# Annual Report July 2009 – June 2010





EDITOR'S NOTE: All references in this report - including position titles held by individuals, legislative references and time references - are current for the time period ending June 2010.

### A Message from MRAB Chairman David Osikowicz

#### October 2010

On behalf of the Mining and Reclamation Advisory Board (MRAB) members, I am pleased to present for your review the Board's Annual Report, documenting the Board's activities from July 2009 through June 2010. The Board continues to address environmental problems related to past coal mining practices and to assist the Department in ensuring that current industry practices represent an environmentally responsible approach to mining.

This was a busy year for MRAB due to the proposed regulatory rulemaking package on permit fees, financial guarantees and OSM deficiencies and the Chapter 95 Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) issues. The Board held three full board meetings and four Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee meetings during the reporting period, as outlined in the by-laws. Full Board meeting dates were held October 22, 2009, January 7, 2010 and April 22, 2010. The Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee meetings were held November 20, 2009, December 14, 2009, March 15, 2010 and June 18, 2010.

The October 22, 2009 meeting was held at the Knox District Mining Office in connection with the annual field trip the following day. The Board toured several ABS reclamation projects in the area to observe the treatment of acid mine discharges.

During the time frame of this report, DEP staff provided the Board with regular updates on the status of Bond Rate Guidelines, BAMR Projects and the ABS Legacy Sites. DEP also provided updates on the beneficial use of coal ash, Indiana Bat, Chapter 95 TDS, the Remining Operator Assistance Program, PA's bonding program, and the proposed permit fees, financial guarantees and OSM deficiencies rulemaking package.

The Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee focused their efforts on the proposed increased permit fees and provided their recommendations to the MRAB at the April 22, 2010 Board meeting.

The Board continues to provide advice and technical input to the Department with regard to expenditures and program administration of AML Title IV monies, proposed

regulatory rulemaking issues including TDS, permit fees, financial guarantee and OSM deficiencies, and other environmental issues.

The dedication and support of all Board members and alternates, ongoing contributions by both DEP staff and Board members, and the significant knowledge transfer in a productive, respectful manner is fully appreciated. The Board remains highly committed to advising and working with the department in carrying out its mission, evaluating the rights and responsibilities of industry, and making responsible, calculated recommendations for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

David Osikowicz, Chairman

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#### Introduction

The Mining and Reclamation Advisory Board (MRAB) was created in 1984 by Act 181 of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, which amended the Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act (SMCRA). The Board's purpose is to assist the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in expending reclamation funds for the purposes provided by SMCRA and to advise the secretary on all matters pertaining to mining and reclamation. The advisory role of the Board also covers Title IV of the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, which relates to abandoned mine land reclamation issues.

The Board is comprised of the following members:

- Two licensed bituminous surface mine operators;
- One licensed anthracite surface mine operator;
- Four public members of the Citizens Advisory Council, elected by the Council;
- One anthracite or one bituminous licensed professional engineer;
- One county conservation district representative, appointed by the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission;
- One majority party state senator, appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;
- One minority party state senator, appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;
- One majority party state representative, appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives; and
- One minority party state representative, appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Board operates under bylaws adopted in January 1989 and amended in October 1993 and December 1996. The bylaws establish a committee structure and other operational procedures, including a minimum of four meetings per year, held in January, April, July and October, as required by SMCRA. *The bylaws current for the time period covered by this report are found in Appendix A*.

#### The Board's Committees

#### • Annual Report Committee

As mandated by Section 18(g)(5) of SMCRA, "The Board shall prepare an annual report on its activities and submit the report to the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and the House Conservation Committee." Throughout the reporting period, the committee compiles and summarizes information for inclusion in the Annual Report.

#### Members of the committee:

Josie Gaskey, Chairperson Richard Fox Joseph A. Deklinski Susan M. Wilson

#### • Policy Committee

The Policy Committee held its initial meeting in October 1993 (then called the Policy and General Issues Committee). Its mission is to consider mining and reclamation policies identified as integral to the timely and efficient administration and operation of DEP's mining regulatory and abandoned mine reclamation programs.

