

## 2025 Buechler Velva Phase 3 AML Project

**Contractor:** Young Gun Construction, LLC.

**Contract Number:** AM-908-25

**Contract Bid Amount:** \$2,359,836.25

**Total Project Cost:** \$2,614,291.90

**Tree Removal Contractor:** Young Gun Construction, LLC.

**Contract Number:** AM-901-24 Amendment #1

**Contract Bid Amount:** \$75,000

**Total Project Cost:** \$75,000

**Location:** Nine miles southwest of Velva ND, including portions of Section 1, T151N, R81W, and Section 30, T152N, R81W, Ward County

2025 eAMLIS Project Information							
Project	Problem Area Number & Name	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Working Days	Project Cost	Estimated Population Impacted	Acres Reclaimed
2025 Buechler Velva Phase 3 AML Project	ND000004 Buechler Knorr	1/13/2025	11/14/2025	105	Tree Removal: \$75,000 Highwall: \$2,614,292	40 People (Census)	90.15 Acres 2900 ft Highwall

## Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

This project was funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The OSMRE (Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement) is required to submit a report to Congress within six years of the first IIJA AML grant allocations. This report will detail the progress made under the IIJA AML provisions in addressing outstanding reclamation needs under subsections (a) and (b) of section 403 and section 410 of SMCRA. OSMRE has asked States and Tribal AML Programs to collect the following metrics.

### IIJA Metrics:

#### AML Reclamation Environmental Benefits

- Number of acres reforested: 0 acres
- Number of trees planted on AML sites: 0 trees – This site would be eligible for future tree plantings.
- Number of bat gates installed: 0 bat gates
- Quantity of rare earth elements, metals, or sediment recovered for reuse: 0 tons

## **AMD Remediation Project Benefits**

- Quantity of iron, aluminum, manganese, sulfate, etc. removed and/or recovered on annual basis by AMD water reclamation projects: 0 tons
- Quantity of Rare Earth Elements (REE) recovered by AMD water reclamation projects: 0 tons
- Number of AMD passive treatment systems built: 0 systems
- Number of AMD passive treatment systems operated and maintained: 0 systems
- Number of AMD active treatment systems built: 0 systems
- Number of AMD discharges abated: 0 discharges abated
- Miles of waterways improved: 0 miles of waterways
- Estimated volume of water treated: 0 gallons
- Number of outflows remediated: 0 outflows

## **Socio-economic Benefits of IIJA AML Projects**

- Number of former/current employees of the coal industry employed in AML reclamation: 1 employee
- Percentage of workers employed at AML sites that reside in the county in which the AML project is located, or in adjacent counties: 16% (3/19)
- If there is a community benefit agreement as part of the project: No
- Number of project partners involved in AML reclamation projects: 0 project partners
- Number of contract(s) awarded that aggregated projects exceeding a value of \$1 million at the time of award: 2 contracts were awarded that aggregated over \$1 million
- Number of businesses constructed on reclaimed AML sites, and number of people employed at those sites: 0 businesses
- Number of job hours involved in IIJA AML remediation: 14,150.5 hours
- Number of people receiving potable water after completion of water supply restoration projects: 0 people
- Number of residents positively impacted by the restoration of previously polluted waterways: 0 residents
- Number of residents within one mile of an IIJA-funded project: 8 residents

**Further, for projects or aggregated projects in excess of \$1 million, States or Tribes should require that contractors, consistent with State or Tribal applicable law, provide:**

- 1) a certification that the project uses a unionized project workforce;
- 2) a certification that the project includes a project labor agreement; or
- 3) a project workforce continuity plan:
  - Not Applicable – North Dakota is a right to work state.

## **AML Background**

The Public Service Commission administers the Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Program on behalf of the State of North Dakota. The State AML Program was approved by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1981 under the authority of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-87, Title IV). Program funding comes from a federal reclamation fee on coal that has been mined in the United States since the late 1970's. These fees are placed into the AML fund, and the money that North Dakota receives from this fund is used to eliminate existing and potential public hazards resulting from abandoned surface and underground coal mines.

## **Buechler Velva Phase 3 Site Background**

Localized mining in the general area began as the Truax-Traer Coal Mine (1927-1961), then became a division of Consolidated Coal Company (1962-1969), and later was called the Consolidated Coal Company (Western Division).

