

SURFACE MINE RECLAMATION

The area within the Watershed has been subjected to intensive strip-mining activity in the past and the "scars" remain. Presently, Kocher Coal Company is actively stripping in the Lorberry area, at the site of the old Lincoln Colliery Workings. The area will be one of great size when completed. Stripped material is presently being hauled to the western side of L.R. 53029 and dumped just north of Rowe Tunnel.

The strip-mine areas remain as the largest surface treatment problem in the rehabilitation of the Watershed. Basically involved are the reshaping of the spoil banks to some conformable topography, burial of toxic and acid forming materials, and covering of the portion of the high wall containing acid-forming materials. Following this action, re-establishment of vegetative growth and cover must be accomplished. Dependent on topography and drainage, lined diversion ditches (flumes) may need be installed above the disturbed areas (to keep additional waters from entering the restored area), or through the areas, to control drainage. This could only be recommended after backfilling and surface restoration took place. For additional control of pollution from these areas, if topography and drainage features would be conducive, impoundments could be constructed to retain the acid-forming materials, as well as provide control of

flow in the areas. These recommendations could be incorporated with the issuance of the strip mine permit to assure that the recommended practices are carried out.

Past experience has shown that planned reclamation carried out during and immediately following strip mine activities is both more effective and less expensive than At some later date.

From field studies of the existing strap-mined areas within the watershed area, there is an estimated (approximate) 365 acres of actual open pits. Volumes of material necessary to backfill these pits would approximate 17 million cubic yards. Costs involved in these procedures would approximate three and one-half million dollars (\$3,500,000.00).

The pit numbers and locations can be found on Plate P-2 (in the Appendix), labelled Stripping Pit Locations, The following tables give the pit numbers (as found on Plate P-2) the area in acres, the status, volume of backfill needed, and estimated restoration costs.

The assemblage of the various pits into categories was done on a locale basis and not on a recommended priority basis. The pits in the Lower Rausch Creek, the Lorberry Creek and the Swatara Creek areas are nested within rather rugged terrain. If priority of restoration were to prevail, the "prime area" to begin restoring would be that just east of the intersection of Interstate Highway 81 and Pennsylvania Route 209. The area seems to be the one most conducive to development.

As previously mentioned in the discussion of Land Use, the coal mine areas have been stripped of their natural beauty and less than five per cent (5%) of the total land area is presently developed. Expenditures of restoration of the abandoned strip mines would be rather difficult to justify.