

AML HANDBOOK

TAB II PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

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Mining and Minerals Branch  
Land Resources Division-WASO  
National Park Service

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## INTRODUCTION

A letter from Secretary Lujan to all employees dated July 11, 1989 states "Each agency shall ensure that appropriate financial, personnel and other resources are allocated to effectively implement and administer the agency's safety and health program."

The objective of the program presented in this handbook is to mitigate or eliminate safety hazards and environmental impacts associated with abandoned mineral lands (AML). For the purpose of this handbook, these are lands impacted by past mining or minerals exploration where a responsible party cannot be identified. In other context, AML also includes abandoned oil and gas wells and associated exploration.

Each National Park Service (NPS) park or unit with abandoned mineral lands should develop and maintain an inventory of AML sites, documenting safety hazards, impacts on natural and cultural resources, and visitor use. Such an inventory will provide the information to establish remediation priorities, and to monitor resource conditions and corrective actions.

Safety hazards and resource impacts associated with abandoned mines should be mitigated or eliminated as funding and personnel become available. Alternatives for treating mine openings include permanent closure, temporary closure, maintenance as wildlife habitat, no action, or, once safety problems are addressed, retention and interpretation as an historic feature.

Until AML sites can be remediated, visitors must be given a reasonable warning of hazardous conditions. This warning may include signs at mine sites, signs at visitor contact stations, notices in visitor guides, and verbal warnings during ranger contacts and interpretive presentations. Warnings must be sufficiently detailed so that a visitor can recognize hazards and make an informed decision to avoid them.

All remediation of abandoned mineral lands must be consistent with NPS policies on compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), protection of threatened and endangered species, and preservation of cultural resources. Where appropriate, AML issues should be addressed in park management documents including the statement for management, land protection plan, resource management plan, backcountry management plan, etc.