The general mine area started reporting coal shipments in 1927 and operated continuously until it was closed in the mid-1980s. The initial production was “sold locally” until 1952, when the majority of the coal was sold for “use at the plant”. The William J. Neal Station was built in 1951 by the Central Power Electric Cooperative. The station was sold to Basin Electric Power Cooperative (1973). After Basin Electric built Leland Olds Station and Antelope Valley Station, the William J. Neal Station became less important and was decommissioned around 2000.

The 1952 aerial imagery does not show any mining activity in the project area. This area was actively being mined in the 1961 aerial photo. All mining in the project areas was completed before 1977.

## **Project Overview**

The AML Division began planning the 2025 Buechler Velva Phase 3 AML Project after site investigations and meetings with landowners in 2022. A public meeting was held on November 13, 2024, at the Velva City Hall. The meeting sought input from landowners, local government, and anyone concerned about abandoned mines.

PSC staff performed topographic surveys in the fall of 2022 and 2024, along with a plan to address the problems raised by landowners. In January of 2025, Young Gun Construction, LLC. was approved to complete tree removal with Amendment #1 to Contract AM-901-24. Trees were felled in the wintertime to avoid impacting bat populations and nesting raptors. Young Gun Construction, LLC. began cutting down the trees on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Approximately 600 trees were felled by January 17, 2025.

Young Gun Construction, LLC of Ludlow, South Dakota, was awarded the construction contract via competitive bidding in April 2025. On May 26, 2025, construction commenced.

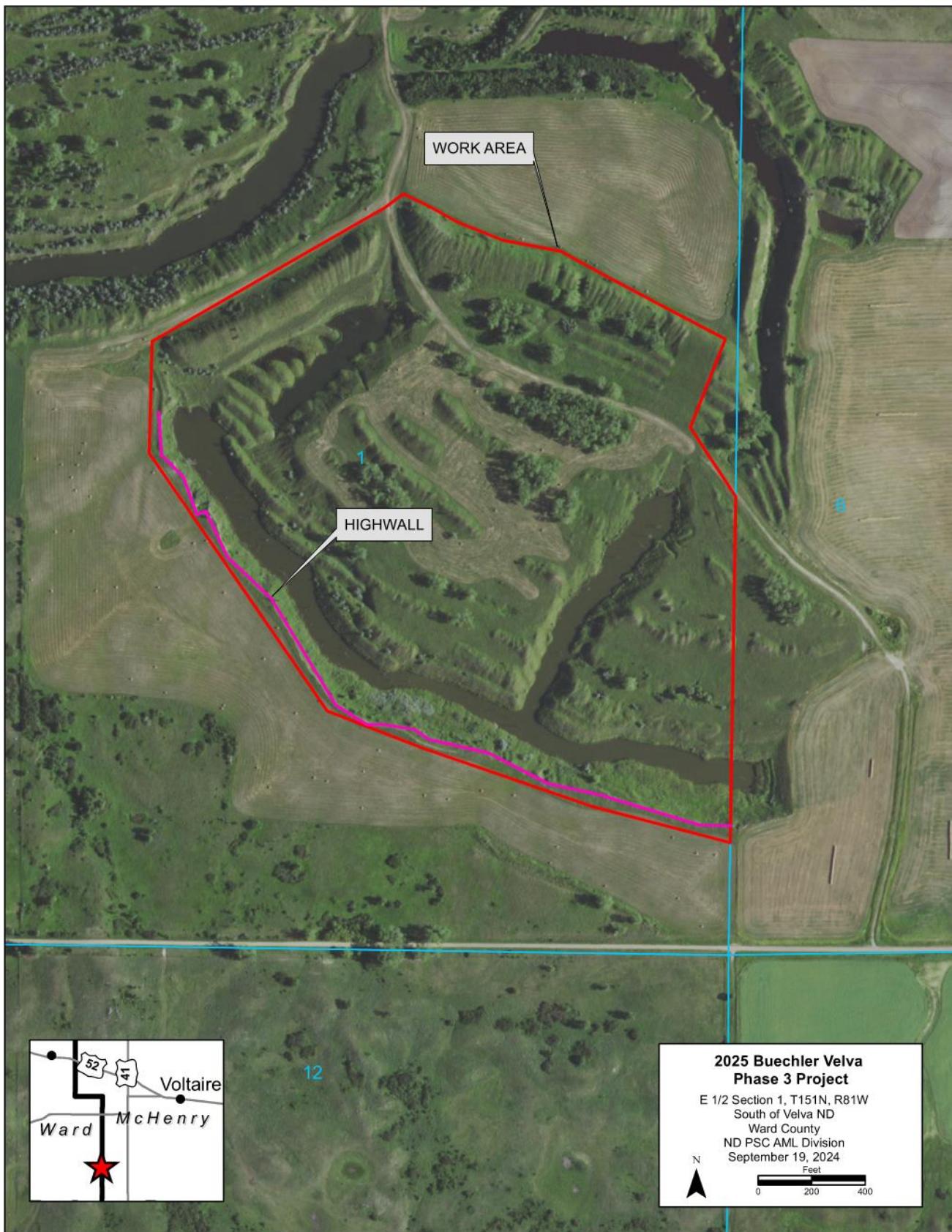
