

Office of Surface Mining
Reclamation and Enforcement

Pittsburgh Field Division



Evaluation Report

**ABANDONED MINE LANDS
INFORMATION SYSTEM**

Maryland Abandoned Mine Lands Program

Evaluation Year 2004

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OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study was to review Maryland's processes for adding, updating, and maintaining information in The Office of Surface Mining's (OSM) Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System (AMLIS) to assure conformance with OSM Directive AML-1 and associated law, rules, policy, and procedure. Accuracy, conformance with directive requirements, and timeliness of data entry were reviewed.

SUMMARY

Maryland generally follows the requirements found in OSM Directive AML-1 for making entries, updating, and maintaining the AMLIS system. Cost estimates are generally accurate and have a logical basis, though the format of the AMLIS system lends itself to inherent problems involving distribution of funds which are outside Maryland's control. Areas which need further attention include:

- Assuring that problem areas are entered under the correct AMLIS Program
- Assuring that priority documentation form records are maintained for each problem
- Using separate program PADS for multi-program funded problem areas
- Assuring that non-OSM program funding sources are recorded separately
- Assuring Problem Areas are not duplicated among programs
- Assuring that updates are entered in a timely manner

Maryland is in the process of updating the entire inventory database included in AMLIS. This update will include taking advantage of technological advancements through use of geographic positioning systems (GPS) and the global information system (GIS), as well as gathering more detailed data on existing problem areas to better reflect an accurate inventory. When complete, the updated files will be entered into AMLIS. The expectation for completion of this effort is eight months to one year.

BACKGROUND

AMLIS is an inventory of land and water impacted by past mining. It is mandated by law and is used by OSM to determine which States and Tribes have sufficient Priority 1 and 2 coal problems to justify a grant distribution from the Federal historic coal share¹ and to determine which are eligible for the minimum program funding² under the annual distribution of Abandoned Mine Land (AML) grant funds. The AMLIS is also used to verify that all coal problems have been funded when a State or Tribe certifies³ that all known priority one and two coal reclamation problems have been completed, including post-Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) coal sites.⁴

¹ Section 402(g)(5) of SMCRA

² Section 402(g)(8) of SMCRA (currently \$1.5 million per year)

³ Section 411(a) of SMCRA

⁴ Section 402(g)(4)(F) of SMCRA

AMLIS is maintained by OSM with information added by individual States. Maryland presently has 157 problem areas comprising 447 problems⁵ in the AMLIS system. Breakout is 40 priority one, 288 priority two, and 119 priority three problems. Priority one and two pre-SMCRA problems, as well as AML enhancement, Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative, RAMP and Federal Program non-emergency projects are required to be tracked in three phases; unfunded, funded, and completed. Pre-SMCRA priority three problems, Watershed Cooperative Agreement problems, and non coal problems are only required to be entered into the AMLIS upon funding of the project.

States are responsible for updating information in the AMLIS system in accordance with OSM Directive AML-1. This directive has gone through several iterations since 1984.

Initially, all problems were lumped under one program (Priority 1, 2, and 3). All AMLIS entries were reviewed, approved, and entered by OSM. A major change was made November 26, 1991 to reflect The Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Act of 1990, which included revisions to Section 403(c) of the SMCRA. These revisions required maintenance of the inventory by OSM and formulation of standardized procedures for use by the States and Tribes in updating the inventory. The 1991 Directive added thirteen additional program areas for inclusion in AMLIS⁶.

On August 12, 1992, OSM, via Temporary Directive 92-9, eliminated OSM's review responsibilities for priority designations and cost determinations, and limited OSM's role to entering data into the inventory and reporting on program accomplishments.

In 1993 OSM prepared an oversight evaluation report which concluded:

- The Maryland Inventory is not complete, and does not support the minimum program funding levels throughout the life of the program
- BOM provides the required inventory submissions
- Inventory submissions are generally complete and accurate

It recommended that Maryland proceed with efforts to finalize the inventory to include all known AML problems.

Since that time Maryland has been making efforts to follow this recommendation with a resultant increase in priority one and two unfunded problem areas and associated costs. At the time of the 1993 report, the inventory contained only \$7.9 million in unfunded priority one and two costs. As a result of recommendations contained in the 1993 report, changes to AMLIS guidelines and definitions, and Maryland's efforts to update AMLIS, the unfunded priority one and two problems have risen to \$14.5 million.

A revision to the directive on January 20, 1995, required that priority four, five, and six pre-SMCRA coal and all Non-Coal sites be added upon funding of the problems. Also, States, rather than OSM were tasked as the primary source for data entry into AMLIS.

⁵ Includes unfunded, funded, and completed problems

⁶ Pre-SMCRA Coal (P1, P2, P3), Pre-SMCRA Coal (P3 only), Pre-SMCRA Coal (P4), Pre-SMCRA Coal (P5, P6), RAMP, FRP, State Emergency Program, Remining, Coal Interim Site Funding, Coal Insolvent Surety Site Finding, Acid Mine Drainage Plan, Private (P1, P2, P3), Non-coal (P4).

Revisions which took effect on October 15, 1998, included the addition of four more program areas; Pre-SMCRA Coal (Research), Federal Reclamation Program Emergency, Non-Coal (priority 5), and the Clean Streams Initiative. It also changed the title of the old “Private (P1, P2, P3)” program to “Other (P1, P2, P3)”, and included a method of entering non-OSM AML fund sources.

Two more programs were added to the directive on August 28, 2000. They were the Enhanced AML program and the Watershed Cooperative Agreement program. In addition, AMLIS included a method of tracking multiple funding sources under a single program.

The most recent revision included adding a completion date for problems completed after March 31, 2001. This revision was dated May 11, 2001.

In September, 2003, The Department of Interior Office of Inspector General issued an audit report⁷ (exhibit 1) which found inaccuracies in cost estimates, units, and documentation of data in the system. The audit recommended that OSM take corrective measures to establish quality control systems, update cost estimates, and establish procedures to verify the accuracy of data. OSM has responded in part by mandating this oversight review.

SCOPE/METHODOLOGY

Maryland personnel responsible for maintenance of the AMLIS system were interviewed (Exhibit 2) regarding internal procedures for updating the system. These procedures were then compared to requirements of OSM Directive AML-1 for consistency and effectiveness. Next, a sample of ten problem area files were reviewed to determine completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of information entered into AMLIS. Files were chosen to reflect the range of programs, problem types, and funding status present in Maryland. Additional records were checked based on findings from the sample. Emphasis was placed on costs and units reclaimed, and the presence of supporting documentation. Finally, each of the ten sample sites were visited for field verification of AMLIS data.

FINDINGS

Processes and Procedures:

Certification – As mentioned earlier, in September of 2003 the Department of Interior Office of Inspector General issued an audit report that found inaccuracies which compromised AMLIS’s ability to identify the highest priority sites for funding, forecast future reclamation needs, and measure performance under AML program goals. It recommended that OSM:

1. Establish a quality control system that ensures the accuracy of data entered into AMLIS
2. Update and periodically adjust the estimated costs of reclamation, and

⁷ Report No. 2003-I-0074

3. Establish procedures to verify the validity of reported performance for acid mine drainage projects reported under the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative Program.

OSM concurred with each of the three recommendations, and as part of an implementation plan to address the first recommendation, is requiring that States formally certify the accuracy of their systems. While there is no standard certification document, OSM has offered suggestions to include a certification statement as follows:

*“The (State/Nation/Tribe/OSM) certifies that it has a system in place that ensures the accuracy of data in AMLIS. This is done by [short description of the system and its checks and balances].
Signed: _____”*

Maryland has no formal certification of their system. As part of this review OSM has agreed to work with Maryland on establishing a system and/or schedule for implementation.

