

APPENDIX D
STATE OF UTAH, DIVISION OF
WILDLIFE RESOURCES, FISH AND
WILDLIFE PLAN

APPENDIX D

UMC 784.21; FISH AND WILDLIFE PLAN VALLEY CAMP OF UTAH INC., UTAH NO. 2 AND BELINA NO. 1 AND 2 MINING PROJECT

Mitigation and Impact Avoidance Procedures General to All Wildlife

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources provides the following recommendations in order to minimize disturbances and impacts on wildlife and their habitats that could be impacted during developmental, operational and reclamation operations at the Company's mining project. The recommendations address how enhancement of the wildlife resource and their habitats as discussed in UMC 783.20 can be achieved. They are also consistent with the performance standards of UMC 817.97. In instances where it would be necessary to restore or could be beneficial to enhance or develop high value habitats for fish and wildlife, recommended plant materials and rates of application are provided as "Appendix B" (UMC 817.97 and UMC 817.111 through 817.117). This list should prove useful in meeting the additional requirements to be imposed upon the operator since the primary or secondary land use will be for wildlife habitats (UMC 817.97 d 9). Additionally, "Appendix C" represents a list of commercial sources for plant materials.

The project and adjacent areas are represented by seven basic wildlife habitats which are inhabited on occasion and during different seasons of the year by about 206 species of vertebrate wildlife. The wildlife habitats and use areas for the "high interest" species from this group of wildlife have been ranked into four levels of importance. The most valuable to an individual species or ecological assemblage are the critical sites followed in respective importance by high-priority, substantial value and limited value sites. Each type of use area requires various and specific levels of protection from man's activities. Additionally, due to the variability of vegetation communities in each use area, various and specific technologies in site development will need to be evaluated for pos-

sible mitigations, enhancements of wildland habitats or the required level of reclamation.

It is recommended that the Company make significant efforts to educate all employees associated with their coal handling operation of the intricate values of the wildlife resource associated with the project and adjacent areas and the local area. Each employee should be advised not to unnecessarily or without proper permits harass or take any wildlife. (Apprehension of wildlife violators has increased by nearly 250 percent during recent years in the region). It is especially important that wildlife not be harassed during winter periods, breeding seasons and early in the rearing process. Exploration should be limited as much as possible during these crucial periods.

During winter wildlife are always in a depleted condition. Unnecessary disturbance by man causes them to use up critical and limited energy reserves which, often times, results in mortality. In less severe cases, the fetus being carried by mammals may be aborted or absorbed the the animal, thus reducing reproductive success of a population.

During breeding seasons, disturbance by man can negatively affect the number of breeding territories for some species of wildlife. Disturbance can also interrupt courtship displays and preclude timely interactions between breeding animals. This could result in reduced reproductive success and ultimate reductions in population levels.

Early in the rearing process, young animals need the peace and tranquility normally afforded by remote wildlands. It is also during this period that young animals gain the strength and ability to elude man and other predators. This allows the young animal to develop in relatively unstressed situations and to utilize habitats that are secure from predators. Disturbance by man can compromise this situation and result in abandonment of the young by the female, increased accidents that result in mortality to young animals or increased natural predation. It is

recommended that employees be cautioned against disturbing young animals or females with young if accidentally located.

Employees associated with coal handling operations should be instructed that when wildlife are encountered during routine work that they not stop vehicles for viewing purposes. Moving traffic is less disturbing to wildlife than traffic that stops or results in out-of-the-vehicle activities. If viewing is desirable, the vehicle should only be slowed, but not stopped.

Hunting and other state and federal wildlife regulations must be adhered to by sportsmen utilizing the project area.

Mitigation and Impact Avoidance Procedures for Aquatic Wildlife

The permanent culvert crossings Eccles Creek for access to the Belina mines must be modified so that a natural bottom and devices for reducing stream velocity are part of the structure. This should eliminate the barrier to fish migration that now exists.

