

for minerals and fuels is a mining process in which the surface of the land is removed to permit the taking of the natural resource product. This process, because of its lower cost operation and the recovery of greater quantities of minerals, provides an economical base for the marketing of the product whether it be coal or other material. In many cases, surface mining, or strip mining as it is also known, provides the only way in which large deposits of valuable materials can be obtained. In the operation of this process, there is necessarily a disturbance of the land surface. The coal industry has been often accused of being a poor neighbor for not rehabilitating this disturbed surface. For almost 50 years, however, the industry has been pursuing a voluntary program of reclamation of mined lands. Early in 1900, a request for tree seedlings was made to the Ohio Department of Forestry by a strip mine operator, but it was not until 1918 that we have any substantive evidence of this program. Then an Indiana operator planted an area in fruit trees, some of which are continuing to bear today. In 1920, in Illinois, the use of mined lands for timber production was instituted. In 1928, the Indiana strip operators organized into a group which, for the first time sponsored a program of statewide planting of lands. This effort has continued and has been so successful that today practically every responsible operator in the 22 States where surface mining is conducted is engaged in a program of land reclamation. Many of these lands are converted into recreational areas, homesites, shopping centers, and agricultural and grazing lands, in addition to the many acres which are devoted to timber protection and wildlife and bird propagation and protection. One of the major contributions which the industry's reclamation effort is making is providing water impoundments, ponds, and lakes which contribute to the source of waters for all purposes of the community.

As evidence of the industry's sincerity in the land reclamation effort, in 1962 the responsible members of the industry joined together into a voluntary organization for the purpose of encouraging, promoting, and developing the program of reclamation of mined lands. This organization—the Mined Land Conservation Conference—(an affiliate of the National Coal Association) has done much to improve the land reclamation program and provide new knowledge and practices to aid in more effective and economical methods of reclaiming mined lands. A major assist in this field is given by the MLCC Technical Committee made up of experts in all of the scientific and technical fields that are in any way connected with the adaptation of mined lands for purposes of community and economical uses. This committee serves not only the individual and group members of the MLCC but is also available without cost to all types of governmental agencies, including this committee, for such advisory or consulting services as may be helpful. In its effort to further the cause of land reclamation and utilization, the conference has instituted a voluntary industry program of surface mine conservation. The principal tenets of this code include the following:

- Dispose of all refuse in a manner that will prevent stream pollution.

- Prevent acid drainage both during and after the mining operation.