Western Surface Mine Permitting and Reclamation

June 1986

NTIS order #PB87-100350
Foreword

This report responds to a request from the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs to assess the ability of current mining and reclamation technologies and methodologies, and of Federal programs and policies, to meet the statutory mandates for environmental protection in reclaiming the surface of Western coal mined lands.

OTA examined the state of development of Western reclamation technologies and methodologies, the adequacy and uses of baseline and monitoring data on mined land reclamation, the reliability of analytical techniques used to predict the impacts of mining and evaluate the success of reclamation practices, and the encouragement given to research and to the development and use of innovative permitting and reclamation technologies. The study also examines the role and effectiveness of lease stipulations and permit conditions as means of imposing technological or methodological requirements for environmental protection and resolving uncertainties in mining and reclamation situations. Technical and policy options for resolving uncertainties about, and for improving the prospects for, successful reclamation on Western Federal lands, including research and development needs, are discussed.

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Director
NOTE: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.
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Related OTA Reports

- Technologies To Benefit Agriculture and Wildlife
  OTA-BP-F-34; May 1985. GPO stock #052-003-00966-O.

- Protecting the Nation’s Groundwater From Contamination
  OTA-O-233; October 1984. GPO stock #052-003-00966-8.

- Environment/ Protection in the Federal Coal Leasing Program
  OTA-E-237; May 1984. GPO stock #052-003-00954-4.

- Wetlands: Their Use and Regulation

- Water-Related Technologies for Sustainable Agriculture in U.S. Arid and Semi-arid Lands
  OTA-F-212; October 1983. GPO stock #052-003-00930-7.

- U.S. Crop/and and Rangeland Productivity
  OTA-F-166; August 1982. NTIS order #PB 83-125013.

- Development and Production Potential of Federal Coal Leases
  OTA-M-150; December 1981. NTIS order #PB 82-149378.

- The Direct Use of Coal
  OTA-E-86; April 1979. NTIS order #PB 295797.

- Management of Fuel and Non-Fue/ Minerals on Federal Lands
  OTA-M-88; April 1979. NTIS order #PB 295788.