Updates - Maryland follows the procedures contained in the OSM Inventory Manual⁸ on updating the three funding phases of problems. Maryland staff stated that they conducted a general update to funding costs on selected, high cost projects within the last four or five years. They are presently working on a scrub of the entire inventory, including incorporation of GIS, GPS information, field work, regrouping of problem areas, and updates of outstanding costs. They have run into difficulties, however, regarding the database program used to incorporate data and have been unable to proceed further with the scrub until internal decisions are made at the Departmental level. Expectations are that modifications to a Departmental FOXPRO database program will take approximately eight to twelve months. After this effort is completed, data entry will proceed and updated data files incorporated into AMLIS.

The inventory manual requires that updates occur to change problems from the “unfunded” category to “funded” no earlier than issuance by OSM of an authorization to proceed document and no later than execution of a contract. Maryland’s general policy is to wait until the contract execution to take this step. Also, Maryland uses the final inspection of a project site as the trigger for updating problems to the “completed” category.

Ranking and Selection – Chapters four and five of Maryland’s approved State Reclamation Plan contains procedures for ranking and selecting projects in the inventory based on priority. Maryland follows the procedures in the State Reclamation Plan. In addition, chapter five of the AML-1 Directive requires preparation and retention of “priority documentation forms”⁹ to document reasons problems were given priority one or two rankings, as well as to document the basis of reclamation cost estimates. Priority one problems are defined under section 403(a) of SMCRA as those requiring, “*the protection of public health, safety, general welfare, and property from extreme danger of adverse effects of coal mining practices.*” Priority two problems are those requiring “*the protection of public health, safety, and general welfare from adverse effects of coal mining practices.*” Further clarification of these definitions is provided in OSM’s Final Guidelines for Reclamation Programs and Projects¹⁰ and 30 CFR section 701.5. Presently there are eight types of

⁸ Directive AML-1

⁹ Formerly called “supplemental forms”

¹⁰ 45 FR 14810-14819, March 6, 1980

priority documentation forms which reflect the different types of priority 1 and 2 problems encountered. Originally, hard copies of the form were required to be retained by States, but this is no longer necessary as States now have the ability to add the priority documentation directly into AMLIS.¹¹ File review of the ten sample projects revealed evidence of one hard copy priority documentation form.¹² For the remaining projects there was no evidence of either electronic or hard copy priority documentation forms in the files. However, as part of their ongoing database update, Maryland does maintain a field documentation form which includes information required in the priority documentation forms necessary to establish priorities for all priority one and two problems.

Cost Estimates – Maryland uses a combination of the OSM guidelines, which were included in the 1984 Inventory Manual, along with historical data on past projects to estimate unfunded costs to reclaim problems when new PADS are entered into AMLIS. Upon switching problems from unfunded to funded, Maryland uses either the design costs, if the entry is made following completion of the design, or updates based on field visits, professional experience, and historical costs. When costs are switched from funded to completed, costs are updated based on actual invoices.

Accuracy:

Updates – OSM Directive AML-1 requires that updated Problem Area Description documents (PAD) be entered into the system in accordance with the funding phases shown in the table below.

PAD SUBMISSION GUIDE

<i>Planned Program</i>	<i>Unfunded</i>	<i>Funded</i>	<i>Completed</i>
Pre-SMCRA Coal (P1 & P2) State/Tribe AML Program - Includes work conducted under the Enhancing AML Reclamation@ rule, Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative, RAMP & FRP (non-Emergency)	X	X	X
Pre-SMCRA Coal (P3, P4, P5) State/Tribe AML Program- Includes P3 work conducted under the Enhancing AML Reclamation@ rule.		X	X
Pre-SMCRA Coal (Research)			X
State Program Emergencies - Federal Emergency projects are entered into FRPMS and information then transferred to the AML Inventory.			X
OSM=s Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program		X	X
Non-coal (P1, P2, P3) & 411(f)		X	X

¹¹ This option has been available since 1998 or prior.

¹² Glotfelty

<i>Acid Mine Drainage Plan, Coal Interim Site ^{*/}, & Coal Insolvent Surety Site ^{*/}</i>		X	X
Remining, Other (formerly Private & 10% Set aside)			X

Unfunded, funded, and completed projects in the Inventory are to be updated according to the following:

a. Unfunded.

- (1) When new problem areas are identified;
- (2) When new problems occur or are identified on existing problem areas;
- (3) When estimated costs are revised substantially;
- (4) When priority rankings change; and
- (5) When the request for an Authorization To Proceed (ATP) is submitted to OSM for a pre-SMCRA coal P1 & P2 keyword(s)¹³, including Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative projects. If the features included in the proposed project are not already in the system, they must be included in the unfunded columns of the appropriate priority prior to the request for an ATP. Projects are not considered funded until the ATP is approved.

b. Funded.:

- (1) No earlier than when OSM approves an ATP to reclaim keyword(s). The features and costs should be moved from unfunded to funded and costs updated to reflect the ATP;
- (2) No later than when a construction contract is signed to reclaim keyword hazard(s). The features and costs included in the contract should be moved from unfunded to funded and costs updated to reflect the construction contract. If the keyword hazard(s) and costs were moved from unfunded to funded after OSM approved an ATP, the costs do not have to be revised when a contract is signed. However, it is desirable to do so if there is a significant difference between the costs entered after the ATP is approved and the cost of the contract; and,
- (3) When the request for an ATP is approved by OSM or a contract is signed to perform the work for:
 - ! Pre-SMCRA coal P3, 4 & 5 sites;
 - ! non-coal;
 - ! SMCRA 411(f) sites;
 - ! acid mine drainage sites;
 - ! coal interim permit sites; and
 - ! coal insolvent sureties sites.

c. Completed:

¹³ The terms “keyword” and “problem” are both used in this document. In the past the term “problem” has been used in most cases. The team preparing this manual thought that there were actually many more types of problems than those used in the AML Inventory and that people in the field have fit these many types of problems into one of the keywords used in the AML Inventory.

(1) Upon project completion as required by 30 CFR 886.23. Reclaimed features and associated costs should be moved from funded to completed columns, and costs updated to reflect the construction costs;

(2) When construction is completed on projects within certain programs when that data has not been previously entered into the Inventory, (e.g., State Program Emergencies); and

(3) When the preparer becomes aware that the keywords have been abated through methods other than through SMCRA programs (private reclamation, remining, natural causes).

In order to assess the accuracy and timeliness of update entries, OSM tested whether costs and units had been shifted from unfunded to funded between the issuance of an ATP and execution of a contract, and the documentation and timeliness of shifting from funded to completed upon completion of a project.¹⁴ Results are shown in the table below.

PROJECT	FUNDED			COMPLETED		
	ATP APPROVED	CONTRACT SIGNED	ENTRY MADE ¹⁵	COMPLETION DATE	ENTRY MADE ¹⁶	DIFFERENCE (DAYS)
<i>Bartlett Hill Landslide¹⁶</i>	NA ¹⁷	?		9/19/91	1/13/93	481
<i>Fazenbaker¹⁸</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<i>Glotfelty</i>				9/16/99	3/2/00	167
<i>Maryland Allegany Features¹⁹</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<i>Oak Hill Landslide</i>	9/21/00	?	8/24/00	NA	NA	NA
<i>Railroad Street AML Remediation</i>	9/18/00	?	8/24/00	NA	NA	NA
<i>Shallmar AMLR</i>	1/27/89 ²⁰	5/8/02	6/20/00	8/14/03	9/23/03	40
<i>Spruce Hollow AML Project²¹</i>	2/18/98	6/28/02	6/19/00	4/8/03	9/23/03	168
<i>Washington Hollow AML Project²²</i>	NA ²³	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<i>Woodland Creek²⁴</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
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Three of the ten projects reviewed were emergencies and not evaluated as OSM makes AMLIS entries for emergencies, and then only upon completion. This process is through quarterly

¹⁴ BOM considers the final inspection date the date a project is completed.