The abandoned surface coal mine (main site) was characterized by a steeply eroding highwall, 40 feet high and 2,900 feet long (**Figures 1 and 2**). Approximately 3,847 feet of silt fence were installed to control erosion and prevent sedimentation downstream (**Figure 3**). The contractor then began segregating topsoil and subsoil into piles. Next, the highwall was backsloped and backfilled with earthen material from adjacent spoil piles. Over 17 inches of rain fell during the construction of the project, creating extremely muddy conditions (**Figures 4 and 5**). A measured 912,022 cubic yards of spoil material were moved to reclaim the surface mine on the main site. Once backfilling and backsloping operations were complete, subsoil was respread. The trees felled in January were shredded, and the wood chips were incorporated and respread between the subsoil and topsoil layers to enhance vegetation (**Figure 6**). Surveys showed 68,386 cubic yards of topsoil and 116,617 cubic yards of subsoil were salvaged and respread (**Figure 7**). Manure was loaded and hauled from the landowners' nearby feedlot and respread over the steepest slopes in the reclaimed areas to help establish vegetation (**Figure 8**). Engineered drainage channels lined with erosion control blankets were installed to direct surface water runoff on the reclaimed area. A rock channel was installed on a steep area to control erosion and act as a drainage channel. A farm trail was re-established, graveled, and a flexible concrete mat was installed as a low-water drainage crossing. The remaining disturbed areas were seeded with locally adapted grass species and mulched. Approximately 1,807 feet of wattles were installed to prevent erosion in the newly disturbed areas (**Figure 9**). Reclamation at the main site was completed on October 22, 2025.

