

Recommended Best Management Practices for Mining Operations

We strongly recommend that the mining company closely adhere to Alabama Surface Mining Commission Administrative Code, Chapter 880-X-10C, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SURFACE MINING ACTIVITIES, and develop an erosion control plan tailored to the mining site. We also recommend development of mine plans that closely adhere to protective measures in ADEM regulations sections 335-6-10-.06(a) and (c) to maintain minimum water quality conditions applicable to all State waters.

We also recommend the following best management practices to control erosion and minimize impacts to aquatic systems:

- provide 100-ft naturally vegetated buffers adjacent to any streams, ditches, or drainages consisting of trees, shrubs, and grasses, or other herbaceous species to protect surface waters from soil runoff and mining contaminants.
- size settling ponds to accommodate a 25-year, 24-hour rain or flood event and avoid placing ponds in sites with steep topography or in buffer areas.
- inspect BMP structures within 24 hours of each significant rainfall event and take immediate corrective action if erosion or soil runoff is observed.
- monitor water quality (especially turbidity or total suspended solids) to assure that discharges/runoff do not increase stream turbidity above background levels.
- immediately revegetate any disturbed areas not actively mined.
- execute any work that results in exposed earth on slopes leading to wetlands or surface waters during periods when significant rainfall is not predicted.
- maintain the State's standard for pH at all times ("Wastes shall not cause the pH to deviate more than one unit from the normal or natural pH, nor be less than 6.0, nor greater than 8.5" (ADEM 1992)). This is particularly important for sustaining a healthy ecosystem and aquatic fauna.

For additional information regarding best management practices, consult the "Alabama Handbook for Erosion Control, Sediment Control, and Stormwater Management on Construction Sites and Urban Areas" (2003), available from Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee or on-line (2002 version) at:

http://www.swcc.state.al.us/pdf/handbook_erosionctrl.pdf.