

TIPS Saves the Day

Tim Wilson

9/25/2007

Speaking in my capacity as a PG-III Program Services Manager in the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Surface Mining Section, I wanted to relate to you a recent situation where TIPS saved the day for the Kansas abandoned mine land (AML) program.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife Protection State Park No. 1 Reclamation Project involved a site-specific solution to abate over 9,000 feet of priority-2 dangerous highwalls within a State-owned public recreation area. The highwalls were located along a system of interior roads within the project site that led to fishing, hiking, camping, and hunting areas. Our solution to the problem was to design and build a new road layout that maintained a safe distance from the highwalls, while maintaining access to the desired areas. The site consists of numerous final-cut strip pits interspersed with heavily vegetated spoil dumps. This not only made the site difficult for performing the reconnaissance required to ground-truth the aerial mapping during design, it also made it next to impossible to survey the site with conventional methods. The design firm provided a table of latitude/longitude data, along with the site drawings to aid in laying out the new roadways. Our survey team loaded these data into TIPS - provided Trimble GeoExplorer XT software and, using the data as waypoints, was able to stake and flag the new road layout. At times, the construction equipment was following some distance back from the survey team and clearing vegetation from the new layout while the team was doing its staking. This work was undertaken in early December 2006, shortly after a 10-inch snowfall event. Even though leaf fall had already occurred, the number of trees on the site, the relief of the terrain, and slippery conditions made the going hard. Upon completion of the GPS-aided survey, the team stated that there was "no way" the road could have been staked using conventional methods without drastically disturbing more area than was required for the actual road path. As the project site also falls within critical habitat for the threatened and endangered gray bat, minimal disturbance was essential to the success of the project. We, in the Kansas AML program, appreciate the equipment, training, and support provided to us by TIPS over the past 20 years. Without the TIPS program, our tasks would certainly be more daunting, if not, as in this case, next to impossible. Thanks for allowing us to share this one, of many, success stories.