This project also included repairing two erosional areas in the 2021 Buechler Velva Phase 2 Project site (**Figure 10**). Repair work consisted of the excavation and disposal of an existing corrugated metal pipe, regrading, and the installation of a rip rap rock channel (**Figures 11 and 12**). The second area repaired was a 150-foot slope failure on a steeply sloped area near the former highwall. Topsoil was incorporated, and the area was regraded. The disturbed area was seeded and mulched (**Figure 13**). Straw wattles were installed to prevent erosion. The project was completed on November 14, 2025.

Statistics for the 2025 Buechler Velva Phase 3 AML Reclamation Project:

- 1,764 tons of gravel were used to maintain access to the project site
- 3,847 feet of silt fence was installed and removed
- 68,386 cubic yards of topsoil were salvaged and respread
- 116,617 cubic yards of subsoil were salvaged and respread
- 912,022 cubic yards of spoil material were moved to reclaim 2,900 feet of dangerous highwall
- 471 tons of rip rap were placed in two constructed channels
- 1,260 cubic yards of manure were incorporated into the respread topsoil.
- 6,342 feet of erosion control blanket were installed
- 1,807 feet of wattles were installed
- 90.15 total acres reclaimed

**Figure 1: Project Location Map – Main Site**



**Figure 2:** The surface mine in Section 1 before reclamation.



**Figure 3:** Over 3,800 feet of silt fence was installed to control sediment.



**Figure 4:** Over 17 inches of rain fell during the construction of the project, creating extremely muddy conditions.



**Figure 5:** Dealing with muddy conditions was a continuous problem during active construction.



**Figure 6:** Over 600 trees were felled, shredded, and incorporated into the respread soil.



**Figure 7:** Dozers are respreading topsoil.



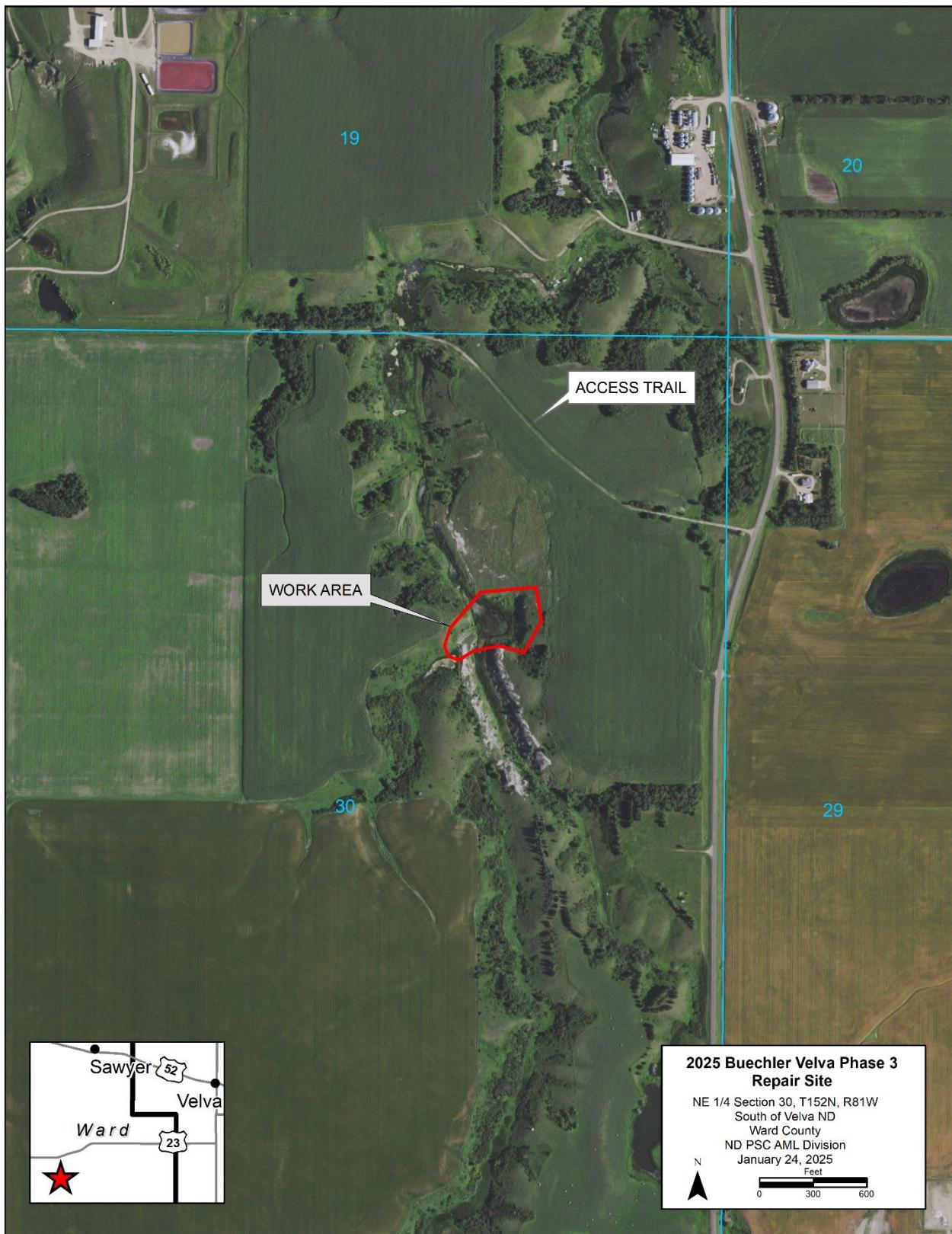
**Figure 8:** Manure is being loaded from the landowner's feedlot.



**Figure 9:** The main site in Section 1 after reclamation.



**Figure 10: Repair Site - Project Location Map**



**Figure 11:** Erosional features on the reclaimed surface mine before construction.



**Figure 12:** A rock channel was installed to replace a culvert with unstable, eroding soil.



**Figure 13:** Repaired slope stability area after completion.

