

ARRI, GEORGES CREEK WATERSHED, AND THE MDE BUREAU OF MINES CELEBRATE ARBOR DAY

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KLONDIKE, MD - Horner Hill Permit SM-82-374 - The Maryland Department of the Environment, Bureau of Mines celebrates Arbor Day each year by co-hosting a tree planting event with the Georges Creek Watershed Association. This year's event, which promoted the reforestation of mined lands advocated by the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI), took place on a Title V mine site near Frostburg, Maryland.



Above: Approximately 100 volunteers and students from three local schools attended and planted trees on the 10 acre site. The surrounding area is forested with native hardwoods.

The site (pictured above) had been surface-mined in the late 1980's and reclaimed using traditional reclamation techniques, including heavy grading, smoothing, and soil compaction. Quick growing grass and legumes were then planted to stabilize the soil. This type of reclamation is excellent if the post-mining land-use is pasture or some other agricultural use. But if the land is to be returned to forest, the heavy soil compaction and thick grass negatively impacts the survival rate of planted tree seedlings. In addition, volunteer growth of trees is extremely limited with this type of reclamation.

One of the goals of this year's event focused on taking steps toward making this reclaimed mine site a commercially valuable and well managed forest. The event also promoted the goals of ARRI, planting high-value hardwood trees on reclaimed mined lands by using methods that increase the survival rate and growth rate of trees, and expedites the establishment of forest habitat through natural succession.

As part of the Arbor Day event, the site was graded and ripped by Clise Coal Company, a local coal operator who donated a D-9 bulldozer to prepare the site for tree planting. The bulldozer was used to scalp the sod from the tree planting rows, eliminating competition for sunlight,

water, and nutrients between the grass and the newly planted tree seedlings. The bulldozer also “ripped” the soil to further eliminate compaction.

More than 5000 native hardwood tree seedlings were planted, including green ash, walnut, maple, cherry, and oak, by volunteers and students from three local schools, Allegany County Career Center, Westmar High School, and Beall High School, to commemorate Arbor Day, the first Wednesday in April in the State of Maryland. The property owner, Will Jenkins, also participated. Allegany Coal and Land provided access to the site in partnership with the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Georges Creek Watershed group.



Left: Shari T. Wilson, Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment, is presenting George Beener, President of Tri-Star Mining, with the 2006 ARRI Excellence in Reforestation Award for tree planting activities on his permits.

During the program, opening remarks were made by Shari Wilson, Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment, Ed Larrimore, Director of the Maryland Mining Program, Mike Garner, Chief of the Maryland AML Program, and Mike Bower of OSM. While

in the area, Ms. Wilson toured an ARRI site that was planted last year and an active coal mining permit operated by Clise Coal Company. MDE Secretary, Ms. Wilson signed the ARRI Statement of Mutual Intent while at the Arbor Day program.

Since 1960, through a cost share program with the Bureau of Mines, Maryland coal mine operators have planted nearly 7.5 million trees and shrubs on 10,500 acres of reclaimed surface coal mines, this represents nearly one half of all surface coal mined lands. In addition to the coal industry tree planting, the Maryland Bureau of Mines plants an average of 35 acres each year on abandoned mines sites.

Event participants included individuals from the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative, the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Georges Creek Watershed Association, the Maryland Coal Industry, the Alleghany Center for Career and Technical Education, Beall High School, Westmar High School, the Maryland Land Reclamation Committee, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Frostburg State University, Clise Coal Company, Jenkins Development, the property owner Will Jenkins, and others.