

DMM Safety Alert:

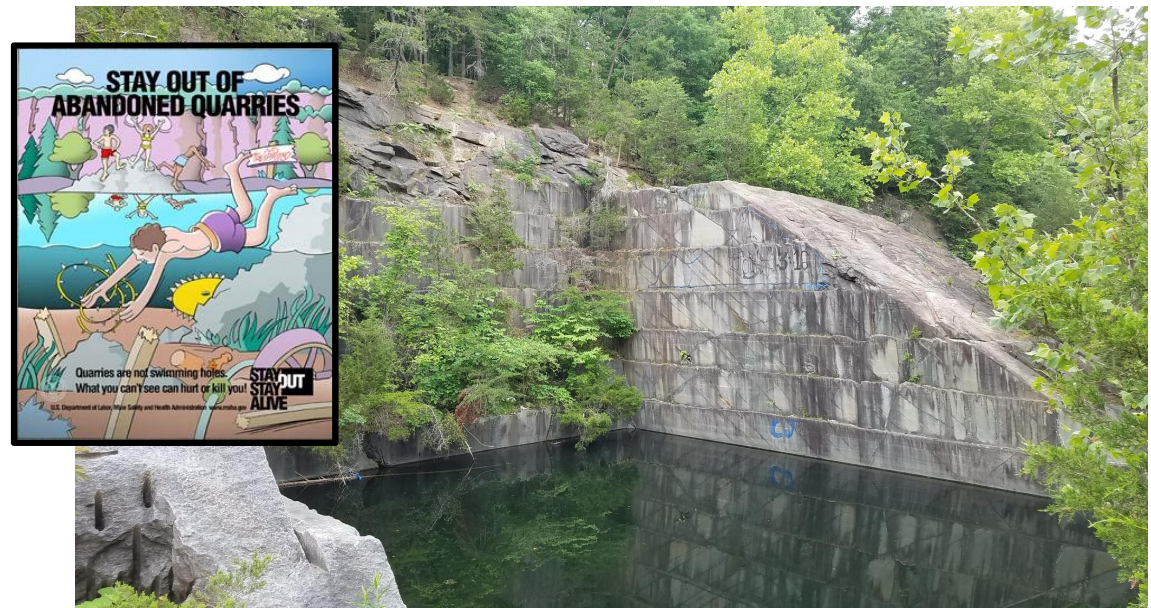
Quarry Drowning

On June 4, 2019, an 18-year-old man died while diving in an inactive quarry pit at a permitted mine site in Virginia. The victim was with a group of friends when he failed to surface after diving into the water-filled pit. The pit location is fairly remote and not easily accessed, but through word-of-mouth and social media, people have been directed to the site for swimming and diving. No trespassing and other warning signs near the site have been disregarded.

Water filled pits at active or abandoned mine sites often appear to be desirable swimming holes. However, the water can be deceptively deep and dangerously cold. Steep, slippery walls and unstable banks make exiting the pits difficult. Every year people, children and adults, are injured or killed while exploring or playing on mine property.

The use of active and abandoned mine sites for recreational activities will remain a serious issue going forward. Virginia's mineral mining laws and regulations require mine operators to take reasonable precautions to prevent trespassing on active mine sites. However, many of the abandoned mine sites in Virginia are not regulated by Virginia's Division of Mineral Mining. Regardless, DMM recommends the following:

- Install adequate warning signs that specify the hazards.
- Where practical, install fencing around hazardous areas.
- Install gates at all entrances to the mine and keep them closed and locked when there is little or no activity at the mine.
- Monitor mine property for signs of trespassing and work with local law enforcement to combat it.
- Have direct contact with neighbors to discuss the dangers of unauthorized entry to the mine property.
- Utilize the federal Mine Safety & Health Administration's Stay Out Stay Alive program; <http://www.msha.gov/SOSA/SOSAhome.asp>



Scene of recent fatality