Mining Reclamation Program at Risk

The state’s mining reclamation program is at risk of slipping into insolvency, according to a new state legislative audit, reports the Gazette Mail. The audit report, presented to a joint panel of state senators and delegates, “finds that the state Department of Environmental Protection has failed to comply with state and federal law in its reclamation program oversight, resulting in missed opportunities to financially shore up a program that will keep requiring hundreds of millions of dollars to reclaim permit sites per federal regulations.”

The report finds that the state’s current per acre coal mining reclamation bond limits may not be enough to guarantee the solvency of the program. “Rising reclamation costs have devalued permit bonds since the current bonding limits were established by state code in 2001, the report observes, while the cost of reclamation has increased significantly.”

An article in Grist that was published before the state audit was released, called the state’s reclamation funding system “broken.” An attorney for the Sierra Club said, “All of the backstops that are supposed to be in place to make sure that at the end of the day nobody has to live next to an abandoned coal mine — all of those backstops are now threatened.”

Meanwhile, a civil engineering team from WVU is in the final stages of developing a 10-year research project to restore a 40-acre abandoned mine refuse site in Greenbrier County. The project will use geomorphic landform design to mitigate acid mine drainage originating from the waste pile.

Council Rejects Engineering Education Proposal for Wheeling

The West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education rejected Bluefield State College’s request to bring a new Engineering and
Manufacturing Center to Wheeling, according to the Intelligencer. City leaders enthusiastically greeted the proposal and intended to lease the college space at the former Ohio Valley Medical Center campus. The proposal, however, met with opposition from West Virginia Northern Community College, Wheeling University, and West Liberty University due to concerns about bringing another institution of higher learning into the local market. The article says, “the council's decision to nix Bluefield’s proposal focused on a lack of demonstrated workforce demand for the proposed programs.”

Stay up to date on legislative issues through the NSPE Advocacy Center.

Register for the 2021 Virtual PECon

Registration is now open for NSPE’s Virtual Professional Engineers Conference 2021 (August 3–5). The early bird registration rate deadline is July 15.

Attendees will have access to up to 14 unique and insightful PDH sessions (live and on-demand sessions) and will have the opportunity to collaborate with peers and experts from across the country through morning “coffee chats” and Mastermind sessions. In the Mastermind sessions, attendees will address their most pressing professional issues and tap into the knowledge, experience, and advice of their peers and PE experts to help workshop solutions. There will also be virtual engineering facility tours and a celebration of PE Day (August 4).

PECon at a Glance

- **Bridging the Gap to Leadership: Connecting the Skills You Have with the Skills You Need** (Shelley Row, P.E., CSP, Leadership and Decision-Making Expert)

- **Florida International University Bridge Failure, A Study in Ethics** (Susan Sprague, P.E., F.NSPE, Senior Associate, and Eric Tappert, P.E., Consultant)

- **AI and the Evolving Role of the “Traditional” Engineer: An Engineer’s Perspective from NASA to Infrastructure and Beyond** (Kimberly Johnson, P.E., Founding Principal)
Registration Options

A **Day Pass** for NSPE members is $99 until July 15 and $149 after July 15. The pass provides access to four PDH sessions, networking morning “coffee chat” roundtables of your choice each day, and evening post-session discussions.

The **All Access Pass** for NSPE members is $249 until July 15 and $299 after July 15. This pass provides access to 14 PDH sessions, access to daily networking morning “coffee chat” roundtables, and evening post session discussions.

Student members can register for a Day Pass or the All Access Pass for free until July 15. The rate for both passes is $50 after July 15. Nonmembers can join NSPE for $299 and receive member pricing.

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**Women in Engineering Event to Explore Gender and Racial Equity**

DiscoverE and the Congressional Women in STEM Caucus will co-host an event on **June 23**, in celebration of **International Women in Engineering Day**. The event will include a lively panel discussion exploring the factors that attract girls to engineering, why women persist in the field, and the role you can play in achieving gender and racial equity in engineering and technology.

NSPE Government Relations staff coordinated the participation of the Women in STEM Caucus for the event. The Women in STEM Caucus seeks to bring public and congressional awareness to policies, programs, and initiatives that support women in STEM fields, and develops the next generation of women leaders. Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), Rep. Debbie Lesko (R-AZ), Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI), and Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-IN) serve as caucus co-chairs.

NSPE recognizes the benefits of a diverse population of licensed engineers in shaping the future of engineering. Diverse backgrounds foster unique contributions and capabilities and create an inclusive community ultimately leading to a more creative, effective and technically respected community.

[Register here.](https://example.com/register)
2021–22 Call for Volunteers

NSPE needs your knowledge, expertise, and time to help the Society carry out its vision and mission and meet the goals of the strategic plan. Volunteer positions begin in mid-August and end at the 2022 Professional Engineers Conference.

There are three types of volunteer opportunities:

- **Level 1 (Highest Engagement)–Standing Boards and Committees**
  Often includes attending at least one in-person meeting. Most meetings held via video conference. Terms may be up to three years.

- **Level 2 (Intermediate Engagement)–Ad Hoc Committees and Task Forces**
  Activities primarily include online correspondence and video conference meetings.

- **Level 3 (Lowest Engagement)–Ad Hoc Volunteer**
  Volunteer on a project-by-project basis.

Submit forms by July 9 to be considered for a 2021-22 term.