¹⁵ From AMLIS Change History

¹⁶ Bartlett Hill did not have a record of entries prior to completion

¹⁷ ATP's were not in use at the time of approval of this project. It was approved under a 1989 grant action.

¹⁸ Fazenbaker is an emergency project and therefore entered into AMLIS by OSM rather than Maryland

¹⁹ Maryland Allegany Features is an emergency project and therefore entered into AMLIS by OSM rather than Maryland

²⁰ Grant amendment recommended for approval 1/27/89 (This preceded ATP documents)

²¹ Co-op w/NRCS

²² Co-op w/NRCS

²³ Presently unfunded

²⁴ Woodland Creek is an emergency project and therefore entered into AMLIS by OSM rather than Maryland

submission of completed emergency project data from the Pittsburgh Federal Reclamation Program Division to Headquarters. Two other projects were still in the unfunded stage and therefore not subject to evaluation.

Of the five projects which were subject to evaluation for transfer from unfunded to funded, timely entries had been made for two. Of the three which did not have timely entries, one, (Bartlett Hill Landslide) had no history of entries prior to completion of the project. The remaining two had entries made prior to the ATP (the earliest allowable date for transfer).

Four of the five projects subject to evaluation had reclamation activities completed. The average range of time for transferring from funded to completed for these projects was 40 to 481 days. This raises a concern regarding timely input in accordance with the above requirements. More importantly, entries made after September 30 of any given year are not likely to be included in the OSM annual report to Congress. Two of the four projects had entries made after the due date. . Mitigating factors in this issue may have been the considerable amount of time the AMLIS system was not available for input due to litigation, and problems with the original operating system. The system is now available through an internet web site.

Appropriations language for the last several years has stipulated that a State may set-aside 10% of their appropriations into an interest bearing account for future use in treating Acid Mine Drainage, and allows greater than 10% (up to \$1,000,000) for Maryland if all priority 1 problems have been completed. Maryland has formally declared that all known priority 1 problems have been completed. However, the AMLIS system showed four priority 1 problems in three problem areas²⁵ as unfunded costs. If correct, Maryland would need to immediately stop drawing set-aside funds in excess of the 10% limit and return any funds previously drawn. If incorrect, Maryland would need to update AMLIS to reflect that all priority 1 problems have been addressed. After informing Maryland staff of this discrepancy, these sites were reevaluated and determined to be priority two problems. AMLIS has since been updated to reflect this change.

Units and Costs - The accurate apportionment of costs among and within individual problems is difficult due to an inherent incompatibility between the way AMLIS records problem units and costs versus the way projects are designed and contracts bid. While bid designs, contracts, and invoices follow a standard method of breaking out costs by various activities (mobilization, clearing/grubbing, earth moving, revegetation, etc.), and costs (lump sum, unit cost per cubic yard of fill, etc.) within an individual problem, these do not correlate to AMLIS activities (linear feet of highwalls reclaimed, number of portals sealed, etc.) and unit costs (cost per linear feet of highwall eliminated, cost per portal closed). Interpolation from one system to the other is awkward, inconsistent, and often inaccurate.

Distribution of similar costs among multiple AMLIS problems creates further imprecision. Often, contract activities cover more than one AMLIS problem. For example, an AMLIS problem area may have two problems, dangerous highwall, and portals, to be reclaimed. The contract may correct both of these problems by one activity, moving x cubic yards of fill up against the highwall. States must apportion this cost among both problems, but there is no universal or standard guidance

²⁵ Wolfden Run (clogged streams and clogged stream lands), Eckhart Coal Waste AMLR (clogged streams), and Vindex (dangerous piles & embankments)

provided. Another example is mobilization costs. Mobilization is generally a single lump sum contract activity which is a part of all problems, but again there is no standard guidance on apportioning this cost.

Maryland has offered an informal suggestion that would assist in achieving more consistency in apportioning costs. Their suggestion would be to add another line entry to each AMLIS problem showing a percentage distribution for those costs which are either non-problem specific or those which are allocated among several different problems. This way, the distribution method would be documented for ease in determining how these costs were arrived at, and guidance could be provided by OSM to achieve greater consistency among States.

Documentation – Chapter 7 of the OSM inventory manual provides recommendations for estimating reclamation costs. As previously stated, Maryland generally uses the guidance provided by OSM in estimating unfunded reclamation costs, along with staff experience, field reviews, and actual costs for similar work. The IG audit found that the OSM guidance is outdated.²⁶ However, as stated in the inventory manual, these costs “*are not intended as accurate reclamation costs expressed in current value dollars. Whatever basis you use for developing Inventory cost guidelines should be documented under the “basis for your cost estimate” on the Priority Documentation Forms.*” Priority documentation forms (Exhibit 4) formerly called “supplemental forms”, are not required to be submitted to OSM as part of the NEPA process, but are required to be maintained by the State in either hard copy or electronic form. As stated earlier, only one of the files reviewed had copies of the priority documentation form on file and none had electronic entries. Therefore, where possible, OSM used the inventory manual guidance to ascertain the accuracy of cost estimates for unfunded costs, discussed the basis for funded costs with Maryland staff, and checked final invoices for verifying completed costs. Results are shown in the table on page 13. Only seven projects were reviewed for documentation of cost estimates. The other three were emergencies and are maintained in AMLIS by OSM.

Unfunded Costs - The lack of priority documentation forms to indicate the basis of cost estimates made review of unfunded estimates difficult. Of the seven projects reviewed for cost documentation, three never had entries made into the unfunded phase, and only two still included unfunded costs in AMLIS. Of these two, use of the inventory manual guidance was not possible for the Shallmar project since the Polluted Water category (PWAI) cost estimate requires information on flows, etc., which were not documented in the file. However, Maryland noted that their estimate for Shallmar unfunded costs was based on the cost of installing a similar doser treatment facility at another project and was thus likely more accurate than using the inventory manual. The other project with unfunded costs, Washington Hollow, had an estimate of \$300,000 for reclamation of .1 acres subsidence. Using guidelines, the minimum reclamation acreage is listed at .5 acres times \$50k per acre, which yields an estimate of only \$25,000. Maryland’s estimate was based on a consultant study on the extent of the problem. The study recommended grouting @ 140 c.y. per area for 4 areas, comprising approximately .1 acres. Costs were then derived by BOM

²⁶ Guidance provided in 1984 with updates for dangerous highwalls, subsidence, and underground mine fires in 1989/90.

based on calculations of grout needed and previous experience with grouting operations on a similar highway subsidence project.²⁷ Maryland feels this estimate is more accurate than using the inventory guidelines.

Funded Costs - Two of the three projects which included funded costs included some form of documentation of the basis for the costs. These tended to be plans and specifications, field engineer estimates, and maps. Due to the difficulties mentioned earlier regarding incompatibilities with units and activities used in contract specifications vs. those used in AMLIS, and the lack of documentation of a basis for calculations, costs in the funded category were not evaluated by problem type, but for the entire problem area. As shown in the table there were some discrepancies between the documentation and AMLIS entries for the two projects which included documentation on file. Maryland was unsure of the reason for the \$7340 discrepancy for the Oak Hill landslide project. The Natural Resources Conservation Service actually prepared the estimates for this project through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with BOM for this project. A preliminary estimate of costs provided by the NRCS dated 6/17/98, estimated reclamation costs of \$357,340, and suggested using \$400,000 for planning purposes. A 6/28/02, purchase order was for \$300,000. Maryland explained the \$74,359 discrepancy for the other project, Spruce Hollow, as the amount paid through the RAMP program for this project. If this is correct, these costs should be entered separately under the RAMP Program in AMLIS.

