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Protecting Bats in Mines
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The protection of Neda Mine (pages 3-7) is only one of many successes we've had since our last report on the North American Bats and Mines Project [*BATS*, Summer 1995]. This mini photo essay highlights a few more of our accomplishments over the past 18 months. Every project has been a cooperative effort--not only between BCI and our co-sponsor, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management--but also among many local, state, and national organizations, from caving clubs to government agencies to major mining companies.

Our work with mining companies has been expanded into a program of its own, called "Mining for Habitat." One of the more exciting aspects of this program is the planned creation of artificial habitat for bats on private mine lands. Several of these efforts are already underway, thanks in part to a donation from Karen Hixon that allowed us to hire a Bats and Mines Assistant Director, Sheryl Ducummon. Mining for Habitat achievements will be reported in future issues of *BATS*.



Dan Taylor helps haul steel to build one of four large gates at the Blackball Mine in Illinois. Although the mine had been designated as a protected area several years earlier, the estimated 23,000 bats that hibernate there, including endangered Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*), were still threatened by vandals and curiosity seekers.

Thanks to teamwork with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Unimin Corporation, the Near Normal Grotto of the National Speleological Society, and expert

gate-builder Roy Powers, Jr., of the American Cave Conservation Association, we have ensured the safety of the Blackball bats for years to come. Now protected, the mine's bat population has space to grow considerably.



These participants at a Portland, Oregon, Bats and Mines workshop last June are just a few of the more than 500 biologists, geologists, mine reclamation specialists, and wildlife managers who have attended our workshops since the spring of 1995. Attendees from more than 50 federal, state, and private agencies across North America have learned how to assess and protect mines as bat habitat, and most continue to multiply the impact of their education by training colleagues and developing their own bat conservation and management programs. The workshops are co-sponsored by BCI and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, as well as the U.S. Forest Service and many state and private partners.



Last February Dan Taylor (right) and Dr. J. Scott Altenbach (center) helped the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the University of Minnesota evaluate the effects that constructing a new university physics lab would have on hibernating little brown bats in Minnesota's Tower-Soudan Mine. Altenbach and Taylor spent three days underground censusing bats and assessing bat habitat and found five times as many bats as had been previously counted in the mine. In the end, they suggested measures that would allow construction of the lab while also protecting the hibernating bat colony.

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