



**SAN MIGUEL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**



## Reclamation: Returning the Land to South Texans

### What is reclamation?

Reclamation is the process of restoring the land to a condition that is “as good as or better than” its original state and is done in collaboration with landowner expectations and requirements after mining has concluded. Properly reclaiming the land is important to prevent any negative impact on the environment and to provide beneficial land usage in the future for landowners and livestock, as well as for fish and wildlife habitat.



As good as or better than



Working in concert with our landowners



Award-winning reclamation

### Nearly three million acres restored

According to the National Mining Association (NMA), as of 2022, mine operators have reclaimed approximately 2.95 million acres of mined lands nationwide since 1978. These reclaimed lands have been repurposed for various beneficial uses, including recreation areas, farms, economic development, parks, golf courses, schools, housing, wildlife habitats and wetlands.

In Texas, miners do everything they can to minimize disturbances to land, vegetation, water, air and natural habitats. Their reclamation and restoration programs often exceed state and federal environmental regulations and are subject to an open, comprehensive and thorough permitting process. Many of these reclamation programs are award-winning.

*San Miguel has won awards for its land reclamation and environmental conservation, including a certificate of special Congressional recognition from U.S. Rep. Henry Cueller.*

**2.9**

million acres restored

**11,024**

acres reclaimed by San Miguel as of 2023

**20**

agencies regulate the industry

## We are neighbors and stewards

As of 2023, SMEC has reclaimed 11,024 acres of land. In 2023 alone, SMEC spent:

**\$1.7 MILLION**

**ON TOPSOIL AND HAULBACK  
REPLACEMENT**

**\$417,000**

**ON SEEDING, MONITORING, AND  
PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT WORK**

As a result, these lands are now used as pastureland, developed water resources, industrial/commercial use, ranching and agricultural purposes.

Many landowners have praised SMEC's reclamation efforts. Additionally, inspectors from the RRC and the Office of Surface Mining have commended the vegetation growth, sustainability and the return of a variety of wildlife to the areas reclaimed by SMEC. In fact, San Miguel has won awards for its land reclamation and environmental conservation, including a certificate of special Congressional recognition from U.S. Rep. Henry Cueller.

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## Land reclamation is highly regulated

Mining operations are regulated by no less than 20 state and federal agencies. In Texas, the industry is primarily regulated by the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). San Miguel works closely with these agencies to ensure compliance throughout every stage of the mining process.

During reclamation, the RRC requires that the reclaimed land complete three phases of "bond release" before being returned to the landowner. During this time, a mining site's soils, water and vegetation are analyzed and monitored to ensure they meet sustainable use standards. RRC inspects bond release areas before approving each phase. Its staff also conducts monthly inspections of reclaimed and active mining areas throughout the entire permit area.

After bond release, a five-year extended responsibility period must be completed, requiring that vegetation ground cover and productivity standards be met for a minimum of two years using normal agronomic practices. Ultimately, inspections required under these two programs enable San Miguel and regulatory agencies to identify any potential problems and mitigate them before returning reclaimed lands to the landowner.

## We work in partnership with our landowners

SMEC takes pride in its process of post-mining land restoration. Working with landowners, we are able to return post-mining lands so landowners may enjoy the use of their properties for generations to come – whether for livestock and ranching or fishing and wildlife habitat. Our goal is to make the land appear as if it was never mined. In effect, we reclaim property as if it were our own.

Our environmental specialists are highly educated experts on all aspects of state and federal regulations regarding mining and reclamation. Their charter is to review and improve SMEC operations, aiming to exceed state and federal vegetative regulations to protect the environment and provide value for landowners. We take pride in our culture of conscientious environmental leadership.

\*National Mining Association-<https://nma.org/>

### About Us

San Miguel Electric Cooperative, Inc. is a member-owned mining and power generation cooperative that serves the people of Texas' rural communities, working and living in partnership with its members. Through integrity, hard work and a commitment to safety, San Miguel maintains a dependable power supply at the lowest possible and competitive cost.

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