



# News

Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, Office of Communications  
222 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue #13, Anchorage AK 99513-7599  
Tel: 907-271-5555 Fax: 907-271-5421  
[www.blm.gov/ak](http://www.blm.gov/ak)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Contact: Danielle Allen, 907.271.3335**

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## **BLM Announces 2006 Reclamation and Sustainable Mineral Development Award Winners**

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director Kathleen Clarke yesterday announced the winners of the 2006 Reclamation and Sustainable Mineral Development Awards. The awards recognize the efforts that have been made in implementing the principles of sustainable development, a concept adopted by the United States and 192 other countries to balance environmental, economic, and social considerations in planning for mining operations.

The *Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award* recognizes achievements in environmental stewardship of operators with less than fifteen employees. Like the Hardrock Environmental Award, this award recognizes operators who have demonstrated continuous or repeated efforts to successfully meet or exceed Federal, State or local reclamation requirements.

### **The 2006 Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award winners are Mike & Lou Busby, doing business as GeoQuest and Chicken Gold Co. at the Chicken Creek Mine.**

For the past 16 years, Mike and Lou Busby have mined about 180 miles east of Fairbanks on Chicken Creek, first as lessees on mining claims, and since 1998, on patented claims they own. The Busbys view their mining operation as a temporary use of the land. Their goal was to conduct a surface mining operation that would retain a diverse landscape, minimize post-mining erosion, protect the surface-water hydrology, and preserve greenbelts and wildlife habitat within the mine footprint. By segregating and stockpiling all excavated materials to use in reclaiming the site and by designing and implementing a zero-discharge water recycling system that would function throughout the planned mine life, GeoQuest and Chicken Gold Co. have minimized the impact of their operations on the environment. Success of the reclamation is attested to by the large number of visitors to the post-mine development known as the Chicken Gold Camp & Outpost. Due to careful and well planned reclamation, visitors have no idea that any mining has ever been conducted on the land. During the active mining operation, the public was encouraged to view the mine. To facilitate safe access, the company identified public trails with signs to direct foot traffic and explain the operations. Public involvement has also been encouraged through creation of a gold panning facility with material supplied from the mine and instruction provided for novice panners. Mike and Lou Busby's operations in Chicken, Alaska are an example of the use of Best Management Practices by a small operator, emphasizing principles of environmental stewardship and economic sustainability.

“All of this year’s award winners illustrate the BLM's concept of sustainable development — maintaining current standards of living while providing for future needs,” BLM Director Kathleen Clarke said. “Thanks to their efforts, the public lands will continue to provide a range of resources for present and future generations,” she added.

Director Clarke presented the awards to the winners yesterday evening in Washington, D.C., at a joint BLM and Office of Surface Mining awards dinner hosted by the National Mining Association.