If ultimate operations are planned or occur that could physically or chemically impact any perennial stream beyond the impact of mere crossings, detailed reclamation plans will be required. A reclamation plan for a stream modification would have to provide for measurement of the physical characters of the water prior to disturbance. Such measurements should consider surface water information required in SMC 779.16, data on stream velocity, gradient, width, depth, pool-riffle ratio and substrata types.

Reclamation that would achieve development of a stream channel similar in character to that which existed prior to disturbance should result in natural re-establishment of macroinvertebrates, macrophytes and a fish population. If merited and needed, the Division could then introduce desired fishes. This would adequately mitigate for disturbance and temporary loss of aquatic resources. There would be no mitigation for displacement and possible loss of other wildlife species dependent upon the aquatic wildlife as a prey source. It is believed that impacts

on such species would not be significant.

It is also recommended that adequate precautions be taken to keep all forms of coal or other sediments from being inadvertently deposited along or within perennial stream channels. Similar precautions should be taken to preclude deposition of coal particles or sediments in or along other drainages from which the material could be transported during a precipitation event into a perennial stream. This would include blow-coal from haulage trucks, railroads or other transportation systems and storage piles. Control of larger coal particles from the above sources is equally important to control of fugitive dust. If needed, haulage vessels or storage sites should be covered, or the surface of the coal appropriately sprayed in order to solidify it against wind movement. Travel speeds of haulage vessels could be reduced so that coal is not allowed to leave the transportation system. The impacts of coal or other sediments on aquatic ecosystems are many and varied; therefore, sediments must be kept out of those systems.

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources reaffirms all of the recommendations in UMC 817.41 through 817.57 and UMC 817.126 for protecting the State's waters and their associated riparian and wetland zones along with the aquatic wildlife resource.

Mitigation and Impact Avoidance Procedures for Terrestrial Habitats

It is recommended that all wetland and riparian habitats be maintained. Roads and other facility developments should not destroy or degrade these limited, highly productive and unique habitats. Roads crossing through those areas should do so in a manner that is least damaging to the habitat. Wetlands and riparian habitats are ranked as being of critical value and are the most productive sites in terms of herbage and biota produced as compared to other local habitat types. It is probable that a majority of the vertebrate wildlife that inhabit the project area make some use of riparian or wetland areas.

It is important to note that roads and other surface facilities to be con-

structed should as far as practicable be placed at sites where they will not compromise wildlife or their use areas. Also, surface facilities, including roads, should be screened if possible from wildlife use areas by vegetation or terrain.

In situations where wildland habitats have been or will be disturbed, reclamation is required. Also, there are sites where development or enhancement of wildland habitats through vegetation treatments and/or seedings and transplants of seedlings could benefit wildlife. "Appendix B" depicts the Division's recommendation for plant materials to be utilized for various wildlife habitats on wildland treatments that are intended to benefit wildlife. If circumstances arise where seed or seedling transplants for a recommended plant species are not available, suitable alternates are also recommended.

Seedling transplants from nursery stock as well as nearby rangelands would also be acceptable for some wildland treatments.

Appendix C represents an exhaustive list of commercial sources for plant materials for use in wildland treatments.

Temporary control of rodents may be required to ensure a successful rangeland treatment. It is recommended that the county agent be consulted in this area of concern. Poisoned oats are the most common and acceptable method for rodent control; however, only licensed persons may apply the treatment.

Currently, there are some new concepts in methodology for revegetation that are being successfully implemented in other parts of the nation and world. One promising method is a procedure where a large scoop removes, from a natural and stabilized site, a small area of earth intact with vegetation and subsurface soils for placement on a site to be restored. This same procedure can be utilized when disturbing pristine sites, except that the native vegetation is stored for use in latent reclamation. Another meritorius method for stimulating natural revegetation, in combination with other reclamation techniques, is to plan facility developments so that islands of natural, native vegetation remain. This will allow for natural

vegetation to spread from the islands. These techniques can also be useful for enhancement of poor quality sites that currently exist on the mine plan area.

