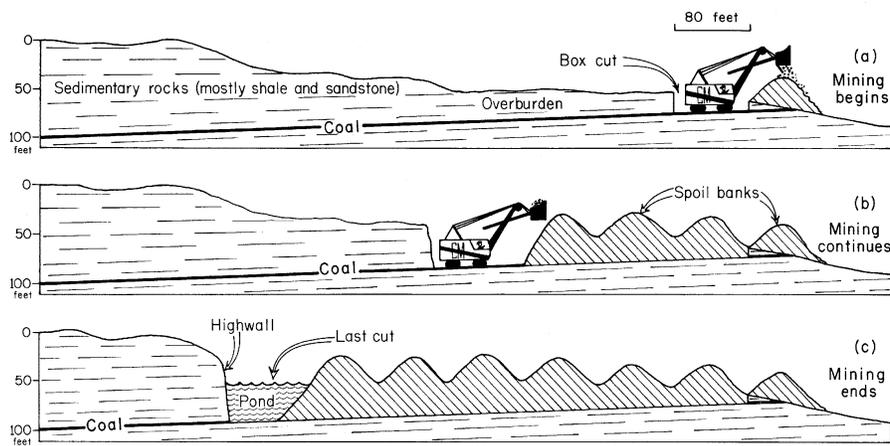
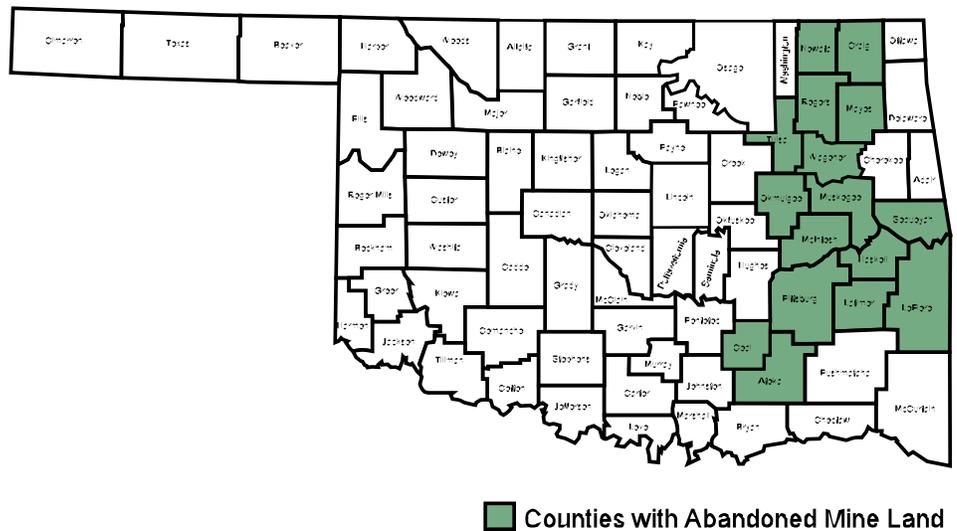


# Oklahoma

## Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program

The mission of the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Reclamation Program is to protect lives, repair scarred land and improve the environment. The purpose of the AML Program is to protect the public from hazards left as a result of past coal mining practices. The primary objective is to reclaim surface and underground coal mine sites abandoned prior to August 3, 1977, that pose the highest threat to the public's health, safety, and general welfare. The program is 100 percent federally funded from fees on active coal mine production. The AML Program coordinates with 16 eastern Oklahoma conservation districts in identifying hazardous AML sites, with particular emphasis placed on the public's involvement.

Coal mining has been underway in Oklahoma since 1872. In a 16-county area of eastern Oklahoma, over 32,000 acres were surfaced mined and another 40,000 acres were underground mined, then left unreclaimed. Early production in Oklahoma was almost entirely from underground mines, but with the development of large power equipment, surface mining became increasingly important. Surface mining accounted for 50 percent of annual production in 1943 and 99 percent or more by 1967. Today surface mining continues to be the primary mining method used in the state.

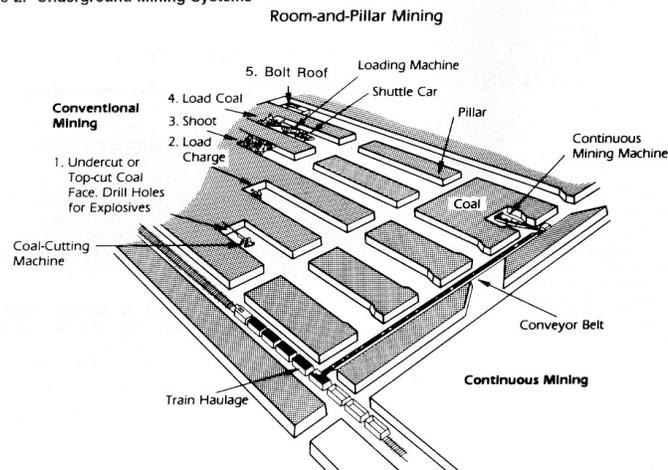


Schematic cross-section showing stages of surface mining for coal. *Oklahoma Geological Survey*

On August 3, 1977, Public Law 95-87, known as the "Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977" or SMCRA was signed into law. This federal legislation established a nationwide system for controlling the surface effects of active coal mining. The act also established a trust fund for the purpose of reclaiming orphan coal mine land that endangers public health and/or safety. Money for the AML Trust Fund is generated from fees on active coal mining at the following rates:

- \$.28 per ton on surface mined coal
- \$.12 per ton on underground mined coal
- \$.08 per ton for lignite coal

Figure 2. Underground Mining Systems



Schematic showing underground room-and-pillar mining.

By law, a state is to receive at least one half of the fees collected in that state. The United States Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement is the federal agency responsible for allocating the reclamation fees in the trust fund. Though much has been accomplished in the 38-year history of Oklahoma's AML Program with the small amount of funding received, there is more than \$120 million in un-reclaimed abandoned mind land remaining.

**The fee collection will end September 30, 2021. Reauthorization of fee collection is imperative to continue the AML Program mission to protect lives, repair scarred land, and improve the environment.**

Oklahoma AML Program Achievements	
Number of Completed Projects	181
Total Acres Reclaimed	5,233
Linear Feet of Highwall Reclaimed	307,818
Hazardous Water Bodies Reclaimed	249
Subsidence Sites Reclaimed	223
Structures Removed	23
Mine Openings closed	397
Miles of Clean Streams Reclaimed	16
Emergencies Remediated	87