



# DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

## OFFICE OF MINE RECLAMATION

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## California Abandoned Mine Lands Forum June 12, 2007 Minutes

### Meeting Location:

California State Lands Commission  
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Sacramento, CA 95825

**Call In Number:** 1-888-793-1765, **Passcode:** 31575 (*numbers may change each meeting*)

### FACILITATION AND MEETING SUMMARY

*Facilitator & Minutes:* Stephen L. Jenkins, Michael Brandman Associates

### ATTENDEES

Randy Adams, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)
Brandon Badeker, State Lands Commission (SLC)
Syd Brown, State Parks
Doug Carey, State Water Resources Control Board
Sean Dunbar, Holdrege & Kull
Andrea Foster, U.S. Geological Survey
Brad Hall, Engineering/Remediation Resources Group (ERRG)
Tracy Gidel, Nevada County Department of Environmental Health (DEH)
David Huff, Nevada County DEH
Stephen L. Jenkins, Facilitator - Michael Brandman Associates
Ginger Kaldenbach, U. S. Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement
John Key, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Dave Lawler, BLM
Bill Mitchell, Wheeldon Geological Consultants
Cy Oggins, Department of Conservation, Abandoned Mine Lands Unit (AMLU)
Greg Pelka, SLC
Sarah Reeves, AMLU
Gary Righettini, East Bay Parks
Laurie Scribe, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
David Sederquist, Youngdahl Consulting Group
Wendell Smith, Blue Sky Technologies
John Waters, East Bay Parks (retired)
Bill Whiteside, Blue Sky Technologies
Mike Zabaneh, State Parks

**Start time: 10:05 a.m.**

## **I. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements**

Stephen L. Jenkins, from Michael Brandman Associates, began the meeting by introducing himself as the meeting facilitator. Steve welcomed Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Forum attendees, reminded participants to sign in to help update the Forum distribution list, and asked for introductions (name and agency/organization).

## **II. Review Agenda**

Steve reviewed the agenda topics and the time allotted for each item. No agenda changes were made.

## **III. Review Minutes of Previous Meeting**

There were no suggested changes to the February 21, 2007 Forum meeting minutes. Minutes will continue to be emailed to the Forum distribution list and posted on the Forum website ([www.consrv.ca.gov/OMR/abandoned\\_mine\\_lands/amlu\\_forum.htm](http://www.consrv.ca.gov/OMR/abandoned_mine_lands/amlu_forum.htm)). Anyone who wishes to suggest corrections or additions to the minutes should do so by email to Sarah Reeves at [Sarah.Reeves@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:Sarah.Reeves@conservation.ca.gov).

## **IV. Summary of Agency Meetings to Provide AML Priority Lists for Senator Feinstein's Office (Cy Oggins, Abandoned Mine Lands Unit)**

Following a request by U.S. Senator Feinstein's office, many state and federal AML agencies met in March 2007 to discuss priority environmental and physical hazards at abandoned mine sites throughout the state. As requested, the agencies reached consensus on two lists, one for environmental hazards and one for physical hazards, which were transmitted to Senator Feinstein's office in April 2007. These lists represent a snapshot in time based on existing information and the unique priorities identified by each individual agency. California's AML agencies will continue to meet to discuss how to maintain and update the lists in the future.

## **V. Presentation by Ginger Kaldenbach, U. S. Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM)**

Cy Oggins introduced Ginger Kaldenbach, who is in California to explore a partnership opportunity between the OSM, State Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), and the Department of Conservation's Abandoned Mine Lands Unit (AMLU) to remediate physical hazards at historic abandoned coal mines.

Ginger began by summarizing the history and responsibilities of her office in Denver with respect to federal coal mining and reclamation laws and programs. The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) was signed into law in 1977 by the Carter Administration. The Act authorized the states to develop their own programs for enforcing SMCRA. These states are referred to as "program states." Title 4 of the Act

establishes the abandoned mine lands reclamation program. The program is financed by a tax on coal production ranging from 15-35 cents per ton. Program states are eligible for the majority of the funds collected by the tax for use on reclamation of abandoned coal and non-coal mines within the state. Funds not given to program states can be spent in non-program states, but only on the remediation of physical hazards at abandoned coal mines.

In California, OSM has worked previously with John Waters and the East Bay Regional Parks District to remediate hazards associated with the Black Diamond coal mine complex in Antioch. Prior to remediation, several fatalities and numerous injuries and rescues occurred at this mine complex. Since 1977, OSM has spent approximately \$4 million in federal funds to close approximately 100 coal sites. The complex is now mostly reclaimed.

