](http://www.blm.gov/wol/st/en/prog/more/Abandoned_Mine_Lands/AML_Publications.html)

- **Fix A Shaft Today! (FAST!) Campaign:** In April 2007, the BLM launched the FAST! Campaign in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Association



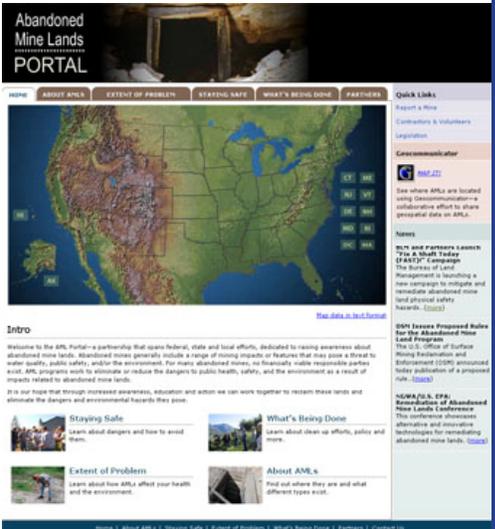
of Abandoned Mine Lands Programs (NAAML), the National Mining Association (NMA), and Bat Conservation International, Inc. (BCI). In June 2008, the first FAST! Campaign pilot was completed in Utah at the Buckmaster Draw Project site, and the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah identified and selected areas to implement the FAST! Campaign approach.

[www.blm.gov/wol/st/en/prog/more/Abandoned\\_Mine\\_Lands.html](http://www.blm.gov/wol/st/en/prog/more/Abandoned_Mine_Lands.html)



FAST! Workshop Participants

- **Abandoned Mine Lands Portal:** On June 30, 2008, the inter-governmental web portal, [abandonedmines.gov](http://abandonedmines.gov), was launched. The AML portal was created in a partnership that spans federal, state and local efforts, dedicated to raising awareness about abandoned mine lands. The Web site provides information on AML sites, news, updates, and links to other AML resources.
- **National Mine Lands Inventory:** AML sites are now listed on the public GeoCommunicator/GIS Site Mapper website ([www.geocommunicator.gov/](http://www.geocommunicator.gov/)) under the pilot National Mine Lands Inventory. The National Integrated Land System (NILS) GeoCommunicator's Site Mapper is an interactive map used to graphically display abandoned mines and BLM sites including recreation, administrative, lands, campgrounds, and buildings. Users can overlay the sites along with BLM-issued land and mineral authorizations, mining claims, land and mineral title records, roads, surface management agency data, and impaired watersheds as well as many other reference themes and base maps.



## Contact Information

George Stone  
Senior AML Specialist  
(202) 452-0339  
[George.Stone@blm.gov](mailto:George.Stone@blm.gov)

Erinn Shirley  
AML Specialist  
(202) 452-5015  
[Erinn.Shirley@blm.gov](mailto:Erinn.Shirley@blm.gov)