



DIVISIONS
ENERGY
GAS AND OIL
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
MINED LAND RECLAMATION
MINERAL MINING
MINES
ADMINISTRATION

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Washington Building, 8th Floor
1100 Bank Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219-3638
(804) 692-3200 FAX (804) 692-3237
www.dmme.virginia.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2021

Contact: Tarah Kesterson (276) 523-8146

E-mail: tarah.kesterson@dmme.virginia.gov

Abandoned Mine Land Project Results in Thousands of Trees Planted on Historic Mined Land this Arbor Day

Big Stone Gap, Va. – An Abandoned Mine Land (AML) project will bring new life to three sites in southwest Virginia. Just in time for Arbor Day, over 20,000 thousand trees will find homes on historic coal mined land. An AML grant of \$46,175.80 funded the tree planting on sites in Appalachia, Coeburn and Clinchco.

This project restores native tree species that were removed during coal mining that occurred before more stringent environmental regulations were created in 1977. This project will return a total of 40 acres back to unmanaged forestland over time.

“While these trees will prevent erosion, they will also create a home for nearby wildlife,” said **Abandoned Mine Land Project Manager Jon Fleming**. “The native species are suitable habitats for foraging and nesting.”

The species planted include Common Apple, Black Locust, Black Oak, Pin Oak, Sawtooth Oak, Southern Red Oak, White Oak, White Pine, Persimmon, Pitch/Loblolly Pine, Virginia Pine, Black Walnut, Yellow Poplar, Northern Red Oak and Red Maple

Conservation Services, Inc. will began work on the project on April 21, 2021 and plan to finish the project by May 13, 2021.

DMME’s Abandoned Mine Land program was established after the passing of the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act in 1977. The agency manages a federal grant to reclaim issues caused by historic mining. Grant funds come from fees paid by the coal industry on each ton of coal mined.

Arbor Day was first celebrated in 1872 by J. Sterling Morton in Nebraska.

###