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Mining, oil and gas firms receive Earth Day awards

Reclamation » State agency honors the Utah companies for going above and beyond.

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Six companies received Earth Day Awards on Wednesday from the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining (DOGGM) for projects that state officials say voluntarily exceed regulatory requirements.

"Today's mining and oil and gas companies readily accept their responsibility to protect and restore the environment while providing natural resources that ensure our standard of living," said board chairman Douglas Johnson, an engineer who now manages sales and marketing for Sanpete Steel, a Moroni-based steel fabrication and erection company.

The 2010 recipients are:

» Simplot Phosphates, which was rewarded for the contouring work and reseeding program that it "consistently" implements north of Vernal at an open-pit mine that, since 1960, has supplied phosphate for fertilizer.

This is the fourth time in five years that Simplot Phosphates has been honored by the DOGM board. Earlier honors reflected the company's previous reclamation work; alterations of mine reclamation plans to help build two emergency runaway-truck ramps along State Route 191; and an educational program about mining, reclamation and post-mining land use.

» Kennecott Utah Copper and Rio Tinto, also a multiyear award recipient, for final site restoration at its Magna concentrator, which closed in 2001 after nearly a century of operation. Kennecott has now received 10 awards since the program was initiated in 1991.

Kennecott spokeswoman Jana Kettering said the company spent nearly \$4.6 million on the yearlong project, which included tearing down support buildings and structures, excavating soils below grade foundations, sending concrete debris to a third-party recycler for reuse, adding new clean dirt and recontouring and revegetating the 18-acre site with shrubs and grasses.

» Anadarko Petroleum Corp., for a program at its Monument Butte oil field that reduced water-truck traffic by 85percent, water consumption by 70 percent and the amount of dust and diesel emissions from traffic on dirt county roads.

» Energy West Mining Co., for helping to construct a 2.6-mile directional borehole that enables the North Emery Water Users Special District to install a water pipeline around a rugged cliff. The borehole reduced surface damage while giving the water district a dependable source of drinking water.

» Georgia Pacific Gypsum, for developing an innovative "bump blasting" technique that allowed a reclaimed quarry near Sigurd to have a more natural-looking appearance.

» Questar Exploration and Production Co., for advanced techniques that used desirable vegetation to restore plugged and abandoned well sites more quickly than standard procedures.

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