

# **Appalachian Fuels, LLC wins Regional Reforestation Award**

*By Ben Owens and Linda Keene*

*Photo by Linda Keene*

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LOGAN, VA - Appalachian Fuels, LLC won the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative's (ARRI) 2007 Excellence in Reforestation Regional Award on August 6, 2008.

On behalf of ARRI, Brent Wahlquist, Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, presented the award to Don Cooke, Engineer, and Dave Maynard, General Manager, both from Appalachian Fuels, LLC, during the 2008 ARRI Mined Land Reforestation Conference held at Chief Logan State Park, Logan, WV.

This award recognizes those individuals, operators and organizations that truly exemplify excellence in forestry reclamation on surface coal mine sites.

Appalachian Fuels, LLC, was recognized for its Bent Mountain mine site near Meta, Kentucky. It has become a premiere research site and a public showcase for forestry reclamation techniques.

Appalachian Fuels, LLC has a long-standing partnership with the Kentucky Department for Natural Resources (DNR) and the University of Kentucky to advance and promote the science of forestry reclamation that results in the success of high-value Appalachian hardwoods.

Appalachian Fuels, LLC actually revised the permit plans on their Bent Mountain facility to incorporate DNR's Reclamation Advisory Memorandum # 124 reforestation techniques which promotes the establishment of forest land.

Through a cooperative effort between Appalachian Fuels, LLC and University of Kentucky, a number of large scale research projects have been established on the Bent Mountain site by research scientists. The University of Kentucky has planted approximately 110,000 high value trees on more than 150 acres of research cells on this site. Many of these research projects will continue into the far future.

Appalachian Fuel, LLC's commitment to reforestation goes well beyond the use of the land. They have used their personnel, resources, and funds to prepare research cells prior to research planting.

The impact of the combined efforts of Appalachian Fuels, LLC, the DNR and the University of Kentucky reach beyond Eastern Kentucky. This mine site has played host to over 3,000 people from across the nation with an interest in the Forestry Reclamation Approach.

Photo: (From left) Don Cooke and Dave Maynard, both from Appalachian Fuels, LLC, accept the 2007 Excellence in Reforestation Regional Award from Brent Wahlquist, Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.



Cooke said, "This award means everything. Our land owners want to know their land is being reclaimed properly. This award is our proof." He added, "It also motivates our people and lets the state agencies know we will go the extra mile."

Nominees were submitted by each State and judged based on the following: (1) Tree-planting efforts, the proper use of the Forestry Reclamation Approach, specific problems and the resulting solutions, and unusual circumstances that were encountered; (2) How well any resulting techniques, technologies or accomplishments benefited other mining and reclamation operations; (3) The long-term benefits to the landowner and local or regional community.

This year's recipient was chosen by the ARRI Core Team from a field of four extremely strong nominees, each having won the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative's Excellence in Reforestation State Awards in their respective states. These included: Ohio - Cravat Coal Company, Jockey Hollow East Mine, permit D-2235; West Virginia - The Fola Coal Company, LLC, surface mines Number 4 and 6 in Clay County -- permits S-2005-02 and S-2011-99 and; Tennessee - Gatliff Coal Company, Tackett Creek Area No. 14, permit 2995.

The recipients of 2007 Excellence in Reforestation State Awards are: Maryland - Vindex Energy Corporation; Maryland - The Douglas Coal Company; Virginia -

GOBCO, LLC, awarded for Clinchco Gob Pile AML Enhancement Project; Virginia - Red River Coal Company, Inc.; West Virginia - Elk Run Coal Company, Incorporated, awarded for East of Stollings Surface Mine, permit S-5057-92; West Virginia - The Fola Coal Company, LLC, permits S-2005-02 and S-2011-99; Kentucky – ICG Hazard, LLC; Kentucky - Appalachian Fuels, LLC; Ohio - Oxford Mining Company, Inc., permit D-2122; and Ohio -Cravat Coal Company, permit D-2235.

Each site exemplified the five-principals of the Forestry Reclamation Approach that ARRI promotes. These steps are:

- ⇒ To create a suitable rooting medium for good tree growth that is no less than four feet deep and comprised of topsoil, weathered sandstone and/or the best available material.
- ⇒ The second step is to loosely grade the topsoil or topsoil substitute established in step one to create a non-compacted growth medium.
- ⇒ The third step is to use ground covers that are compatible with growing trees.
- ⇒ Next, plant two types of trees, early succession species for wildlife and soil stability and commercially valuable crop trees.
- ⇒ Finally, use proper tree planning techniques.

ARRI's past Excellence in Reforestation Awards have been earned by researchers, landowners and operators. The awards recognize excellence for the reclamation of both active mine sites and abandoned mine lands.