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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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Virginia Energy Declares Abandoned Mine Land Emergencies after Recent Heavy Rainfall

Big Stone Gap, Va. –The Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy) declared two Abandoned Mine Land emergencies after recent heavy rainfall caused issues with subsidence and drainage from historic coal mining operations. Virginia Energy oversees the AML program that identifies emergencies and develops projects to reclaim issues caused by coal mining before 1977.

On Sunnydale Farm Road in Pound, an underground mine subsided creating a 15-foot deep void close to two homes. An access road to two homes was washed out on Bowser Hollow Road, also in Pound, by erosion from a coal surface mine that operated in the 1970's.

“Both of these issues put residents in danger,” **said Abandoned Mine Land Manager Lesa Baker.**

“Public safety is our first priority at Virginia Energy so we were able to get crews to the site quickly to fix these problems. Heavy rainfall often increases the impact of issues caused by abandoned mine lands so it is not uncommon for our team to receive several calls after.”

An AML grant of \$137,700 will fill the void on Sunnydale Farm Road and stabilize the surrounding area. McFall Excavating is currently working at the site. They will use concrete and grout to fill the hole. The underground mine was active from 1950-1960.

C&S Construction and Excavating, Inc. is working in Pound to make the road accessible once again. With an AML grant of \$65,000, the contractor will build drainage controls, add two culverts and upgrade an existing ditch to better control erosion from the historic surface mine. Stone will also be placed along the streambank and the road will be graded and resurfaced.

Virginia Energy's Abandoned Mine Land program was established after the passing of the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act in 1977. The agency manages a federal grant to reclaim issues caused by historic mining. It is funded by the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement (OSMRE).

The Abandoned Mine Land program falls under the Mined Land Repurposing program within Virginia Energy. If you should have an issue with an abandoned mine land please call 276-523-8100 or email vaenergy@energy.virginia.gov.