Completed Costs – Four of the sampled problem areas had completed costs. Three of the four had documentation in the form of final invoices or other documentation which supported the AMLIS entry.²⁸ The fourth, Spruce Hollow, showed an AMLIS entry \$74,359 more than the final invoice. Maryland staff explained that this was the cost for the RAMP portion of this project. However, AMLIS entries do not include other funding sources for this project. Also, RAMP costs should be entered as a separate PADS since they pertain to a separate program.

²⁷ MD-043-SGA State Route 936 Roadway Grouting @ \$355k

²⁸ Gotfelty difference \$382 attributed to rounding

PROJECT COST DOCUMENTATION

PROJECT NAME	PRIORITY DOCUMENTATION FORM PRESENT?	UNFUNDED				FUNDED			COMPLETED		
		PROBLEM	AMLIS ENTRY \$	GUIDANCE CALCULATIONS	DIFFERENCE	AMLIS ENTRY	DOCUMENTATION	DIFFERENCE	AMLIS ENTRY	INVOICE	DIFFERENCE
Bartlett Hill 29 Landslide	NO	DS	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$155,993	\$155,993	\$0
Fazenbaker 30	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Glotfelty 31 Allegany Features	YES	PWAI	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$82,000	\$81,618	\$382 ³²
Oak Hill Landslide	NO	CS, CSL, DS, WA	NA	NA	NA	\$350,000	\$357,340 (NRCS estimate)	\$7,340 (See narrative)	NA	NA	NA
Railroad Street AML 34	NO	CS, CSL, WA	NA	NA	NA	\$438,500	\$423,500 (BOM engineer estimate)	\$15,000 (See narrative)	NA	NA	NA
Shallmar AMLR	NO	DI, DPE, HEF, IRW, P, PWAI	\$100,000 ³⁵ (PWAI)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$1,202,523	\$1,202,523	\$0
Spruce Hollow 36	NO	DI, CS, CSL	NA	NA	NA	\$60,000 (DI)	None (Consultant estimate based on experience)	NA	\$321,130	\$246,771	\$74,359 ³⁷
Washington Hollow 38 Woodland Creek	NO	S	\$300,000	\$10,000	\$290,000 (See narrative)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
AVERAGE											

²⁹ Bartlett Hill did not have a record of entries prior to completion

³⁰ Fazenbaker is an emergency project and therefore entered into AMLIS by OSM rather than Maryland

³¹ Glotfelty did not have a record of entries prior to completion

³² Difference due to rounding

³³ Maryland Allegany Features is an emergency project and therefore entered into AMLIS by OSM rather than Maryland

³⁴ Railroad Street project did not have a record of unfunded entries

³⁵ This cost estimate was for a doser and based on the cost of installing the kempton air shaft doser (no documentation)

³⁶ Co-op w/NRCS

³⁷ This difference is the amount paid under RAMP portion

³⁸ Co-op w/NRCS

Program Assignments

The AMLIS system currently contains information for nineteen program areas.³⁹ These program areas are further divided into problem areas which contain reclamation features. The reclamation features, or problems, are monitored in three funding phases by units and costs of reclamation. Maryland has undertaken projects in seven of these programs. However, AMLIS data shows entries for only five of these program areas; Pre-SMCRA Coal (P1, P2, P3); Pre-SMCRA Coal (P3 only); Remining; Other, and RAMP. The other two programs, Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative and the Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program, have had projects completed which are either not in the inventory or are entered under a different program category.

A third program, the federal emergency program, is maintained in a separate tracking system⁴⁰ by OSM and added to AMLIS upon completion. Emergency projects are incorporated into the system by county. During the interview, Maryland expressed an interest in closer coordination with OSM on federal emergencies. Because projects are combined by county in the AMLIS system, Maryland is unable to monitor project-specific information for the state. Maryland would like to have more information such as final design plans and specifications, location coordinates, and other project-specific information. Much of the data is available on OSM's Federal Reclamation Project Management System (FRPMS), which is maintained by OSM's Federal Reclamation Program Division in the Pittsburgh Appalachian Region Coordinating Center. Division staff were contacted and agreed to share with Maryland any and all of this information, as well as file information on reclamation plans and specifications.

Individual programs were reviewed in conjunction with an excel spreadsheet provided by BOM which lists completed projects (exhibit 4) and The BOM Semi-Annual Report for the period April – October 2003. Results of the review are as follows:

Pre-SMCRA Coal Program (SGA) – This program, which includes Priority 1, 2, and 3 sites with coal removed prior to 1977, constitutes the bulk of Maryland AMLIS problem areas with 111 of the 157 total. In comparing the program assigned in AMLIS to the data contained in the aforementioned documents, several discrepancies were noted. All were either emergency program problem areas⁴¹ entered into AMLIS as Pre-SMCRA Coal Program (SGA) problem areas, or CLA/WCA problem areas shown in AMLIS as SGA problem areas only. Two of these SGA completed projects were also duplicated in AMLIS as emergency projects entered by OSM upon completion. These entries, as shown in the table below, amount to \$492,607 in duplicate costs. Part of this problem may be attributed to a lack of coordination between OSM and Maryland. OSM at one time had encouraged states to enter emergency data into AMLIS, but now OSM makes all emergency entries for states without approved emergency programs.

³⁹ Pre-SMCRA Coal (P1, P2, P3); Pre-SMCRA Coal (P3 only); Pre-SMCRA Coal (P4); Pre-SMCRA Coal (P5); Pre-SMCRA Coal (Research); State Emergencies; RAMP; Federal Reclamation Program non-emergency; Remining; Coal Interim site; Coal Insolvent Surety site; Acid Mine Drainage Plan; Other; Non-coal; Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative; Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program; Enhanced AML Rule projects; 10% set-aside

⁴⁰ Federal Reclamation Program Management System (FRPMS)

⁴¹ As shown on the BOM Completed Projects Spreadsheet, exhibit 1

PROJECT	COMPLETED EMERGENCY PROJECTS		
	cost under SGA ⁴²	cost under Emergency ⁴³	Duplicate Costs input
<i>Mayhew Landslide</i>	\$38,000	\$40,669.50	\$38,000
<i>Woodland Creek</i>	\$454,607.00	\$454,607.00	\$454,607.00
TOTALS	\$727,750.80	\$474,179.80	\$492,607.00

Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative (CLA)/ Watershed Co-op (WCA) Programs- There are no entries in the AMLIS CLA or WCA programs for Maryland. However, according to the semi-annual Report published by BOM, eleven projects (see table below) are funded either wholly or partially with CLA or WCA money. If the semi-annual report information is correct, these projects should have separate PAD entries in AMLIS under the appropriate WCA and/or CLA program.

PROJECT	SGA PROGRAM AMLIS ENTRY #	FUND SOURCE(S)⁴⁴
<i>Casselman River AMD Abatement Project</i>	MD-007-SGA	ACSI and WCA
<i>Coney Cleaners AMD Project</i>	MD-209-SGA	ACSI
<i>Crellin Bore Hole Project</i>	MD-210-SGA	ACSI
<i>Elklick II AMD Project</i>	MD-212-SGA	ACSI
<i>Elklick III AMD Project</i>	MD-213-SGA	ACSI and Small Creeks and Estuaries Grant
<i>Everhart SAPS System</i>	MD-215-SGA	ACSI, WCA, EPA
<i>Glofelty</i>	MD-208-SGA	ACSI
<i>McDonald Mine Doser Project</i>	MD-169-SGA	ACSI, WCA
<i>Mill Run Diversion Well</i>	MD-031-SGA	ACSI
<i>Neff Run AMD</i>	MD-171-SGA	ACSI
<i>Potomac Hill AMD Abatement Project</i>	MD-064-SGA	ACSI

Pre-SMCRA Coal (P3 only) (SGB) – Includes Problem areas which consist of priority 3 problems only. Maryland has two of these problem areas.

Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP) (RUA) – Maryland has 39 problem areas entered under the RAMP program. Many of these projects were added to AMLIS in 1992 and 1993 at approximately the same time when the NRCS sent completed PADS through BOM to OSM for entry into the AMLIS system. There have been no active RAMP program entries in recent years.

Other (PVA) – This program includes those problem areas with funding sources other than the AML program. There are four AMLIS entries for these programs. They were funded by State dollars⁴⁵.

⁴² Source - AMLIS

⁴³ Source AMLIS system – MD ALLEGANY FEA Problem Area (Costs may differ from AMLIS SGA entry due to inclusion of Admin costs in FRPMS)

⁴⁴ Per BOM semi-annual report

⁴⁵ Bituminous Coal Mine Reclamation Fund and Deep Mine Fund

Field Review

Field review was conducted of six of the ten sites⁴⁶ in order to confirm that AMLIS accurately reflected field conditions. In all cases field conditions were found to be accurate and current as found in the AMLIS system. The following chart and individual problem summaries encapsulate the field review and individual problem area findings:

PROJECT	PROBLEM	CONFIRMED?	PRIORITY	CONFIRMED?	FUNDING STATUS	CONFIRMED?	UNITS	CONFIRMED?
Bartlett Hill Landslide	Dangerous slide	Y	1	Y	Completed	Y	4 acres	Y
Oak Hill Landslide	Clogged Stream	Y	2	Y	Funded	Y	.1 acres	Y
	Clogged Stream Land	Y	2	Y	Funded	Y	.5 acres	Y
	Dangerous Slide	Y	2	Y	Funded	Y	1.5 acres	Y
	Water Problems	Y	3	Y	Funded	Y	25 gpm	Y
Railroad street aml Remediation	Clogged Stream	Y	2	Y	Funded	Y	.4 acres	Y
	Clogged Stream Lands	Y	2	Y	Funded	Y	2.0 acres	Y
	Water Problems	Y	3	Y	Funded	Y	35 gpm	Y
Shallmar AMLR	Dangerous Impoundment	Y	2	Y	Completed	Y	1 acre	Y
	Dangerous Pile/Embankment	Y	2	Y	Completed	Y	21.5 acres	Y
	Hazardous Equipment	Y	2	Y	Completed	Y	1 count	Y
	Industrial/Residential Waste	Y	2	Y	Completed	Y	1 acre	Y
	Portal	Y	2	Y	Completed	Y	3 count	Y
	Polluted Water Agricultural/Industrial	Y	2	Y	Unfunded	Y	? count	?
	Polluted Water Agricultural/Industrial	Y	2	Y	Completed	Y	? count	?
	Bench	Y	3	Y	Complete	Y	2.5 acres	Y
	Highwall	Y	3	Y	Unfunded	Y	1200 ft.	Y
	Highwall	Y	3	Y	Completed	Y	800 ft.	Y
	Mine Openings	Y	3	Y	Unfunded	Y	1	Y
Spruce Hollow	Dangerous Impoundment	Y	1	Y	Completed	Y	1	Y
	Clogged Streams	Y	2	Y	Completed	Y	.2 acres	Y
	Clogged Stream Lands	Y	2	Y	Completed	Y	1 acre	Y
	Dangerous Impoundment	Y	2	Y	Funded	Y	1 acre	Y
	Dangerous Impoundment	Y	2	Y	Completed	Y	1 acre	Y
Washington Hollow	Subsidence	Y	2	Y	Unfunded	Y	.1 acre	Y

⁴⁶ Four of the sites were not visited because one had been visited earlier and three were emergencies.

Bartlett Hill Landslide



Before

After

The Bartlett Hill Landslide was a priority one problem area consisting of a dangerous slide encroaching on an occupied dwelling. Four acres of slide area were reclaimed⁴⁷ including installation of subdrains, ditches, and a gabion retaining wall at a completed cost of \$155,993.

⁴⁷ Engineer's estimate of five acres included support areas per BOM engineer

Oak Hill Landslide



The Oak Hill Landslide problem area is an ongoing reclamation project which includes priority 2 clogged streams, clogged stream lands and dangerous slide problems, as well as priority 3 water problems. The toe of the slide was partially blocking a perennial stream. Reclamation was originally undertaken by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with BOM. The reclamation proved unsuccessful due to additional unanticipated saturation zones deeper in the fill and the design was modified to include removal of slide material from the site to alleviate weight on the upper portion of the slide. In addition, acid mine drainage (AMD) is being routed through a four-cell successive alkaline producing system (SAPS). The SAPS is designed for treatment of 80 gallons per minute (gpm) flow, but is currently treating approximately 25 gpm, with plans to direct additional AMD through the system. This project is funded for \$350,000.

Railroad Street AML Remediation



The Railroad Street AML remediation project includes a priority 2 clogged stream and clogged stream land problems, as well as priority 3 water problems. AMD from old deep mines flows along a bench, then down a steep embankment before crossing through a culvert under a public road. The culvert periodically fills with coal mine waste sediment, causing flooding of the road. Plans call for diversion ditches, sub-drains, and a SAPS system, with estimated costs totaling \$438,500. The engineer's estimate on file indicates costs of \$423,500. Maryland staff feels that the additional \$12,600 may be for the design costs. If this is correct, these costs should be removed from AMLIS as AMLIS should only include construction costs.

Shallmar AMLR



Before



After

The Shallmar AMLR problem area has reclaimed features including a priority 2 dangerous impoundment, 21.5 acres of dangerous piles/embankments, 1 hazardous equipment area, Industrial Residential waste, and 2.5 acres of priority 3 bench. Remaining problems include installation of a doser to treat a priority 2 polluted water/agricultural industrial (PWA) problem, reclamation of 1200 feet of priority three highwall and one mine opening. Total expenditures thus far are \$1.2 million with an estimated \$260,000 remaining in unfunded costs.

Spruce Hollow AML Project



Before



Before



After

The Spruce Hollow AML Project included removal of a priority 1 dangerous impoundment, and reclamation of priority 2 clogged streams and clogged stream lands, which have been completed, and a priority 2 dangerous impoundment feature which has been funded but not addressed. The priority 1 dangerous impoundment was threatening 23 homes and residents downstream. A 600 foot section of clogged stream and an acre of clogged stream lands were reclaimed. In addition, a pond was installed as a wetlands remediation measure. Another \$60,000 in funded costs remains to address remediation of flooding downstream attributed to removal of the dangerous impoundment.

Washington Hollow



The Washington Hollow Project is an unfunded priority 2 subsidence. Cost estimates of \$300,000 for .1 acres of subsidence in 4 areas along a 450 foot section of public road are based on an engineer's survey of the amount of grout required for each of the four areas, plus experience with previous grouting jobs. The cover from the coal seam to the surface varies from 0 to 45 feet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommend Maryland adopt a formal certification system to assure accuracy of information in AMLIS to resolve Interior Inspector General audit finding.
2. Recommend that Maryland assure problem areas are entered into AMLIS under the correct AMLIS Program in accordance with OSM Directive AML-1.
3. Recommend that Maryland assure that priority documentation form records are maintained for each problem in accordance with OSM Directive AML-1.
4. Recommend that Maryland use separate program PADS for multi-program funded projects in accordance with OSM Directive AML-1.
5. Recommend that Maryland assure that non-OSM program funding sources are recorded separately in accordance with OSM Directive AML-1.
6. Recommend Maryland assure problem areas are not duplicated among programs in accordance with OSM Directive AML-1.
7. Recommend Maryland assure that updates are entered in a timely manner in accordance with OSM Directive AML-1.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1 - Inspector General Audit Report

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Office of Inspector General
AUDIT REPORT
Inventory System and Performance Results of the
Abandoned Mine Land Program,
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and
Enforcement**

Report No. 2003-I-0074 September 2003
United States Department of the Interior

Office of Inspector General

Eastern Region Audits
381 Elden Street
Suite 1100
Herndon, Virginia 20170

September 30, 2003

Memorandum

To: Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
From: William J. Dolan, Jr.
Regional Audit Manager, Eastern Region
Subject: Final Audit Report on the Inventory System and Performance Results of the Abandoned Mine Land Program, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (Report No. 2003-I-0074)

This report presents the results of our audit of the Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System (AMLIS) and the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Program performance reporting of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM).

