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Expanding Partnership to Post Reclamation Management

Iowa is completing more AML reclamation projects than ever before in this minimum program state. Additionally, 99% of Iowa's AML land is private property. Reclaimed land remains private property with no long-term easements or agreements in place for post-reclamation management. Therefore, the long-term stability and success of reclaimed sites depends entirely on the voluntary management decisions made by individual landowners.

This session highlights an innovative landowner outreach project in Iowa that could be replicated in other states. The project involves a partnership between the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and USDA Service Centers, and Pathfinders RC&D (a regional nonprofit). Pathfinders RC&D secured grant funds to launch this project spring 2014.

The outreach project developed and distributed materials to inform and empower landowners on best management practices for their reclaimed land. Information was shared at regional meetings and a field trip. These events allowed landowners to learn more about management options, to connect with local technical professionals, and to learn where to get assistance after the reclamation is complete. Through these efforts, we hope to change the expectations of landowners regarding long-term management of their AML property.

For several years, Iowa AML staff discussed the importance of protecting the reclamation investment through landowner education. The immediate results of this project exceeded expectations. Partners are now developing Phase 2 to be implemented 2014-2016.