#### Members of the committee:

Mark A. Snyder, Chairperson Curtis Kratz

#### • Reclamation Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee on Reclamation Issues was originally formed at the July 1997 Board meeting in response to concerns regarding the Bark Camp Mine Reclamation Laboratory in Clearfield County, the Reed and Strattanville sites in Clarion County and a package of reclamation initiatives being developed under DEP's "Reclaim PA" program.

At the Oct. 22, 1999 MRAB quarterly meeting, the Board voted unanimously to change the name to the Reclamation Committee to reflect the committee's ongoing work. The committee addresses reclamation issues, initiatives and activities.

#### Members of the committee:

David L. Strong, Chairperson Eric Conrad Robert E. Hughes Bruce Golden Susan M. Wilson (Alternate)

### • Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee

The Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee reviews all major regulatory packages coming before the Board during the reporting period and reports back to the full Board.

#### Members of the committee:

Jack R. Chamberlin, Chairperson The Honorable Raphael Musto The Honorable Jeffrey P. Pyle The Honorable Donald C. White David D. Osikowicz David L. Strong Susan M. Wilson (alternate)

#### **FULL BOARD**

SMCRA mandates that the MRAB meet four times per year. Throughout the reporting period, the full Board met four times. The following sections provide a detailed summary of the activities of the full Board. For a complete list of meeting dates and locations, see **Appendix D**.

#### **2009-2010 MAIN AGENDA TOPICS (Presented Alphabetically)**

#### ABS Progress Report

As of December 31, 2009, there was approximately \$4.1 million in the Reclamation Fee O&M Trust Account. \$300,000 was transferred into the Legacy account from the O&M account. The reclamation fee for 2010 was \$0 based on dollar amount being above required \$3 million level.

DEP submitted a program revision to OSM August 2008 regarding the reclamation fee and is awaiting their approval.

#### **Bond Rate Guidelines (BRG)**

Bruce Carl, DEP, attended the Board meetings and provided the Board with the Department's updated projection of the 2010 bond rates based on the average costs of recent reclamation projects. At the January 2010 meeting, Mr. Carl presented the proposed Land Reclamation Bond Rate Guidelines for 2010 indicating that revegetation costs remained largely unchanged, however, pasture costs have increased due in part to increased mulch costs.

The 2010 bond rates went into effect on April 1, 2010.

#### Bureau of Abandoned Mines Reclamation (BAMR) Projects/Status Report

Updates on reclamation projects were supplied by Brian Bradley, DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation. As of April 22, 2010, completions were as follows: 36 projects with a total of 836 acres of abandoned mine reclaimed at a cost of \$19,159,250. There are 188 future contracts planned with 4,649 acres to be reclaimed at a cost of \$111,181,791.

#### **Commonwealth Bonding Program**

William Allen, DEP lead many discussions over the year including whether there was a need to revise or add a program similar to the Conversion Assistance Program in an effort to assist operators in the current weak economy. As of December 31 2009, the Conversion Assistance Reserves held approximately \$12 million based on a ten percent forfeiture rate. The Board referred the matter to the Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee and they are continuing to work on this issue.

#### Field Trip

The MRAB holds an annual field trip. The 2009 field trip was held on October 23, 2009. The Board toured several of the Department's reclamation project sites in and around the Knox District Mining Office to observe the treatment of acid mine discharges.

#### **OSM (Office of Surface Mining) Oversight Activities**

Mr. Rieger updated the Board on OSM oversight activities including the more comprehensive approach for stream protection and increased oversight inspections.

#### **Reclamation and Remining Incentives Report**

John Meehan, DEP updated the Board on Pennsylvania's reclamation and remining incentives programs which have been very successful. Coal mine operators using these programs have reclaimed 5,221.3 abandoned mine land (AML) acres equivalent to more than \$28 million in reclamation value.