The OSM utilizes AMLIS, which is a computer database compilation of abandoned mine sites in the United States, to perform reclamation activities through AML. We found that AMLIS contained inaccurate data that compromised its ability to identify the highest priority sites for funding, forecast future reclamation needs, and measure performance under AML program goals. The OSM needs to establish a quality control system that ensures the accuracy of data entered into AMLIS, update and periodically adjust the estimated costs of reclamation, and establish procedures to verify the validity of reported performance for acid mine drainage projects.

In the September 26, 2003, response to our draft report, the Director of OSM concurred with the report's three recommendations. We consider Recommendations 1 and 3 resolved and implemented and Recommendation 2 resolved but not implemented. Accordingly, we are referring Recommendation 2 to the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget for tracking of implementation.

The legislation, as amended, creating the Office of Inspector General, (5 U.S.C. App 3) requires semiannual reporting to Congress on all audit reports issued, actions taken to implement audit recommendations, and recommendations that have not been implemented. Therefore, this report will be included in our next semiannual report.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please call me at (703) 487-8011.

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Introduction

The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) established the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) to regulate coal mining operations and to reclaim lands and waters degraded and abandoned before the Act was passed. OSM performs reclamation activities through its Abandoned Mine Land Program (AML), which is funded from fees paid by coal operators to the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund (AML Fund).¹ State and Indian tribal governments perform nearly all of the reclamation work through grants from the AML Fund that totaled about \$198 million in fiscal year (FY) 2001. Also in FY 2001, OSM administered the federal reclamation program that received about \$18 million from the AML Fund for emergency reclamation activities not covered by state and Indian tribal programs.

SMCRA set priorities for using monies from the AML Fund, as follows: (1) the protection of public health, safety, general welfare, and property from extreme danger of adverse effects of coal mining practices; (2) the protection of public health, safety, and general welfare from adverse effects of mining practices; (3) the restoration of land and water resources and the environment previously degraded by adverse effects of mining practices; (4) the protection, repair, replacement, construction, or enhancement of public facilities; and, (5) the development of publicly owned land adversely affected by coal mining practices.

SMCRA also required the Secretary of the Interior to maintain an inventory of degraded sites meeting priorities 1 and 2 (high priority projects) and to provide standard procedures for states and Indian tribes to keep the inventory current. This requirement led OSM to create the Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System (AMLIS), which is a computer database compilation of abandoned mine sites in the United States. AMLIS contains data on unfunded high priority coal reclamation sites, funded projects, and completed projects listed by problem type.² It is the primary source of

¹ Coal mine operators pay fees of 35 cents per ton for surface mined coal, 15 cents per ton for coal mined underground, and 10 cents per ton for lignite. OSM deposits the fees into the AML Fund. Expenditures from the Fund may only be made through appropriations and are used to pay the costs of abandoned mine land reclamation projects and transfers to the United Mine Workers of America Combined Benefit Fund.

² A problem type is an adverse condition, such as a clogged stream, waste pile, landslide, subsidence, or an underground mine fire.

Inventory of

Abandoned Mine Land Background

information on the number of sites and amounts of funds used for reclamation work completed and for sites remaining to be reclaimed. The information in AMLIS is developed and updated by the individual states or Tribes, or OSM, as applicable.

At the end of FY 2001, AMLIS reported that reclamation projects costing \$1.5 billion had been completed and that it would cost \$8.5 billion to reclaim the remaining abandoned mine sites. Of the \$8.5 billion, priority 1 sites totaled approximately \$200 million, priority 2 sites totaled about \$6.5 billion and priority 3 sites totaled about \$1.8 billion. Funded but incomplete projects comprised the remaining \$241 million.

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) requires federal departments to prepare annual performance reports comparing planned, measurable goals with actual performance results. Congress was concerned that “Federal managers are seriously disadvantaged in their efforts to improve program efficiency and effectiveness, because of insufficient articulation of program goals and inadequate information on program performance.” The purpose of GPRA was to “help Federal managers improve service delivery, by requiring that they plan for meeting program objectives and by providing them with information about program results and service quality.” In accordance with GPRA, OSM established two AML performance goals based on the following performance measures:

1. Acres Reclaimed. AML sets annual target goals based on specific amounts of acreage to be reclaimed, “GPRA acres.” OSM computes GPRA acres using standard conversion factors for each problem type. For FY 2001, OSM planned to reclaim 8,600 GPRA acres and reported that 13,808 acres were reclaimed.

2. Number of New Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) Projects. In 1995, OSM started the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative (ACSI). The intent of the initiative was to facilitate the partnership efforts of citizen groups; university researchers; the coal industry; corporations; the environmental community; and local, state, and federal government agencies in eliminating the environmental and economic impact of streams polluted by acid mine drainage. In FY 2001, OSM planned to fund 35 new cooperative AMD projects under ACSI and reported that 37 projects were initiated.

GPRA Goals

Related to the AML Program

Our objective was to determine whether OSM: (1) maintained complete and accurate information in AMLIS to permit effective management of and reporting on AML activities, and (2) established adequate performance measures and goals, and data verification procedures to accurately report on AML performance results. Our audit was conducted at OSM headquarters in Washington, D.C.; Regional Offices in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Denver, Colorado; and five field offices.

As part of our audit, we evaluated OSM's system of internal controls related to the data in AMLIS and the information reported to Congress in its "Fiscal Year 2001 Performance Report."

We conducted our audit in accordance with the "Government Auditing Standards," issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Accordingly, we included such tests of records and other auditing procedures that were considered necessary under the circumstances.

Objective and Scope

Results of Audit

We found that AMLIS contained inaccurate data. This diminishes its usefulness for identifying the highest priority sites³ for funding, forecasting future reclamation needs, and measuring performance under AML program goals. Accurate information for decision-making is particularly important at this time because OSM's authorization for collecting reclamation fees under SMCRA is due to end on September 30, 2004, creating an imminent need for legislative and programmatic change. Our audit also determined that OSM lacked effective procedures for verifying the validity of reported performance under the goal for AMD.

Our testing of the accuracy of costs and measurement data⁴ in AMLIS disclosed that approximately 23 percent of the data listed for completed projects and 22 percent for unreclaimed sites were incorrect or not supported by adequate documentation. We attribute these high error rates to the lack of adequate procedures for ensuring that data were accurately entered into AMLIS. In addition, we found that OSM does not perform a periodic adjustment of the estimated costs for unreclaimed sites to reflect price changes. As a result, the reliability of total AMLIS estimated cost of \$8.5 billion for unreclaimed sites is questionable.

To determine whether the inventory of AML sites was complete and accurate, we reviewed sites listed for the States of Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, because they accounted for 78 percent, or \$6.7 billion of the \$8.5 billion, of the estimated costs listed for unreclaimed sites in AMLIS. We statistically sampled 48 of the 8,925 line items listed for completed projects and 54 of the 8,529 line items listed for unreclaimed sites for these states. We restricted our review to errors impacting the two most significant attributes of the inventory, the measurement data (units) listed and the actual or estimated cost listed, as appropriate. Detailed information on our sampling methodology and results is in Appendix 1.

