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A New Tool for Old Mines

Hundreds of thousands of old, abandoned mines are scattered across the American West. These derelict workings range from simple pits to multilevel complexes of chambers and passageways, and many are potential hazards for curious or unwary humans. The risks “ and potential liability “ have convinced public and private landowners to close most of the old mines. But abandoned mines also provide safe havens for bats and other wildlife.



*A bat-friendly cave gate in
Kentucky © Bat Conservation
International*

The challenge, then, is to determine the best method for closure. Options range from permanently backfilling the entrance to erecting signs and fences or building gates that keep people out while allowing bats to come and go. Choosing among those options can be a daunting task.

Now Bat Conservation International, with support from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, is providing a new website to help identify available options and choose the most effective strategies for protecting people, wildlife and historical artifacts on a mine-by-mine basis.

The Abandoned Mine Closure Website was developed by BCI with advice and guidance from top bat biologists, land managers and gating contractors.

The site provides background information on mines and mine features, as well as types of mine closures and the materials, designs and other considerations for each type, and the information that’s required for reaching an informed decision. There is also a list of situations that will require more expert advice and an extensive bibliography of invaluable publications.

The centerpiece of this new site is a “decision-tree” structure that guides the user through a series of questions, with each answer leading to the next appropriate question until specific closure options are recommended.

The Abandoned Mine Closure Website is designed for land managers dealing with Abandoned Mine Land (AML) resources, mining companies preparing to close old mines or re-initiate mining in old areas, and consultants involved with mine assessments and closures.

Future plans include the addition of sections pertaining to pre-closure assessments, exclusions, case studies and an extensive photo gallery. Visit this important new website at www.batgating.com.

Send comments and suggestions to gating@batcon.org.

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