Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI)

FIVE MYTHS

...about forestry as a post-mining land use.

MYTH 1

Tree planting is more difficult and expensive than other types of reclamation.

FACT

Successful tree establishment is not difficult to achieve when proper site preparation, appropriate selection of tree species, and correct planting techniques are used. Planting costs can be offset by the lower costs of site preparation.

MYTH 2

Hay and pastureland are easier to establish than forests.

FACT

Although the preferred method of reclamation for many years, quality pastureland requires a considerable amount of work and management to maintain its productivity. If not properly maintained, pastureland will quickly revert to abandoned grasslands, with limited environmental or economic value. Trees, on the other hand, require less management and provide a wide range of environmental benefits. Trees can also provide a cash crop if the landowner decides to harvest.

MYTH 3

The same reclamation techniques used to create golf courses and parking lots can create successful forests.

FACT

Practices that result in smoothly finished landscapes may be desirable for creating recreational fields, golf courses, and parking lots, but are counter-productive to forestry and wildlife. In addition, land with few or no trees often does not complement surrounding land uses and creates forest fragmentation.

MYTH 4

Planting fast-growing, vegetative groundcover prevents erosion and water runoff from damaging tree seedlings.

FACT

Aggressive groundcovers are good for producing dense hay and pastureland but can be detrimental to the growth of trees. Dense groundcovers compete with newly planted trees and tree seedlings for soil nutrients, water, and sunlight.

MYTH 5

Before planting trees, bulldozers should make repeated passes over the surface material to create a smooth, uniform slope.

FACT

This technique results in a compacted surface that inhibits tree root growth, restricts water infiltration, and increases runoff. Actually, trees prefer loose soil and do very well in rocky material, as opposed to a smooth, uniform surface. Their large and deep root systems help stabilize slopes and reduce erosion.

ARRI

For more information visit http://arri.osmre.gov