³ Although AMLIS records data by problem areas, we refer to them as either unreclaimed sites or completed projects in the report.

⁴ Measurement data (units) are acres, miles, feet, counts, or gallons per minute depending on the problem type. For example: acres of dangerous embankments, miles of clogged stream, feet of dangerous highwall, counts (two) of mine openings, and gallons per minute of water problems.

AMLIS Not Accurate

We found errors in the unit and cost data recorded in AMLIS for 11⁵ of the 48 sampled completed projects, resulting in a total projected error rate of 22.92 percent. Specifically, we found that:

- Measurement data (units) for 10 of the 48 completed projects reviewed were not in agreement with supporting documentation. For example, AMLIS reported for one project that 30 acres of spoil area had been reclaimed, but the supporting documentation showed that only 12 acres were reclaimed for the project. The error rate for these 48 projects was projected to be 20.83 percent.
- Reported costs for 10 of the 48 projects reviewed were either not supported by appropriate documentation or were not in agreement with the documentation provided. For example, for one project AMLIS reported \$66,671 for a dangerous impoundment and the supporting documentation instead showed \$37,950 for a dangerous slide. There was no supporting documentation for the dangerous impoundment that was reported in AMLIS. In another example, a project was incorrectly recorded in AMLIS as \$805,456 for a surface burning reclamation project, when it should have been listed as \$580,359 for cleaning up a bad water supply. The error rate for these 48 projects was projected to be 20.83 percent.

We found 6 errors in the unit data and 12 errors in the cost data recorded in AMLIS for 12⁶ of the 54 sampled unreclaimed sites, resulting in a total projected error rate of 22.2 percent.

Specifically, we found that:

- Measurement data (units) for 6 of the 54 sites reviewed were either not supported by appropriate documentation or were not in agreement with the documentation provided. For example, AMLIS reported that four portals needed to be reclaimed at one site, and the supporting documentation reported two portals. The error rate for these 54 sites was projected to be 11.1 percent.

⁵ 9 of the 11 projects contained errors in both recorded units and costs and were, therefore, included in each of the categories above.

⁶ 6 of the 12 unreclaimed sites contained errors in both recorded units and costs and were, therefore, included in each of the categories above.

Completed Projects Unreclaimed Sites

- Reported costs for 12 of the 54 sites reviewed were either not supported by appropriate documentation or were not in agreement with the documentation provided. For example, for one site AMLIS reported an estimated cost to reclaim of \$72,178,523, however the supporting documentation showed an estimated cost of \$52,762,500. The error rate for these 54 sites was projected to be 22.2 percent.

We also found that the estimated costs listed for unreclaimed sites are not periodically updated to reflect current conditions. OSM Directive AML-1 requires that OSM update the unreclaimed site inventory under specific circumstances, such as when new problems are identified, priority rankings change, or when estimated costs are revised “substantially.” In our opinion, OSM should require that cost estimates recorded in AMLIS be updated periodically to facilitate effective decision-making.

We recognize that it is not practical to re-estimate the costs of reclaiming sites on an individual basis because the inventory contains information on approximately 9,000 unreclaimed sites. However, we believe a viable method could be developed, based on the average actual costs to reclaim each site. For example, an average reclamation cost per acre could be determined from the actual reclamation costs of recently completed projects and applied to the sites listed in AMLIS. Once cost estimates have been initially updated, either the average cost per acre method or an appropriate price index, such as one based on percentage increases or decreases in construction costs, could then be applied periodically to keep the estimates current.

Improvements are needed in GPRA reporting on the number of acres reclaimed and AMD projects started. Specifically, OSM did not have adequate procedures for validating and verifying the information reported in AMLIS for unreclaimed sites, completed projects, and for the performance reported under the AMD goal.

The annual performance of the AML environmental restoration program is reported based on the number of GPRA acres shown as reclaimed in AMLIS and, therefore, any errors intrinsic to AMLIS are reflected in reported results. As previously discussed, our statistical review of AMLIS disclosed an average error rate of approximately 23 percent regarding completed projects.

Consequently, because GPRA acres are based on the data recorded in AMLIS, performance results could be significantly misstated.

**Update of Cost
Estimates for
Unreclaimed Sites
AML Acres
Reclaimed
GPRA Reporting**

Implementation of our recommended actions for ensuring the accuracy of AMLIS data should correct the misstatements and serve as the verification and validation process for reported results. We found that OSM did not have a method in place to verify and validate the data supporting the number of new AMD projects funded under the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative. In FY 2001, OSM's goal was to provide funding for 35 new AMD projects, and it reported that 37 projects were actually provided funding during the fiscal year. However, we found that OSM had not established clear criteria to identify: (1) the actual date of a new project or (2) the type of documentation needed by OSM to ensure the validity of the newly funded projects reported. As a result, we found that states were identifying newly funded projects with varying criteria, such as authorization to proceed dates and actual project start dates. We also found that OSM frequently misinterpreted and erroneously reported information because they did not require clear and consistent documentation. We reviewed the documentation regarding the 37 new projects reported by OSM for FY 2001 and found support for only 25 new projects. As a result, instead of exceeding its target goal by two projects, OSM was actually 10 projects short of achieving its targeted performance. For example, OSM reported seven new projects for Ohio. During the audit, a State of Ohio Department of Natural Resources representative informed us that there were only three new ACSI projects during FY 2001. During our audit, OSM developed a definition for "new" projects and distributed it to the states and OSM field offices. OSM is also in the process of developing criteria to establish clearly defined procedures for identifying, documenting, and verifying the validity of new projects for the year.

Number of AMD Projects

In our report, “Special Report to the Chairman, Committee on Governmental Affairs United States Senate, Review of the Fiscal Year 1999 Performance Reports and Fiscal Year 2001 Performance Plans for the U.S. Department of the Interior” (No. 00-I-533) in June 2001, we suggested that OSM could improve its fiscal year 2001 GPRA goals reporting by (a) providing sufficient information to fully explain the goals and their significance, (b) describing the total program areas for which measures have been established, and (c) adding goals and measures that address the highest priority coal projects.

We found that during fiscal year 2001, OSM had the goal to reclaim 8,600 acres and reported reclaiming 13,808 acres. This goal and its measure did not provide information on the accomplishments by priority or type of project. The other GPRA goal for fiscal year 2001 was to fund 35 new AMD projects under the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative. OSM reported funding 37 new projects. This goal and its measure did not provide useful information on the results of the funding.

During fiscal year 2002, OSM identified three new GPRA goals and set measures that are more detailed and outcome-oriented for fiscal year 2004. For example, one new goal is to eliminate health and safety hazards related to past mining and its measures are the number of hazards eliminated by type, actual units, and the number of people no longer at risk for these hazards. OSM has established individual measurement goals for each type of hazard for fiscal year 2004. Also, the goal aims to reduce the safety risks related to past mining for 10,000 people. The other new GPRA goals are to improve mine-scarred land and water resources and to improve the use of financial resources dedicated to protecting the public from the adverse effects of past mining.

GPRA Goals and Measures

Recommendations

We recommend that the Director, OSM:

1. Establish a quality control system that ensures that states, Tribes, and OSM, as applicable, review and certify the accuracy of data entered into AMLIS.
2. Update the estimated costs of reclaiming sites not yet reclaimed and continue to adjust the costs on a periodic basis.
3. Establish procedures to verify the accuracy of the number of funded AMD projects reported under ACSI.