Encapsulation of seed and fertilizer for several releases over a period of years after a single application is a new and possibly advantageous procedure. This technique along with soil stabilizing structures has been successfully used in South Africa. Dr. J. Van Wyk in the Department of Botany at Potchetsroom University in South Africa could provide additional information on this new technique.

There are also new specialized techniques coming to the forefront for stabilization of problem sites such as roadbanks and steep slopes. It is important that these sites be promptly and permanently revegetated in order to reduce siltation into local riverine systems. This will mitigate for damage to aquatic wildlife populations and habitats from siltation. Enhancement of existing problem sites or reclamation of disturbed sites can mitigate for salt loading of local river systems. It is believed that natural, nonpoint sources represent 50 percent of the salinity in the upper basin of the Colorado River system into which this mine plan area drains.

It is recommended the Company make numerous contacts with appropriate agencies, institutions and persons to ensure that enhancement or reclamation projects achieve the required degree of permanency, plant diversity, extent of cover and capability of regeneration to ensure plant succession. Generally speaking, seeding should be accomplished as late in the fall as possible. Seeding transplants need to be coordinated with local soil moisture conditions which are usually at optimum in the early spring just as the snow melts.

It is paramount that suitable vegetation be maintained and/or re-established if the life requirements of wildlife are to be satisfied in the postmining period. Success in this area of concern along with cessation of man's disturbances will likely result in a natural reinvasion and the resultant inhabitation by most wildlife species of an impacted site.

It is important to note that enhancement or reclamation projects that are

to benefit wildlife must be properly designed so that all the life requirements of the target species are considered in conjunction with forage. Water must be provided or be present and thermal cover along with escape and hiding cover has to be in abundance. Loafing areas and travelways between the many types of use areas must also be provided. In order to meet these goals, a considerable degree of consultation will be required between the Company and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

As a service and also to ensure that the needs of wildlife are met, the various expertism within the Division of Wildlife Resources are available to the Company for consultation. For the most part, Larry Dalton, Resource Analyst, for the Southeastern Regional office at 455 West Railroad Avenue in Price, Utah. 84501 (phone 637-3310) will coordinate any needed contacts. Richard Stevens, Wildlife Biologist, at the Great Basin Research Center, Box 704, in Ephraim, Utah 84627 (phone 283-4441) is available for consultation and site specific analysis concerning species for vegetation plantings, timing and techniques to achieve the best results.

In instances where revegetation projects are to be planned over coal waste areas, heavy metal uptake by the plants must be evaluated. It is recommended that the Company initiate an appropriate long-term monitoring program to determine the magnitude and resolutions, if needed, for this problem.

It is recommended that persistent pesticides not be utilized on the project area. Other alternate pesticides or forms of control should be utilized.

All hazards associated with the project operation should be fenced or covered to preclude use by wildlife; of special concern would be sites having potential to entrap animals or toxic materials.

Mitigation and Impact Avoidance Procedures for Amphibians and Reptiles

Enhancement or development of habitats that provides a diversity of vegetation will benefit amphibians and reptiles. It is important to note that all of these species are protected by Utah law. Due to the myriad of myths that

surround these animals, it is urged that individual specimens not be destroyed. This is especially true for snakes since they are a valuable component of the ecosystem.

Snake dens are ranked as being of critical value to the population and are protected by law. If a den is located, it should be reported to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Snake dens can be moved, but only with intensive efforts that may take a year or more (snakes are caught and removed in the spring and fall). Thus, construction of facility developments may take place in denning locations if there is sufficient lead time to relocate the occupants.

Mitigation and Impact Avoidance Procedures for Avifauna

It is recognizable that development and operation of the mining project will in some cases negatively impact many avian species through physical destruction of habitats and continual disturbance that makes other habitats unavailable or less desirable to an individual bird. It is also true that impacts that are negative to one species may be beneficial to another species. It is recommended that the Company plant native and/or ornamental berry producing shrubs around surface facilities. This will provide food and cover for many of the smaller species of birds, resulting in enhancement of their substantial value and high-priority habitats. This action would also mitigate for disturbances and destruction of avifauna habitats at other sites associated with project operations.

