

REFORESTATION PROGRAM IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA¹

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The State Division of Forestry has been actively concerned with mined land reclamation for 25 years. The results show that successful introduction of forest tree seedlings can be carried out on those areas that require revegetation. Early experimental work has assisted in developing standards and procedures for reforestation work on these lands. Cooperative efforts between the Division of Forestry and the Division of Mined Land Reclamation and other State resource agencies has resulted in excellent field cooperation and applied techniques.

The Virginia Division of Forestry has been interested in the reforestation of strip mined areas in Southwestern Virginia since 1955. Trial plantings, direct seeding and natural seeding occurrences have been established and/or monitored. Grasses and shrubs as well as tree species were evaluated in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service and the Division of Mined Land Reclamation.

Our current role is to provide assistance to the Division of Mined Land Reclamation in species selection, planting procedures and nursery production. Division nurseries contract the production of forest tree seedlings to meet annual planting requirements estimated by Division of Mined Land Reclamation. Grading, packing, storage and delivery of requested species assures a supply of seedling stock to meet individual orders. Both Virginia Division of Forestry nurseries and the Abingdon District Office coordinate field program needs.

The District Office has assisted Mined Land Reclamation in developing planting guidelines for specific species. Recognition is also given to necessary erosion control and soil stabilization. Evaluation of the early plantings has provided excellent guidelines for successful planting projects today. A knowledge of

soil and site characteristics has also been useful in determining proper species selection. Demonstration and training sessions have been carried out for new planting crews and Mined Land Reclamation field supervisors. Well planted tree seedlings are the key to good survival and healthy stands.

The Division's role has been one of a consultant to Mined Land Reclamation. It has been a very beneficial exposure for both agencies. We have learned something useful from our joint discussions, field programs, and follow-up evaluations.

I have every reason to believe that a sound reforestation program can be carried out on Virginia's mined land areas.

¹TREES FOR RECLAMATION IN THE EASTERN U.S.
Lexington, Kentucky
October 27-29, 1980

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