The Government-Financed Reclamation Construction Contracts program benefits the public and the mining operators by establishing contracts for mining companies to conduct operations that will reclaim abandoned mine lands sites at little or no cost to the public. Between Jan. 1991 and Dec. 31, 2009, 210 contracts were issued, with a total reclamation value of over \$8 million.

The Remining Operator Assistance Program (ROAP) creates an incentive to remine and reclaim abandoned mine land areas by providing financial assistance for most of the cost of permitting the remining area. Between Aug. 1996 and Dec. 31, 2009, 30 operators requested participation in this program on 60 remining sites. Through Dec. 31, 2009, 45 projects have resulted in approved remining permits that have reclaimed 371.1 acres of abandoned mine land with an approximate reclamation value of \$2.4 million.

Under the Financial Guarantees program, DEP provides low cost bonding of remining areas. As of Dec. 31, 2009, 163 coal mine operators used financial guarantees to bond 622 mining permit increments. Those operations have reclaimed 2,927.2 acres of abandoned mine land, saving the commonwealth an estimated \$17.5 million.

The Bond Credits program also provides an incentive for operators to reclaim an abandoned area by earning a "bond credit" under a Consent Order and Agreement with the department. Four licensed mine operators have completed five bond credit projects. Five projects have been completed under this program, reclaiming 31 acres. The five completed projects represent a reclamation value of \$217,271.

#### **Regulatory Updates**

**Indiana Bat** - Geoff Lincoln, DEP, updated the Board with respect to the issues surrounding the Indiana Bat. Federal Range-wide Indiana Bat Protection and Enhancement Plan Guidelines were issued by a team comprised of representatives from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and a representative group on behalf of the Interstate Mining Compact Commission (IMCC).

**Beneficial Coal Ash** – Keith Brady, DEP updated the Board on the proposed guidelines for beneficial use of coal ash. PA DEP held four public meetings

and a 45-day comment period on the proposed regulation package. Approximately 1,100 comments were received.

**Total Dissolved Solids** – The Board was updated at several meetings regarding the proposed rulemaking for Chapter 95 Total Dissolved Solids. Discussion centered on the need for the rulemaking, the potential costs to industries across the Commonwealth and the implementation schedule. There was significant discussion as to the effects on the mining industry.

#### Proposed Rulemaking on Fees, Financial Guarantees and OSM

**Deficiencies** – Bill Allen presented DEP's proposed rulemaking package involving changes to remining financial guarantees, program deficiencies and mining program fees. The financial guarantee changes reflect the shift to a conventional bonding system, with letters of credit no longer being accepted. Several corrections to align with the federal program are included, as well as revisions to permit fees.

The permitting fee issue was separated from the overall package to allow the remaining issues to move forward in the regulatory process. The permit fees issue was assigned to the Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee for further discussion and evaluation. Meetings of this Committee were held in November, December, January and March. The Committee recommended that the Board accept the regulation change as stated in proposed Sections 86.17(b) and (c), but not the annual administrative fee as stated in proposed Sections 86.17(d) and (f). Members of the Board made additional motions to increase the permit fees such that they would provide \$400,000 in revenue to the Department in lieu of annual administrative fees, as well as require monitoring and evaluation every 3 years.

#### **Remining Operator Assistance Program (ROAP)**

James Charowsky gave an overview of ROAP and a study performed to determine the benefits of the program. The purpose of the program was to provide incentives to coal operators to remine abandoned mine lands. The study was inconclusive due to a lack of accurate acreage readings prior to the start of the program.

#### **Treatment Trust Fund Status Report**

The MRAB received regular updates from the Bureau of Mining and Reclamation on the status of the Treatment Trust Fund throughout the time frame covered by this Annual Report. The Department continues to work to secure trusts and bonds to guarantee that sites with post-mining discharges are capable of treatment in perpetuity. The Department also continues to make progress with respect to the perpetual treatment of these sites and the number of trusts that are fully funded.

