

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### Wildlife Habitat

Sealing or filling of abandoned mine openings can result in disruption or displacement of wildlife habitat. Wildlife impacted can include bats, owls, small and large mammals (skunks, rabbits, raccoons, bears, etc.) and reptiles (snakes, lizards, salamanders, etc.). Prior to any closure activity, the abandoned mine opening should be inspected for wildlife habitat as site conditions permit. If safe access cannot be gained into or around an abandoned mine opening, information on the potential impact to wildlife can be obtained from the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.

Although backfilling a mine opening will destroy wildlife habitat and prevent entry, the use of specially designed openings in a wire mesh, steel grate or bulkhead barricade will permit access for small wildlife in and out of the opening and reduce the impact on their habitat. Details on suitable access methods are provided in Appendix B, Section B-8.

#### Construction Activities

Construction activities around abandoned mine openings can impact on wildlife habitat. When possible, work should be planned to minimize disturbance, especially during breeding and nesting.

Wildlife habitat can also be impacted when access roads are constructed, trees and brush cleared around openings and when fill or rock is excavated to expose an opening or obtain backfill or construction material. Groundwork and excavation can also result in erosion and sedimentation problems which can impact local streams and surface water courses.

Prior to any significant disturbance and excavation around abandoned mine openings, it is recommended that Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources or Nova Scotia Department of the Environment personnel be contacted to review the proposed work program. With their assistance, a work program can be developed which will minimize environmental impacts and help to preserve wildlife habitat.

#### Domestic Refuse and Debris

If site conditions permit, all refuse and other debris should be removed from abandoned openings and disposed of at a local landfill before the opening is barricaded, capped or sealed. If this is not possible because of unsafe conditions, the refuse and debris should be left in place and the opening secured.

