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Vulcan Materials Mines Recognized for Outstanding Reclamation

Richmond, VA – A Greensville County rock quarry and Henrico County sand and gravel mine operated by Vulcan Materials Company have been recognized with state/industry awards for innovative reclamation practices. The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) and the Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance (VTCA) presented the awards to Vulcan for its Skippers Quarry and Curles Neck Sand & Gravel operations. Award presentations were made at the VTCA's annual meeting held recently in Virginia Beach.

“Vulcan Materials’ thoughtful planning and careful treatment of sensitive wetlands and a historical landmark during the mining and reclamation of the Skippers Quarry and the Curles Neck Sand and Gravel mine earned the company this special recognition,” said DMME Director Conrad Spangler. “It is gratifying to see a company work closely with neighbors and landowners to achieve such productive post-mining land uses.”

The 747 acre Skippers Quarry is located just south of Emporia, VA, and supplies the coastal plains of Virginia and North Carolina with granite aggregates ranging in size from sand to armor stone - boulders used to construct jetties to prevent erosion due to the action of large waves. The quarry is somewhat unique given its close proximity to wetlands, creeks and ponds. To fully utilize the available space for quarry operations, Vulcan had to design their facilities to ensure these natural areas are not adversely affected.

Vulcan also focused attention on the creation of wildlife habitat, and for the last two years the quarry has been a Wildlife Habitat Council (<http://www.wildlifehc.org/>) certified site. Local wildlife have benefited from the company’s efforts to protect and create habitat; provide additional sources of food, water and shelter; establish and promote a recycling program; and educate local residents about environmental protection. Because of the company’s careful attention and innovative approach to the protection of wetlands and wildlife habitat, a process involving all employees, it was designated not only the Best Quarry Reclamation but this year’s Overall Reclamation Award winner in the Commonwealth.

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In addition to the overall statewide award, Vulcan's Skippers Quarry will now represent the Commonwealth in the Interstate Mining Compact Commission (IMCC) reclamation award program.

Vulcan's Curles Neck Sand & Gravel mine is located southeast of Richmond on the Curles Neck Farm, a large tract of active and historically significant farmland located along the James River. The land on which the Farm is located has remained in active use for almost 400 years. Considered one of the "Great James River Plantations," 156 acres of the Farm were listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 2009.

Sand and gravel has been mined at the site by several companies since the early 1950's, with Vulcan Materials operating the site since October 2000. While mining and reclamation were being conducted contemporaneously over the life of the operation, extraction activities ceased in 2008. Final site reclamation was begun, and has been essentially completed on 624 acres. The reclaimed land has been returned to a combination of active agricultural fields, irrigation and storm water control ponds, pasture land, grassy uplands and wildlife habitat areas. The majority of surface water runoff flows into reclaimed pond areas used for irrigation water. These retention areas prevent sediment and fertilizer from farming activities from entering the James River and the Chesapeake Bay.

Vulcan worked with the landowners to adjust the reclamation plan to improve the future development potential of the reclaimed property. In addition, numerous acres of mined land were returned to productive farm fields. Work that exceeded the minimum reclamation standards was conducted by Vulcan in an effort to meet the future needs of the land owners. In several instances, improvements were made solely to improve the aesthetics of the transition between the reclaimed land and the surrounding undisturbed property. This attention to detail, given the property's historic nature and value, resulted in Vulcan receiving the Best Open Pit/Sand and Gravel Reclamation Award. Vulcan's Curles Neck site was also the IMCC National Reclamation Award Winner in 2006.

Honorable Mentions

Three other mining operations received honorable mention awards from the DMME/VCTA for their reclamation efforts:

- Ennstone and Morie Farm, Morie Sand and Gravel Mine, King George County
- Elbow Road Farm, Inc., Open Pit Sand Mine, City of Chesapeake
- Vulcan Materials Company, Boozy Creek Quarry, Scott County

The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy and the Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance collaborate annually to recognize Virginia mineral mining operations that have exhibited exemplary performance in accomplishing the reclamation of mined lands. Entries for both quarry and non-quarry reclamation awards are based upon recommendations from DMME mineral mine inspectors.

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