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Alternative Mine Reclamation Techniques**

Scott Van De Mark from the PA Environmental Council and Dr. Rick Stehouwer of Penn State University gave a presentation on the use of poultry manure combined with paper mill sludge used in the reclamation of mine sites. Warm season grasses were grown in the mix to produce a biomass crop that can be used in biofuel applications and usually takes approximately three years to become established. Crop yields produced roughly twice what was accomplished with conventional techniques and were more than two tons per acre. Cost per acre for this process is approximately \$1,000 per acre compared to the conventional \$600 per acre cost.

#### **Project XL Report**

Mike Smith, Moshannon District Mining Office presented the results of a study designed to evaluate in-stream water quality to determine the performance of alternative methods for treating acid mine discharges of remining operations. The Board gave favorable recommendation to the project.

#### **Reclaiming Primacy Bond Forfeiture Sites**

Joe Ferrara and Mark Odentahl discussed several projects where acid mine drainage discharges are being treated. The presented the statistics associated with the several sites and the dollars associated with the sites.

At the April meeting, John Varner and Malcolm Crittenden presented reclamation efforts in the Cambria District.

#### Appendix A

#### BYLAWS OF THE MINING AND RECLAMATION ADVISORY BOARD

As Amended Dec. 12, 1996

#### **ARTICLE I**

Authorization

The Mining and Reclamation Advisory Board is authorized and organized pursuant to Section 18(g) of the Pennsylvania Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act (Act 181 of 1984) as amended by Act 173 of 1992.

#### **ARTICLE II**

Purpose

The advisory Board is charged to assist the secretary to expend the funds for the purposes provided by this act and to advise the secretary on all matters pertaining to surface coal mining and reclamation which shall include, but not be limited to, experimental practices, alternate methods of backfilling, selection of reclamation projects, alternate reclamation methods, obligations for pre-existing pollution liability, alteration of reclamation loans, reclamation fees and bonding rates and methods.

#### **ARTICLE III**

Membership

The Board shall be comprised of three coal operators, two of whom shall be licensed bituminous surface mine operators and one of whom shall be a licensed anthracite surface mine operator; four public members from the Citizens Advisory Council, who shall be appointed by the council; two members, one from the Anthracite and Bituminous Licensed Professional Engineers, and one from the County Conservation Districts, who shall be appointed by the State Conservation District Commission; four members of the General Assembly, two from the Senate, one member from the majority party and one member from the minority party, who shall be appointed by the president pro tempore; and two from the House of Representatives, one from the majority party and one from the minority party, who shall be appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

- A. Board members shall designate an alternate. The chairperson shall be notified, in writing, of such alternate.
- B. The Board may recommend to the appointing authority removal of any member not attending, or not represented by a designee, at two Board meetings in a year.

#### **ARTICLE IV**

Voting

Members, or designated alternates, shall be entitled to one vote, in person, on all matters that shall come before the Board. No voting shall be done without a quorum, unless otherwise indicated in these bylaws. A majority of the membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

#### ARTICLE V

Officers

The officers of the Board shall be a chairperson and a vice-chairperson.

The chairperson and vice chairperson shall by elected from the membership of the Board, as defined in the Pennsylvania Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act, as amended, and may not be the secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, or his designee. They shall hold office for a term of one year, or until a successor is elected.

It shall be the duty of the chairperson to preside at all meetings of the Board, call special meetings, prepare and distribute the meeting agenda and perform such other duties as pertain to the office.

It shall be the duty of the vice-chairperson to perform the duties of the chairperson in his/her absence.

#### ARTICLE VI

#### Administration

Administrative and clerical duties shall be performed by the Office of Mineral Resources Management, Department of Environmental Protection. A department staff person shall function as a recording and corresponding secretary. Included among these administrative duties shall be:

- A. To give timely notice of meetings of the Board and committees.
- B. To record full Board and committee meeting minutes and keep a permanent file. Board and committee meeting minutes shall be distributed to the full membership. Minutes should be reviewed by the chairperson or vice-chairperson prior to distribution.
- C. To conduct both outgoing and incoming correspondence and maintain a permanent file of such correspondence, and
- D. To perform such other duties as may be requested by the Board, including, but not limited to, travel arrangements, conference calls, etc.