While in California, Ginger will meet with State Parks and AMLU staffs at the Alameda-Tesla Expansion Project area of the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) in Alameda County. The area has approximately 12 hazardous openings, four of which are coal related, including the historic Tesla coal mine. Current work involves preparing an inventory and assessment of the site and to work with the state to develop a design plan for closure of the complex, both coal mines (to be funded by the OSM) and non-coal mines (to be funded by the AMLU). This is the last known coal mine in California that OSM knows of that will require reclamation.

For more information about the OSM or SMCRA, visit <http://www.osmre.gov>.

**VI. Presentation by Andrea Foster, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS): “Towards an Understanding of the Hazards Presented by Arsenic-Rich Mine Waste: X-ray Absorption Spectroscopy Case Studies”**

Andrea Foster, a researcher with the USGS, gave a highly technical PowerPoint presentation on the identification of various forms of arsenic contamination at abandoned mine sites throughout the state. These sites included the arsenic contamination at the Lava Cap Superfund Site, the Argonaut Mine, and the Mesa de Oro tailings in Jackson which is being encroached upon by residential development.

Arsenic can be ingested (primarily through drinking water) or inhaled as dust particles. Two main areas of concern in California associated with arsenic and abandoned mines are located in the Sierra foothills and in the Mojave Desert. In addition, the Owens Lake drains a large watershed containing former mining operations and dust in the lakebed contains on the order of 100 parts per million (ppm) arsenic in the crust that becomes airborne during high wind conditions. Arsenic contamination can pose a potentially significant health risk to residents, off-road recreational vehicle operators, and burrowing animals (such as the burrowing owl and desert tortoise) in these areas.

Andrea’s PowerPoint presentation will not be posted on the AML Forum website due to its size and pre-publication restrictions of the USGS, but the USGS plans to publish the results of this research as an Open File Report in the near future.

## **VII. Discussion by Randy Adams, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC): Brownfields Funding Workshops & “AML Site Discovery Process”**

Randy Adams of DTSC distributed a flyer and discussed two upcoming Brownfields Funding Workshops on July 11 in Sacramento and on July 17 in Los Angeles. Each year, grant funds are available up to \$200,000 for assessment activities and \$300,000 for cleanup activities. Grantees must be a government agency or non-profit organization. The purpose of the training is to help coach potential applicants to fill out an application and improve their chances in winning a grant. More information can be obtained by contacting Sandy Karinen, (916) 255-3745 or [skarinen@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:skarinen@dtsc.ca.gov).

Randy also distributed and discussed the new DTSC publication called “Abandoned Mine Lands Site Discovery Process” which it prepared for the U.S. EPA Region IX. This is particularly useful in areas experiencing new growth and development of residential and other sensitive land uses that may be located near abandoned mine lands. A copy of the document can be obtained by contacting Randy at [RAdams@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:RAdams@dtsc.ca.gov).

## **VIII. Other Items / New Business**

Cy Oggins mentioned that member agencies at the last meeting of the Sierra Trinity Abandoned Mine Lands Agency Group (STAMLAG) discussed ways to broaden the geographic scope of both the AML Forum and STAMLAG to improve participation from Southern California interests. One option discussed was to convert STAMLAG to an all-California AML Agency Group/Forum subcommittee. Tracy Gidel suggested that the Forum and subcommittee could be patterned after other meetings he attends, which include a day-long format with the mornings devoted to an all-inclusive public discussion of agenda topics by the AML Forum, followed by an agency-only meeting in the afternoon. Based on feedback, Cy indicated that the discussion would be continued at the next AML agency meeting, with plans to provide future updates to Forum members.

David Sederquist, Youngdahl Consulting Group, mentioned that he was invited to attend the Forum meeting by Charlie Alpers of the USGS. He is also interested in providing a mechanism for local agencies to become informed about and address AML issues.

## **IX. Summary of Action Items**

There were no formal action items assigned or requested.

## **X. Future Meeting Schedule and Agenda Ideas**

The next meeting is scheduled for August 15, 2007, location TBD. Those on the Forum distribution list will be notified via e-mail in advance of the next meeting. Suggested agenda topics included an update on the USEPA’s recently issued Good Samaritan Guidelines, the new BLM AML Handbook, and any reports from Southern California AML agencies.

**Forum Adjourned – 12:35 p.m.**