

# Foundry Sand Reclaims the Land, Makes the Grade



Waupaca Foundry has a long history of reusing foundry sand as many times as possible in the production of iron castings. Then, Waupaca Foundry promotes environmentally beneficial strategies to repurpose these sands, as well as slags and sand fines, that can no longer be used in the casting process. One of the most exciting of these secondary uses is to employ it as geotechnical fill in mine reclamations.

“The Midwest has lots of gravel mines and sandpits,” explains Environmental Coordinator Bryant Esch. “Once out of service, actions must be taken to responsibly convert the land to its post-mining use.” Regulations such as Wisconsin’s Ch. NR 135, Wisconsin Adm. Code have been established to create a uniform standard for reclaiming these inactive mine sites. The purpose of such laws is erosion prevention, site stabilization, and the achievement of a productive post-mining land use such as agriculture, recreation or wildlife habitat improvements.

Especially for small mine owners, this posed a challenge. Bringing a historical mine back up to grade was not a cheap process. However, foundry sand has proven to be an effective, less expensive way to recover the mine footprints.

To date, Waupaca Foundry has contributed hundreds of thousands of tons of foundry byproducts to fill in mines:

- 524,000 cubic yards used to restore sand and gravel pits in Wisconsin
- 95,000 cubic yards used annually in Kentucky

Data is available upon request to demonstrate the effectiveness of Waupaca Foundry sand for use in mine reclamations.

- Mine sites are restored to productive land use management with foundry materials.
- Waupaca Foundry has overseen the transformation of four mines in Wisconsin with others on the way.
- The largest mine reclamation project is in Kentucky where the Tell City, Indiana plant ships 95,000 cubic yards of foundry byproducts a year.



Waupaca Foundry is leading the industry in environmental innovations and sustainable practices.

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