It is important to note that the nests of all avifauna (except the house sparrow, starling and feral pigeon) when active and their eggs are protected by federal (Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act) or state laws (Utah Code 23-17-1 and 23-17-2). All avifauna utilize a nest during their reproductive process. Dependant upon the species, some nests are well developed while others may be represented by only a scrape on the ground. These sites when being utilized are critical to maintenance of individual bird populations; each species has a specific crucial time period in which the nest is occupied. It is during this crucial period that the nest must be protected from disturbance.

Riparian and wetland areas need to have complete protection from disturbance between mid-March and mid-June due to the crucial nesting season of waterfowl. Disturbance should be significantly limited from mid-June through mid-October in order to protect the high-priority habitat values for brooding, moulting and migrating waterfowl.

Several species of raptors frequent the project area. Their nests when active should not be disturbed and abandoned stick nests are never to be damaged. Every effort should be made to eliminate man's disturbance within visual sight or one-half kilometer radius of an active raptor nest. This distance would have to be increased to a one-kilometer radius if the cause for disturbance were to originate within view and from above the nest. This effort is demanded in the instance of golden eagles and cliff nesting falcons since they are sensitive to disturbance and could abandon the nest. Termination of man's use of a site would not be required if eagles or falcons constructed their nest after mining had been initiated, since it would demonstrate the individual bird's willingness to tolerate mining activities and the associated disturbance by man.

Roost trees for eagles, if located, must not be disturbed or destroyed. As a general comment, whenever active raptor nests are observed or roost trees for eagles located, they need to be reported to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Design and construction of all electrical power lines and other transmission facilities shall be designed in accordance with guidelines set forth in "Environmental Criteria for Electric Transmission System" published by the USDA and USDI in 1970 and/or the REA Bulletin 61-10 "Powerline Contacts by Eagles and Other Large Birds." It is also recommended that placement of utility poles over flat or rolling terrain be planned so that they are out of view of roads or at least 300 meters away from any roads. This will lessen opportunity for illegal killing of these valuable birds, since the poles can serve as suitable hunting perches for raptors. In some instances poles can result in an extension of raptor hunt-

ing territories, which would represent a beneficial impact.

During the crucial period of December through February spruce-fir forests and aspen forests need to be protected from man's disturbance so that blue grouse and ruffed grouse will not be impacted. Destruction of these wildlife habitats at any time of the year need be minimized due to their value to wildlife.

During the spring period (mid-March through mid-June) care needs to be taken that male blue grouse are not disturbed or precluded from establishing breeding territories. Similar precautions need be taken for male ruffed grouse (March through May) in the area of drumming logs.

Agricultural lands associated with the project should be maintained under traditional agricultural practices and not converted to other uses. These lands are of critical and high-priority value to avifauna and a myriad of other wildlife dependant upon agricultural systems.

Mature trees with natural cavities and dead snags need to be protected for use by cavity nesting birds. Trees with such a character are ranked as being of critical value to cavity nesting birds. The project should be planned so that three such trees are left standing per acre within 500 feet of forest openings or water and two such trees per acre in dense forested areas.

Mitigation and Impact Avoidance Procedures for Mammals

The lodges, nests and dens of all mammals or roosts in the instance of bat like mammals represent a critical use area for maintenance of their individual populations. The crucial period for any species is when the lodge, den, nest or roost is occupied. Therefore, such sites for any mammal must be protected from disturbance during that period when it is being utilized.

Many species of mammals develop food caches in order to carry individual animals or family groups through periods when they cannot forage. Such sites are of critical value to maintenance of their populations and if located should not be destroyed or subjected to regular disturbance by man.

It is important to realize that within natural ecosystems there exists a predator-prey relationship. One species of animal may represent a prey source for other species. Therefore, it is important that project operations be designed and implemented so as to not unnecessarily disturb or destroy any wildlife or their habitats.

