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October 2, 1981

Mr. Douglas F. Day, Director
Division of Wildlife Resources
1596 West North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

RE: Whiskey Creek Pollution
Problem
Belina Mines
Valley Camp of Utah, Inc.
ACT/007/001
Carbon County, Utah

Dear Mr. Day:

Mr. Dalton informed me on August 6, 1981, of the stream pollution problem noted in your letter to Jack Feight dated September 15, 1981. In response, I conducted several inspections of the Whiskey Creek confluence with Eccles Creek during the weekend of August 8 through 9, to determine if Belina Mine discharges were occurring over the weekend as Mr. Dalton theorized. During that period, no sediment loading of Whiskey Creek was evident.

During an afternoon inspection on Monday, August 24, 1981, inspectors observed a high volume emergency discharge from the mine water filter pond. A sample was taken and analyzed at the State Health Water Pollution Control Lab. Sample results unfortunately did not contain a TSS count as requested but the turbidity level of 9.5 is indicative of fairly low TSS. By visual observation of Whiskey Creek at the confluence with Eccles Creek, there was no evidence of sediment loading due to the discharge. Therefore, it can not be obvious, as you state, that Belina Mine water being discharged without adequate filtration is the causative agent of the high TSS detected in the DWR samples.

The Division has obtained the results of the water samples taken August 3, 1981, and it is evident that there was a significant impact to Whiskey Creek. It is unfortunate that DWR personnel did not tour upstream or visit the minesite to make a definite determination of the cause of the impact.

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On August 5, 1981, inspectors Jean Doutré and myself visited the Belina minesite and observed no new developments or activity that could have contributed sediments to the undisturbed area drainages. I walked down the Whiskey Creek drainage below the mine and observed significant sedimentation of the stream channel, but clear water. Historically, stream channel sedimentation has been evident since July 1980. On August 5, 1981, we observed Mountain Fuel pipeline installation that was using Eccles Creek water to pressurize the pipeline and then discharging the muddy water back into Eccles Creek. Water samples of Eccles Creek were taken below this activity and analyses showed a TSS value of 376 parts per million. Since the Mountain Fuel pipeline continues on above Whiskey Creek, could it be possible that a similar occurrence may have resulted in the high TSS sampled? Again, as the samplers did not investigate the matter further, we can not make an accurate determination.

It may be helpful for you to know the compliance status of Valley Camp in regard to the problem of illegal discharge. The EPA has been informed of discharge violations to the NPDES permit on several occasions. A Notice of Violation and Order was issued by EPA on August 14, 1981, requiring measures to prevent future reoccurrences. The Division of Oil, Gas and Mining has received plans on July 29, 1981, for modification of the mine water filter pond which are currently being reviewed by State Health and may be the solution to this reoccurring problem.

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this problem, please contact either our Hydrologist, Wayne Hedberg or myself.

Sincerely,

SANDY PRUITT
RECLAMATION OFFICER

cc: Steve McNeal, State Health

SP/btm