# Spoil Encyclopedia Article

## Spoil

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# Spoil

Normally used to describe **overburden** removed during **strip mining**. These operations leave long rows of intermixed rock and **soil**, commonly described as spoil banks. Often composed of loose shale and placed downhill from the final cut, they block outflow, forming lakes, and in level terrain store large amounts of **groundwater**. Prior to the 1977 enactment of the **Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act**, these man-made landforms were often abandoned, creating a distinctive landscape. Efforts are now made to reclaim these aptly-named "orphan" lands. However, unless properly done, **reclamation** may exacerbate **erosion**;in such cases they are best left undisturbed. Trees often lead the **succession**, perhaps hastening the day when effective reclamation might be feasible.