

Book Cliffs underground mining operations dominate Utah's coal production:

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Deer Creek, Dugout, Skyline and Bear Canyon developed a combined 1.6 million short tons from private lands in 2003.

However, none of the underground mining operations produced fee coal last year, explained the UGS forecast.

Coal extracted from mineral lease tracts on private land should increase to 1.5 million short tons in 2005 as the Emery mine increases production.

in 2003, produced the remaining 24.5 percent of state coal production.

Processing waste coal piles at the old Sunnyside and Star Point mines is considered as reclamation rather than mining activity, continued the UGS forecast.

Fluidized bed combustion allows discarded washer plant waste and coal refuse to be used as fuel at Sunnyside Cogeneration power plant.

Annual waste coal consumption

at the Sunnyside facility averages roughly 450,000 tons.

As production in the Wasatch Plateau diminished in 2004, Book Cliffs mines had to increase extraction efforts to meet growing demands.

Mines operating in the Book Cliffs accounted for 38.9 percent of Utah's total production in 2004 for the highest level posted in at least the last 25 years.

By comparison, the Book

Cliffs field accounted for 30.2 percent of the coal produced statewide in 2003.

Overall production from mines in the Book Cliffs climbed 21.9 percent in 2004 and the UGS forecast predicted the level will increase by an additional 1.3 percent in 2005.

Tower operates the Aberdeen and Pinnacle mines and the division's production has more than doubled since 2003.

Canyon Fuels Dugout mine increased production by 30 percent, while West Ridge con-

tinued to experience problems causing the operation's level to fall by 24.2 percent last year.

Book Cliffs production could become more significant in the future with the proposed opening of the Lila Canyon and Columbia mines.

Underground mining facilities operating in the Wasatch Plateau field accounted for 60 percent of the state's coal production last year, down from 68.8 percent in 2004, concluded the Utah Geological forecast report.

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Book Cliffs field dominates Utah coal production

Coal production levels in the Castle Valley region and across Utah dropped for the third straight year to 21.8 million short tons in 2004, representing the lowest level reported by the mining industry statewide since 1993.

But bolstered by significant production increases at Andalex and Dugout Canyon, underground mining operations in Carbon County developed the majority of Utah's coal in 2004.

Carbon's production level registered at 8.8 million short tons last year, up from 7.1 million short tons in 2003.

In addition, all production efforts at Skyline will be concentrated in the company's northern leases located in the Carbon area as opposed to previous extraction activity that occurred in Emery County, noted the latest coal forecast compiled by the Utah Geological Survey.

Although Emery has led the state's coal production list since 1990, the neighboring county dropped below Carbon and Sevier last year.

Emery mines produced 5.5 million short tons last year, compared to 8.9 million short tons in 2003 and the peak annual level of 17.3 million tons in recorded in 1995.

Sevier's only active mine, Sufco, increased production to 7.6 million short tons in 2004, exceeding the county's 2003 total by 6.2 percent.

However, Emery County could witness a resurgence in coal production in the event the proposed Lila Canyon mine comes on line and starts operation, explained the UGS forecast report.

Federal mineral leases continued to dominate the coal production picture in Castle Valley and Utah in 2004.

Mines operating on United States Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service tracts accounted for 20.3 million tons or 92.9 percent of Utah's total coal production in 2004.

Production from Sufco, West Ridge, Dugout Canyon, Aberdeen, Horizon, Bear Canyon and Skyline mines will maintain the status of federal leases as the primary source of Utah coal for several years into the future, pointed out the UGS forecast.

Utah's public lands supplied 849,000 short tons of coal in 2004, representing 61.3 percent less than the 22.2 million ton production total reported in 2003 production.

State lands accounted for 3.9 percent of Utah's total production in 2004, down from 9.5 percent in 2003.

But the UGS forecast estimated that coal production on state lands should jump to about three million short tons in 2005 and increase more in 2006.

Deer Creek production moved onto Utah's Mill Fork tract in June 2005 and Sufco should transfer operations onto the state's Muddy tract by 2006.

Production on private fee land decreased from 2.0 million short tons in 2003 to 701,000 short tons in 2004. The total constituted 3.2 percent of Utah's total coal production last year.

Fee coal in 2004 primarily came from the Emery mine, Andalex Tower division and Crandall Canyon.

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