

Abandoned Mine Lands Program

DEP's Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Program is part of the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation ([BAMR](#)). BAMR has awarded reclamation contracts using [Growing Greener](#), State Capital Budget, and AML Program funds. Title IV of the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) established the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Trust Fund to be used for the reclamation and restoration of areas affected by past mining. The federal Office of Surface Mining collects the fees from coal production across the country and then grants the monies back to states and tribes with approved Abandoned Mine Reclamation Programs, like Pennsylvania.

Currently, there are 8 active abandoned mine drainage treatment plants in operation with a ninth treatment plant under construction. Three additional treatment plants are in design (Wehrum/Blacklick Creek in Indiana County, Quakake Tunnel/Black Creek in Carbon County, and Gladden Discharge/Chartiers Creek in Allegheny County) and three are in the development stage (Little Conemaugh in Cambria County, Coal Creek/Tioga River in Tioga County, and Dark Shade Creek in Somerset County). There are 51 passive acid mine drainage (AMD) treatment systems that were constructed or designed by BAMR which are maintained through AML or Set-Aside funds, a subcategory of AML funds. Two passive treatment systems were rehabilitated by BAMR in 2017 and two more are currently being rehabilitated in 2018.

Stream restoration work is typically done in Qualified Hydrologic Units as defined by the federal SMCRA. During FY 2015-2016, BAMR spent \$6,561,874 on the operation and maintenance of AMD active and passive treatment systems and an additional \$883,679 was spent on the operation and maintenance of five different trust fund sites BAMR oversees. In FY 2016-2017, BAMR has spent \$5,721,391 on active and passive AMD treatment systems and \$668,323 on the trust fund AMD treatment sites. Additionally, BAMR created a Problems and Solutions Brochure that is available [here](#).

The 2006 AML Reauthorization, which amended federal SMCRA, extended the AML Program through 2021 and significantly increased AML funding to Pennsylvania through the reclamation fees collected on every ton of coal produced. Through FY 2021, Pennsylvania should receive at least \$700 million to clean up Priority 1 and 2 AML sites. States can also set aside up to 30% of this funding to address abandoned mine drainage problems not associated with Priority 1 and 2 sites. Between 2007 and 2017, 21% (\$99.7M) of the total funding has been set aside. During this reporting cycle (2016-2017), just over \$13 million was set aside. This extra funding will increase the number of AML problems that can be remediated; however, it will not be enough money to address all the problems in Pennsylvania. In 2016 the federal government passed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 114-113) which made funding available through the U.S. Department of the Interior for projects in the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Economic Development Program ([AML Pilot](#)). This funding was

designed to accelerate the remediation of abandoned mine land sites with economic and community development end uses. Pennsylvania was awarded \$30 million in 2016. An additional \$25 million was awarded to Pennsylvania in both 2017 and 2018 under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-31) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-141). Seventeen (17) projects are being funded (all or in part) with the 2016 AML Pilot Program funding and thirteen (13) projects are being funded (all or in part) with the 2017 AML Pilot Program funding.

Section 18(j) of state SMCRA allows DEP to award grants to eligible entities. Two types of grants can be applied for using the Growing Greener application: the Abandoned Mine Drainage Set-Aside Program and the State SMCRA grants.

Abandoned Mine Drainage Set-Aside Program

The AMD abatement and treatment program (AMD Set-Aside Program) is authorized in Section 402(g)(6) of federal SMCRA. This grant program is for the abatement of abandoned mine drainage and/or treatment through treatment facility system construction. Grants may also be awarded for treatment system design or operation and maintenance of existing passive and active treatment systems. Projects must be in watersheds that are Qualified Hydrologic Units as defined by the federal SMCRA under the 2006 reauthorization. Table 1 shows the number of projects and funding for the period between 10/1/15-9/30/17. More information about the program is available [here](#).

Table 1. The number of projects and the funding amount for each grant year.

Grant Year	Number of projects	Funding
2015 List of Projects	4	\$1,193,603
2016 List of Projects	2	\$68,858
2017 List of Projects	6	\$1,375,115

State SMCRA grants

The state SMCRA grants are part of DEP’s Grant and Loan Program, which provides grants, loans, and rebates to assist individuals, groups, and businesses in addressing a host of environmental issues. The primary focus of the grant is to design, construct and/or rehabilitate treatment facilities on Alternate Bond System (ABS) Legacy AMD discharge sites. The grant can also be used for land reclamation on the same type of sites. To be eligible for this funding, criteria for the grant requires a discharge to be from an ABS Legacy site. No grants were awarded in the 2015 Growing Greener Grant round but one grant was awarded in the [2016 Growing Greener Grant](#) round for \$414,650.