Big game ungulates on the project area--mule deer, moose and elk--each have seasonal use areas ranked as being of critical value to an individual herd. Such sites need to be protected from any of man's activities or developments that could result in destruction, loss or permanent occupancy of the site by man or his facility developments. If these types of impacts cannot be avoided the site must ultimately be reclaimed and revegetated. Also, critical valued areas need protection from disturbance during their appropriate crucial period.

High-priority valued use areas for all wildlife and particularly big game ungulates need to be protected from man's activities or facility developments. Actions that would result in loss or permanent occupancy of significant acreages (25 or more acres) of habitat are of special concern. In any event impacts to high-priority valued areas should be limited and ultimate reclamation planned. Many impacts can be avoided simply by precluding exploration, developmental or other activities during the period of time when a high interest specie is present.

Haulage of coal between the various mine projects and distribution points should be planned so that impacts to wildlife are lessened; of special concern is haulage of coal through wintering areas for big game along US Highway 6. It is recommended that the Company develop coal haulage contracts that require personnel involved with coal haulage to use extreme caution so that accidental collisions between motor vehicles and big game are reduced. Without doubt, a reduction in speed across winter ranges would alleviate this problem during the period between November 1 and May 15 each year.

At present the most successful and cost effective technique for reducing deer-highway mortality is a system of warning reflectors. This system (manu-

factured by Strieter Corporation, 2100 Eighteenth Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois, 61201, and known as "Swareflex") is only of value at night time, but it is during darkness that most deer-highway mortality occurs. Strieter Corporation describes the effect of the reflector system as follows: "The headlights of approaching vehicles strike the wildlife reflectors which are installed on both sides of the road. Unnoticeable to the driver, these reflect red lights into the adjoining terrain, and an optical warning fence is produced. Any approaching wildlife is (are) alerted and stops or returns to the safety of the countryside. Immediately after the vehicle has passed, the reflectors become inactive, thereby permitting the animals to cross safely".

In instances where conveyors, slurry lines or any other structure having potential to be a barrier to big game movement is to be developed, passage structures must be provided. Generally speaking, overpass and underpass type structures are recommended in order to allow passage of big game to habitats on either side of any barrier. These crossings should be placed at the points to be identified from intensive study of big game movements in relation to the mine plan area. Such study would not be required if the structure was adequately elevated to allow uninhibited passage of big game along its entire length.

Underpasses should have a minimum clearance of three meters maintained across a span of at least five meters. Overpasses should be designed as a circular earthen ramp with the barrier bisecting the ramp into two equal halves as follows:

On either side of the conveyor, a half-round ramp with a slope no greater than 3:1 on a five meters wide path placed at an angle of 90 degrees to the conveyor and tapering around to a slope of 5:1 at paths adjacent and parallel to the conveyor. The platform over the conveyor should be concrete or some other material that would not echo when being crossed by big game and should be of character similar to rock or natural earth.

Soils associated with either crossing style should be of the A or B horizons to allow for development of vegetation. Vegetative cover must be established in association with all crossing sites. This will lessen anxiety of individual animals using the site through development of a natural appearing environment.

Mature pinion or juniper trees and an abundance of browse plants need to be placed proximal to crossing points in order to provide a safe travelway. The browse plants will also serve as a permanent attraction for big game to crossing points. Additionally, a mixture of grass and forb

seeds should be broadcast over each crossing point to stabilize the soil and enhance the forage situation.

Appropriately sized boulders may need to be placed at crossing sites in order to control off-road vehicles utilized in outdoor recreation.

Installation of a wildlife warning reflector system, a reduction in speed of coal-haulage trucks and other mine related traffic and increased awareness of wildlife values by mine-associated employees should result in a reduction of deer-highway mortality problems. Such a reduction would represent satisfactory mitigation for the now existing problem.

Industrial developments are encouraged on habitat use areas that are ranked as being of limited value to wildlife. It should be noted, however, that reclamation is ultimately expected on any wildlife use area, regardless of its value to wildlife.