



United States Department of the Interior
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
Reclamation and Enforcement
BROOKS TOWERS
1020 15TH STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80202

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JIM
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Mr. Jim Smith
Division of Oil, Gas and Mining
4241 State Office Building
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

DIVISION OF
OIL, GAS & MINING

Dear Mr. Smith:

Enclosed for your information is a letter this office received regarding the post-mining land use plans for the Valley Camp of Utah Belina Mine Complex. The comments provided by the landowner, Mr. Milton A. Oman, will be incorporated into the forthcoming Decision Document.

If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Bransom or Walter Swain at (303) 837-3806.

Sincerely,

Stephen Manger
Utah Task Force Leader

has existed for many years, located on the north side of Eccles Canyon, which flows from the west to the east and which has its confluence with Mud or Pleasant Valley Creek in Section 17, Township 13 South Range 7 East. This dirt road is connected with a similar type road at the west boundary of my properties in Range 6 East and which leads from the point westerly in several directions through the above-mentioned national forest. The said road in the bottom of Eccles Canyon has now been vastly improved and surfaced by Valley Camp and by Coastal Energy Company. The said road now constitutes a very substantial barrier to the free and unobstructed movement of deer, elk, and domestic livestock - sheep and cattle. Substantial numbers of these animals have grazed these lush, highly productive forage lands since this state was settled, or since approximately the year 1880.

The road extending southward from the bottom of the Eccles Canyon road up to the Belina Mine complex constitutes a complete barrier to the movement of domestic livestock from one side of that road to the other because of the almost perpendicular grade on the upper or west side of this road. My ownership of lands is on both sides of this road. It constitutes less of a barrier to the game animals which graze the area on both sides of the road during the summer season, or from approximately April 15 to the time it snows in this high country - 9,000 feet elevation at the Belina Mine portal - becomes so deep that the animals are unable to travel or find forage sufficient to sustain themselves during the winter months. This Belina Mine road is less of a complete barrier to the movement of the deer and elk herds during the grazing season than it is to the domestic livestock.

COMMENTS AS TO LEAVING THE EXISTING ROAD AND OTHER FACILITIES INTACT UPON THE COMPLETION OR TERMINATION OF MINING OPERATIONS.

1. The existing road has been, during the current year, improved by widening the surface of it at one important curve and the same has been hard surfaced for its entire length. During the same period of time the road has been further improved by the construction of a hard surface or gutter or other suitable drains to catch and carry runoff waters to metal culverts which have been placed under the road surface and which spill the water to the lower side of the road. Deep snows fall in this area - more than twenty feet in an average winter. The waters must be diverted through these culverts at comparatively close intervals so that the volume of water directed through them will not cause extensive erosion and so that the lower or east side of the road will not become so saturated as to cause mudslides upon this very steep side hill. These slides would rip out all vegetative cover including trees. Continuous study will need to be given this very important factor so as to be in a position to know more fully than is now known what erosion will result from the handling of the waters which will accumulate along and above the road and be emptied through the said culverts onto the soils adjacent on the lower side of the road.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to make a determination as to whether the road now in existence should remain intact at the termination or completion of mining operations, which may not occur for twenty or more years. Uses which may exist at that time for the use of the range and for the use of the surrounding forest and range lands may be, and undoubtedly will be, materially altered from the present uses made of the lands to which the road provides access.

With the reservation that the right to change or amend the decision herein from time to time as changed conditions may require, I approve the proposal of the Valley Camp of Utah, Inc., that the road involved be left intact.

One cannot foresee what condition this road will be in after five, ten, fifteen or twenty years. A determination as to whether the road should be left intact upon the termination of mining operations will depend to some considerable extent upon the condition of the road as it exists at the time said operation terminates.

To some extent also, a determination as to whether the road is to be left intact will depend upon what other buildings and other structures at or near the portal of the Belina complex are to be left, in my ownership, and on what conditions the same might be left for use and ownership by myself or by my heirs, executors, or assigns, who are to have the same rights as to all of the properties involved herein as I have.

I do approve the plan of Valley Camp, Inc., to revegetate the surface of the areas adjacent to the road and adjacent to and around the facility near the portal of the mines. Where Aspen trees have a reasonable chance to survive it is urged that they, in preference to evergreens, be planted. Browse and grasses must be of a perennial type and suited to the slopes involved and of species known to reproduce in the most satisfactory manner, and which will provide the game and domestic animals with maximum forage of high quality.

Attention is called to the fact that the mining operations appear as of this date to have developed underground waters, which are being pumped from the mine down into the canyon which extends to the east and northeast of the mine portals, and across which canyon dams have been constructed by Valley Camp to deposit the sediments which come from the mine and which are washed into the ponds built for the purpose of causing the sediments to settle so that the stream which flows down this small pristine canyon into the Eccles Canyon Creek will not be polluted. It is urged that upon the termination of mining operations all waters developed in the mine be siphoned out of the mine and into the canyon where the said ponds are now constructed and that the said waters shall be owned by myself or by my successors who become the owners of the surface of the lands now owned by me.

December 21, 1983

Except for the one mud slide which has occurred on the lower side of the road involved here at a point near its junction with the Eccles Canyon road, I have no complaint with the work Valley Camp has done in the construction of the road and of the other facilities. I consider them to have been very well done with careful attention having been given all of the factors - soils, forage types, and of present and continuing recreation, wildlife and domestic livestock grazing.

Very truly yours,

Milton A. Oman

MAO/akd

cc: Allen D. Klein