

# The Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative

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*Abstract:* The Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) is a broad-based citizen/industry/government program working to encourage the planting of productive trees on active coal mine lands and abandoned coal mine lands. Using a combination of private and governmental resources, the program will facilitate and coordinate citizen groups, university researchers, the coal industry, corporations, the environmental community, and local, state, and federal government agencies that have an interest in creating productive forestland on reclaimed mined lands. Forestry research conducted by various academic institutions has confirmed that highly productive forestland can be created on reclaimed mine land by using a Forestry Reclamation Approach (FRA). The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) and the Appalachian region states have determined that this technology can be implemented under current state and federal regulations. Tree planting is documented throughout Appalachia in the regulatory programs in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Although trees are being planted, the reclamation plans generally do not reflect the current technology. The mission of ARRI is to promote and encourage the use of FRA technology in reclamation of both active and abandoned coal mine sites. Part of our effort will be to provide FRA training and to explain the multiple benefits of creating productive forestland. These multiple benefits include restoration of clean water and air resources, carbon sequestration, soil conservation, wildlife and endangered species habitat, recreational opportunities, and timber production.

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