



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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Coal Refuse Fire Extinguished in Chesterfield County *Coal Refuse Left from Mining That Occurred in the late 1870's*

Chesterfield, Va. – A coal refuse fire was extinguished this week in the Winterpock community of Chesterfield County. The fire was first reported to the Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy) on March 8th. Virginia Energy's Abandoned Mine Land (AML) team determined the fire was an AML emergency. The project cost \$63,050.

AJS Excavation Incorporated arrived on the scene one week ago. They extinguished the fire on Wednesday and spent Thursday encapsulating the coal refuse pile with a fine stone that will form a nearly air-tight seal around the material. Additional erosion control measures were also left in place to protect any of the surrounding water sources.

This coal refuse pile is a result of mining that occurred in the region by Bright Hope Coal Company that was operational in 1877. This specific site was the Beaver Slope Mine. At the time, technology was not available to better separate coal from rock during the mining process. Environmental regulations were also not in place to properly reclaim this material so the spoil that resulted from mining was left in place.

[The Richmond coal basin was an active mining community in the 1700's and 1800's.](#) Several features from that mining still remain in the area. Virginia Energy asks that if you see something you think is associated with historic coal mining to [please contact our agency.](#) We also URGE the public to please stay out of the areas because they can [pose a danger.](#)

[Virginia Energy's Abandoned AML program](#) was created in 1981 and is federally funded to reclaim issues left behind by coal mining that occurred before 1977. Funding has been limited in the past meaning only the highest priority problems were able to be reclaimed. The projects were a safety threat to residents or had a significant negative environmental impact. The federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will provide Virginia Energy with a

substantial increase in funding to do more projects, such as removing coal refuse piles, beginning this spring.