Book Cliffs field dominates Utah's coal production:

(Continued from page 1A)

Deer Creek, Dugout, Skyline, and Bear Canyon, which combined to produce 1.6 million short tons of coal in 2003 from private lands.

However, none of the underground mining operations produced as much coal last year, explained the UGS forecast. Coal extracted from mineral lease tracts on private land should increase to 1.3 million short tons in 2005 as the Emery mine increases production.

During 2004, longwall mining machines in seven mines developed 16.5 million short tons of coal, accounting for 75.5 percent of total Utah production.

Most notably, the UGS forecast indicated that a new low-profile longwall machine, which can cut coal in a seam 5.5 feet thick, was installed at the Cran- dall Canyon mine.

Twenty-four continuous miner machines, down from 25 in 2003, produced the remaining 24.5 percent of state coal production.

Processing waste coal piles at the old Sunnyside and St. Mary's mines is considered as reclaiming 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 2005, up from 22.2 million tons represented in 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 Fuel's Dugout mine increased production by 30 percent, while West Ridge continued 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.