

Our work demonstrated that this subject refuses to stay put in any one category. To some of our field inspection team members, surface mining was chiefly a problem of the unsightly mess that may result.

Others saw it as a problem of sediment and chemical pollution in streams and rivers. Still others were concerned with the resulting loss of wildlife habitat. Use of the land after mining was of prime concern to all.

Should it, for example, be used for recreation, agriculture, forestry, or industrial development? We saw some examples in the pictures a moment ago.

So it is that various people see surface mining as a conservation problem, as an economic problem, as an engineering problem, an environmental problem, a land use problem, or a public relations problem. There is one thing in common. They all see it as a problem.

A review of our study can serve to put surface mining into perspective. For example:

1. Every State has had some surface mining activity within its boundaries.

2. Only 14 States have laws relating specifically to the conduct of surface mining operations and the reclamation of surface mined areas, and five of these direct their attention only to coal mining. I think that is a very crucial point, Mr. Chairman, that only a few of the States do regulate it at this time.

I might say in passing that some of the more recent laws show real promise and have been effective. I went down to Kentucky 2 months ago to present my own Department's Conservation Service Award to former Gov. Ned Breathitt who pioneered the strong strip mining law that was passed in that State in 1966.

The interesting thing that came out while I was down there is that, while some of the industry people had violently opposed this law, saying that it was going to put them out of business, nevertheless under the operation of that law last year as I recall it there were 12,000 new acres of land that were stripped. There were 14,000 acres that were restored and reclaimed under the provisions of the new law, which shows that we can pass effective laws that are workable.

3. By January 1, 1965, surface mining had affected more than 3.2 million acres of land.

4. Despite all reclamation efforts by man and nature, and after the lapse of considerable time, about 2 million acres still need additional reclamation work—this is 3,125 square miles, or an area equal to the combined land area of the States of Delaware and Rhode Island.

5. In 1964 surface mining was biting off an estimated 153,000 acres annually. Only about one-third of the land disturbed that year was adequately reclaimed by man. By 1980 it is estimated, quite conservatively, that more than 5 million acres will have been affected. So that we see this as a long-term major problem and I think the time has come to look at it, to take the nationwide view, and to establish workable long-term policies so that the permanent benefits to the Nation at large can be achieved in terms of mining and in terms of the ultimate use of these lands.

This then is today's picture. Our first task is to insure that tomorrow's inventory of damaged lands is no longer. Once we are assured that the buildup is halted, we can turn our attention to past damage.