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State of Utah
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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June 14, 2001

TO: Internal File

THRU: Daron R. Haddock, Permit Supervisor

FROM: Gregg A. Galecki, Reclamation Hydrologist
Paul B. Baker, Reclamation Biologist

Re: Technical Field Visit of Whiskey Creek, Lodestar Energy, Inc., White Oak Mine, C/007/001

Other Attendees: Chris Colt (Wildlife Resources), Daren Rasmussen and Mark Page (Water Rights), Dave Miller (Lodestar Energy)

Date & Time: May 22, 2001, 10:30 - 14:00. Partly Cloudy, slight SE wind, approximately 80 degees (Farenheit), minor snow remaining in north-facing exposures.

PURPOSE:

To have a joint meeting of personnel from various agencies reviewing/commenting on the Stream Alteration permit application submitted by Lodestar Energy, Inc. for Whisky Creek. Exercise dealt mainly with collecting field observations of the existing creek from various diciplines including hydrology, geology, wildlife, and plant biology.

OBSERVATIONS:

Initially the group met within the mine office and received safety training and had a brief overview/discussion of the stream alteration permit. General hydrologic observations indicate the dynamics of the channel are closely related to geology. In the lower reaches of the channel, prior to entering the culvert bypassing the mine site, the current channel ranges from 8 to 18-inches in width, and the bottom/riparian area is roughly 15-feet wide.

At the first draw, the channel is approximately 18-inches wide, channel-forming flow is approximately 9-feet wide, the high-water mark is approximately 24-feet wide, and the basin is approximately 50-feet wide. With the exception of a few approximately 18-inch drop pools, the channel has a generally moderate gradient. An average meander has a 26-foot apex and 3 to 4-foot arc. A short distance upstream of the road leading to the soil stockpile, the gradient dramatically increases, and the riparian area is confined to the 3 to 4-foot diameter area surrounding an 8 to 15-inch channel. Approximately 200-feet upstream of the disturbed area boundary, the channel once again crosses a more resistant bedrock unit and the gradient is once again more moderate, but the riparian zone is only in the range of 6 to 8 feet.

Many of the plant species in the riparian area were not yet at a phenological stage where they could be identified, but some were. Those that could be identified include Kentucky bluegrass, gooseberry currant, blue spruce, white and sub-alpine fir, western coneflower, fireweed, spring beauty, yarrow, false hellebore, stinging nettle, waterleaf, mountain brome, blue elderberry, sweet anise, and sneezeweed. Some were not identified to species, including geraniums, horsetail, and strawberries. There were two species of sedges, but they could not be identified to species. There was a rhizomatous wheatgrass, probably thickspike wheatgrass, and there may have been another wheatgrass, such as blue-bunch or slender. There could also have been some redtop. Notably, there were no willows or dogwoods.

Flatter sections of the stream have a defined, though relatively narrow, riparian area with a small wet meadow. In steeper sections, upland vegetation, such as the conifers and currants, grow right up next to the stream.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS:

At the end of the field visit, Division of Water Rights personnel indicated they were satisfied with the application. Barring any unforeseen problems, they were ready to issue a Stream Alteration Permit based on the information submitted. I stated that I have not conducted an official review of the submittal that was given to the Division of Water Rights, and reserved the option of making additional observations/comments once thoroughly reviewed.

The Division will make recommendations about the revegetation plan based on this visit, but baseline information is still needed because some of the species could not be identified, because it is the permittee's responsibility (not the Division's) to propose a reclamation plan, and because it may be necessary to have baseline information as a revegetation success standard.

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cc: David Miller, Lodestar Energy
Price Field Office
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