

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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SURFACE-MINED LAND BROCHURE STRESSES RECLAMATION FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE

The surface-mined lands of Appalachia and the Central Midwest represent potential sources of fish and wildlife habitat if such objectives are included in coal leasing arrangements and are adequately planned prior to land reclamation.

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has produced a color brochure written for the layman entitled "Mined Land Reclamation for Fish and Wildlife in the Eastern United States" that can help the small landowner who is interested in seeing his disturbed lands reclaimed to the benefit of fish and wildlife.

The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 establishes a national policy to ensure that all current and future mining is performed according to sound environmental standards, setting as highest priority for reclamation those projects most critical to the protection of the public health, safety, property, and general welfare. There are also direct provisions for fish and wildlife in the Act as well, with performance standards requiring operators to use the best technology currently available to protect fish and wildlife during mining.

Through the use of photographs, artwork, and simple diagrams, this 14-page brochure reviews the new surface mine legislation, explains some of the various aspects of wildlife management such as habitat manipulation and the "edge" principle in very general terms, and stresses the need for provisions for fish and wildlife as part of leasing arrangements with the coal operator and regulatory authorities.

While wildlife may be thought of as inhabiting particular types of habitat, such as deep forest or open fields, wildlife are more likely to be found spending most of their lives near the edges of such areas, in zones of transition where one type of habitat blends with another. This is known as the "edge" principle.

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The edges of particular habitats provide greater varieties of plants and greater amounts of food and cover which, in turn, attract greater numbers and varieties of fish and wildlife species.

Once the landowner has selected the types of species he hopes to attract to reclaimed land, and knows the needs of those types of fish and wildlife, he may design his reclamation plan and choose the types of plants, trees, shrubs, and crops to best benefit those species.

"Mined Land Reclamation for Fish and Wildlife in the Eastern United States" stresses, however, that the landowner must decide what kinds of fish and wildlife are desired before the disturbed land is reclaimed.

A checklist of important items to consider in devising a reclamation plan - such as Federal and State laws, regulations, and zoning; soil and water type and quality; and slope and aspect of the land - is provided. A list of Federal and State agencies in the East and Central Midwest that can assist in offering technical guidance is also provided.

Single copies of this 14-page brochure are available free from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Eastern Energy and Land Use Team, Harpers Ferry Center, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425. Bulk copies may be purchased for 90 cents per copy (stock number 024-010-00498-3) from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

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