Director, Office of Surface Mining Response and Office of Inspector General Reply

In the September 26, 2003, response (Appendix 2) to the draft report, OSM concurred with the three recommendations. Recommendations 1 and 3 are considered resolved and implemented and Recommendation 2 resolved but not implemented (Appendix 3). The response indicated that Recommendation 2 will be implemented by the end of fiscal year 2004.

Appendix 1
Page 1 of 2

SAMPLING METHOD AND PROJECTED RESULTS

The purpose of our testing was to assess the reliability of the data contained in AMLIS for decision-making and reporting. Because the most significant information for effective decision-making

and reporting involved the number of acres reclaimed each year by the AML program and the estimated costs to reclaim the remaining acres, we focused our review on errors that would impact the accuracy of these attributes. We performed a statistical review of random attribute samples selected from the total population of lines of data (input) for completed projects and unreclaimed sites in the following four states: Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. These four states represent 78 percent of the total estimated cost to reclaim high priority AML acres. The sampling method gave every line (generally problem type) in the population the same chance of selection and was designed to measure the rate of occurrence on

the attributes of interest, which were reported costs and measurement data (units). The samples were not designed to estimate the population values or their differences from the recorded values.

Completed Projects

We randomly selected 60 completed projects for review. However, we were unable to review the documentation for 12 of the sampled projects because 5 were USDA RAMP (Rural Area Mine Program) projects not within the scope of our review and 7 of the projects were archived and supporting documentation was not available. Exclusion of these 12 sample items resulted in a revised sample size of 48. The sample was drawn from lines of data in the AMLIS database. For the selected states, there were 8,925 lines of data with 4,053 project numbers.

⁷Nine of the 11 completed projects contained errors in both reported costs and measurement data and were, therefore, included in each of the categories above.

Error Rate
Sample Size
Number of Errors
Overall Error Rate
Lower Limit
Upper Limit
Confidence Level
Completed Projects 48
Reported Costs 10 20.83% 10.5% 34.95% 95%
Measurement Data 10 20.83% 10.5% 34.95% 95%
Items in more than one category⁷ (9)
Items with errors 11 22.92% 12.06% 37.26% 95%

Appendix 1

Page 2 of 2

Unreclaimed Sites

We randomly selected 60 sample items for review in this area. However, six sample items were USDA RAMP sites. Exclusion of these 6 items resulted in a revised sample size of 54. RAMP sites account for 709 of 8,529 lines of data and 391 of 5,219 problem areas for the selected states.

Sample Results

The overall error rate is the rate of occurrence of the problem in the sample. If we had reviewed the entire population, we are 95 percent confident that the actual error rate would fall between the lower limit and the upper limit. For example, in our sample of 54 unreclaimed sites, we found 12 with errors – a rate of 22.22 percent. Based on our sample, we are 95 percent confident that if we had tested all of the sites in AMLIS, the error rate would be between 12.08 percent and 35.53 percent.

For reported costs, an error occurs when the costs reported in AMLIS are not supported by appropriate documentation or are not in agreement with the documentation provided. For measurement data, an error occurs when data reported in AMLIS are not supported by appropriate documentation or are not in agreement with the documentation provided. Six of the 12 unreclaimed sites contained errors in both reported costs and measurement data and were, therefore, included in each of the categories above.

Error Rate
Sample Size
Number of Errors
Overall Error Rate
Lower Limit
Upper Limit
Confidence Level
Unreclaimed Sites 54

Reported Costs 12 22.22% 12.08% 35.53% 95%
Measurement Data 6 11.11% 4.22% 22.57% 95%
Items in more than one
category⁹ (6)
Items with errors 12 22.22% 12.08% 35.53% 95%

Status of Audit Recommendations

Recommendation Status Action Required

1 and 3 Resolved and
implemented.

No further response to the Office of Inspector General
is necessary.

2 Resolved; not
implemented

No further response to the Office of Inspector General
is necessary. The recommendation will be referred to
the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and
Budget for tracking of implementation.

⁸The unreclaimed sites included unfunded problem areas only. Funded projects were excluded because they were only 28 percent of the costs to be reclaimed and were in varying stages of completion.

⁹Six of the 12 unreclaimed sites contained errors in both reported costs and measurement data and were, therefore, included in each of the categories above.

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Exhibit 2 – AMLIS Interview Form

AMLIS INTERVIEW

12/10/03

1. Are new PA's being added to the AMLIS system? (How frequently?)

2. Are existing PA's updated in accordance with AML inventory manual, chapter 1, item #5 for unfunded PA's? Funded? Completed? (i.e.; at what point are new PA's and revisions entered and how current is information)

3. Does Maryland have any non-coal problems entered in AMLIS? ACSI problems? Interim Program problems? Insolvent surety? RAMP? 411(f) (public facilities)? Watershed Co-ops? Who is responsible for input?

4. If any RAMP problems are in the inventory, describe the coordination process w/NRCS.

5. Are chapters 4 and 5 of the Maryland State Reclamation Plan relating to the inventory and ranking and selection procedures still applicable and being followed?

6. Is the AML enhancement (ENN) program used in AMLIS? The Watershed Program (WCA)?

7. Is the Priority document form used for establishing priority rating (P1, P2, etc.)

8. What is used as a basis for making cost estimates for unfunded problems?

9. Are comparisons made of unfunded estimates with completed costs to revise the basis for costs?

Exhibit 3 - Priority Documentation Form

Priority Documentation Form

CS, CSL, DI

Page 1 of 2

CS--CLOGGED STREAM, CSL--CLOGGED STREAM LAND, DI--DANGEROUS IMPOUNDMENT

PAD NO.:	DATE:	KEYWORD:	PRIORITY:
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I.	Health, Safety and General Welfare Information	Yes	No
1.	Is there any occupied structure, improved property, road, or public facility located within the flood water path limit that would be subjected to destruction or flood water damage in the event of local stream flooding, or water retention structure failure?		
2.	Was there any previous record of flooding in the problem area caused by a stream bed being filled with AML-related sediments (thus losing storm water carrying capacity) where the cause of the flooding problem has not been corrected? <i>Note: Both keyword CS and CSL can be considered as the cause of the flooding problem.</i>		
3.	Is there a high probability of occurrence of flooding caused by either an AML-related sediment-filled stream bed, or significant erosion carried downstream by surface water runoff from the unreclaimed AML area, or by a deteriorated AML-related water retention structure currently impounding a large quantity body of water located upstream?		
4.	Is there potential danger of flooding caused by an AML-related sediment-filled stream bed, or significant erosion carried downstream by surface water runoff from the unreclaimed AML area, or by a deteriorated AML-related water retention structure currently impounding a large quantity body of water located upstream?		
5.	Is there any water impounding structure that has been breached, vacating the main body of impounded water, and where the water retention capacity of the structure is now being restored gradually by natural clogging and damming action?		
6.	Does the problem meet the General Welfare criteria outlined in Chapter 6 of the AML Inventory Manual for: a. Immediate Vicinity of a Residential Area? b. Adverse Economic Impact on the Local Community?		

Positive answers to Question 1 and Question 2 or 3 indicate the problem can qualify to meet Priority 1 criteria with the adequate justification included in the narrative description.

Positive answers to Question 1 and Question 4 or 5 indicate the problem can qualify to meet Priority 2 criteria with the adequate justification included in the narrative description.

A positive answer to Question 6 indicates the problem can qualify to meet Priority 2 criteria with the adequate justification included in the narrative description.

PAD NO.:	DATE:	KEYWORD:	PRIORITY:
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II. RECLAMATION PROBLEM DESCRIPTION (Evidence of Extreme Danger and Health, Safety, and General Warfare Problems):

7. Narrative description of Priority 1 (Extreme Danger) problems:

8. Narrative description of Priority 2 (HS&GW) problems:

III. Basis for Your Cost Estimate(s):