In addition, staff representatives from the Office of Mineral Resources Management shall serve as staff liaison to the Board.

#### **ARTICLE VII**

#### Committees

The Board may establish committees to assist in performing its advisory duties.

- A. Committees shall be established by a majority vote of those members attending a regular or special meeting of the Board.
- B. The Board chairperson shall appoint committee members. The committee chairperson shall be selected by its members. The committee chairperson will be responsible for calling committee meetings, requesting needed assistance from DEP, and reporting to the Board, and shall receive necessary administrative and clerical support from DEP.
- C. Each committee shall develop and adopt a statement of purpose or objective of the committee at a meeting of that committee after its creation.
- D. The chairperson of the Board shall appoint a committee to prepare the Annual Report, as mandated by Section 18(g) of the Pennsylvania Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act.
- E. A listing of the committees and their statements of purpose shall be maintained as an appendix to these bylaws. Changes to the appendix shall not constitute a change to the bylaws.

#### **ARTICLE VIII**

Meetings

The Board shall meet on the first Thursday of the months of January and July and the fourth Thursday of the months of April and October, unless changed by a majority of the members. Alternate meeting dates and special meetings shall be called by the chairperson, in consultation with the vice-chairperson. Committee meetings shall be called by committee chairpersons, who shall also notify the full Board.

#### **ARTICLE IX**

Participation by Non-Board Members

#### A. Formal Presentation

Any person may ask the Board for time on the formal agenda to present policy, regulatory or legislative concerns for the Board to consider. The request shall be made in writing to the chairperson and include a summary of the presentation. The chairperson shall determine the interest of the Board in the subject and decide if the presentation will be allowed during the formal agenda. Requests shall be submitted at least one month prior to a Board meeting.

#### B. Informal Discussion

At the discretion of the chairperson, any person present at the meeting shall be afforded the opportunity to speak to the Board or ask questions of Board members.

#### **ARTICLE X**

#### Amendments

The bylaws may be amended, repealed or suspended at any meeting of the Board by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board, provided that written notice of such amendment, repeal or suspension shall have been sent to each member at least one week prior to said meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XI**

#### **Board Representation**

The Board shall act as a body in all matters before it and only the chairperson, or his or her designee, the vice-chairperson or the Board's designee shall speak on behalf of the Board.

# Appendix B

# OFFICERS OF THE BOARD FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD July 2009 – June 2010

Board Chairperson	David Osikowicz
Board Vice Chairperson	Dave Strong
Annual Report Committee Chairperson	Josie Gaskey
Policy Committee Chairperson	Mark Snyder
Reclamation Committee Chairperson	David Strong
Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee Chairperson	Jack Chamberlin

# Appendix C

### BOARD MEMBERSHIP FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD July 2009 – June 2010

<b>Board Member</b>	Position	Alternate
David Osikowicz	Bituminous Surface Mine Operator	George Ellis
Mark Snyder	Bituminous Surface Mine Operator	George Ellis, Darrel Lewis
Jack Chamberlin	Licensed Professional Engineer	George Ellis, Josie Gaskey
Edward Helfrick, Jr.	Anthracite Surface Mine Operator	Bob Burns, Duane Feagley
Sen. Raphael Musto	General Assembly	Richard Fox
Sen. Donald White	General Assembly	Allison Dutrey
Rep. Jeffrey Pyle	General Assembly	Joe Deklinski
Rep. Deberah Kula	General Assembly	Joyce Martin, Tara Smith
Burt Waite	Citizens Advisory Council	Susan Wilson, Mark Killar
David Strong	Citizens Advisory Council	Susan Wilson, Mark Killar
Curtis Kratz	Citizens Advisory Council	Susan Wilson, Mark Killar
Eric Conrad	Citizens Advisory Council	Susan Wilson, Mark Killar
Bruce Golden	State Conservation Commission	Bob Hughes

# Appendix D

# MEETING DATES DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD July 2009 – June 2010

Date	Location	Meeting
October 22, 2009	Knox DMO	Full Board (Annual Field Trip Meeting)
November 20, 2009	Harrisburg, PA	Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee
December 14, 2009	Harrisburg, PA	Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee
January 7, 2010	Harrisburg, PA	Full Board
March 15, 2010	Harrisburg, PA	Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee
April 22, 2010	Harrisburg, PA	Full Board
June 18, 2010	Harrisburg, PA	Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee

## Appendix E

# MRAB COMMITTEES FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD July 2008 – June 2009

## **Annual Report Committee**

Josie Gaskey, Chairperson	Joseph A. Deklinski (Alternate)
Pennsylvania Coal Association	PA House of Representatives
212 North Third Street	240 Ryan House Office Building
Suite 102	House Box 202020
Harrisburg, PA 17101	Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020
Tel: 717-233-7900 ex 24	Tel: 717-783-4707
	Fax: 717-705-2095
Susan M. Wilson (Alternate)	Mr. Richard Fox (Alternate)
Citizens Advisory Council	PA State Senate
P.O. Box 8459	Rm. 17, E. Wing, Main Capitol Building
13 <sup>th</sup> FL RCSOB	Harrisburg, PA 17120-3014
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8459	Tel: 717-787-7105
Tel: 717-787-4527	Fax: 717-783-4141
Fax: 717-772-5748	

### **Reclamation Committee**

David L. Strong, Chairperson	Eric Conrad
P.O. Box 162	ER Conrad & Associates
Brockway, PA 15824	One Memory Lane
Tel: 814-371-6142	Enola, PA 17025
	Tel: 717-773-0913
Robert E. Hughes (Alternate)	Susan M. Wilson (Alternate)
EPCAMR	Citizens Advisory Council
485 Smith Pond Road	P.O. Box 8459
Shavertown, PA 18704	13 <sup>th</sup> FL RCSOB
Tel: 570-674-3411	Harrisburg, PA 17105-8459
Fax: 570-674-7989	Tel: 717-787-4527
Bruce Golden	
WPCAMR	
Green Forge Building	
226 Donohoe Road, Suite 110	
Greensburg, PA 15601	

## Regulation, Legislation and Technical Committee

Jack R. Chamberlin, Chairperson	David L. Strong
702 Chamberlin Road	P.O. Box 162
Brookville, PA 15825	Brockway, PA 15824
Tel: 814-849-4181	Tel: 814-371-6142
Fax: 814-849-7166	
The Honorable Raphael Musto	Susan M. Wilson (Alternate)
Senate of Pennsylvania	Citizens Advisory Council
Senate Post Office Box 203014	P.O. Box 8459
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3014	13 <sup>th</sup> FL RCSOB
Tel: 717-787-7105	Harrisburg, PA 17105-8459
Fax: 717-783-4141	Tel: 717-787-4527
David D. Osikowicz	The Honorable Jeffrey P. Pyle
Original Fuels, Inc.	Pennsylvania House of Representatives
P.O. ox 343	House Post Office Box 202060
Punxsutawney, PA 15767	Harrisburg, PA 17120-2060
Tel: 814-938-5171	Tel: 717-783-5327
Fax: 814-938-5008	Fax: 717-260-6511
The Honorable Donald White	
Main Capitol Building	
Room 281	
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3041	
Tel: 717-787-8724	

## **Policy Committee**

Mark A. Snyder, Chairperson	Curtis Kratz
State Industries, Inc.	Kratz Consulting
P.O. Box 1022	22 Elroy Road
Kittanning, PA 16201	Souderton, PA 18964
Tel: 724-548-8101	Tel: 215-723-4952
Fax: 724-545-2989	