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

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OK

October 2, 2002

TO: Internal File

THRU: Pamela Grubaugh-Littig, Permit Supervisor *pgl*

FROM: Peter H. Hess, Sr. Reclamation Specialist/Engineering, Team Lead *PHH*

RE: Revision of Projected Surface Mining Plan, Plate 5-1C, Lodestar Energy, Inc./Mountain Operations, White Oak/Whiskey Creek Surface Mine, C/007/001-02C-1

SUMMARY:

The Lodestar Energy, Inc. mining operation completed underground coal extraction activities in the White Oak #2 mine during the latter part of September 2001. On October 26, 2001, the Division of Oil Gas, and Mining approved a surface mining permit for Lodestar such that a contour strip mining operation could be initiated in the upper and lower O'Connor coal seams on private ground owned by the heirs of Milton Oman, Ltd. This operation would produce coal from the area formerly occupied by the surface facilities of the White Oak #1 and #2 Mines.

The surface mining plan approved by the October 26, 2001 permit approval included a map (Plate 5-1C) depicting the proposed method to be used to extract the coal from the two-seam area. The pit sequence to be used was detailed on Plate 5-1C.

The permittee decided during August 2002, that an increase in production was necessary, which mandated going to a two-shift production operation. This necessitated a revised pit extraction sequence. The permittee has submitted a revised Plate 5-1C as of September 13, 2002 to reflect the revised pit sequence.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS:

OPERATION PLAN

TECHNICAL MEMO

MINING OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 784.2, 784.11; R645-301-231, -301-526, -301-528.

Analysis:

General

The revised Plate 5-1C submitted on September 13, 2002 depicts a new pit sequence that has been developed by Mr. Dave Miller, P.E., to extract the mineable coals from the two-seam operation. The Plate has been P.E. certified by Mr. Miller. The purpose of the submittal is to prevent the possibility of a compliance situation, as the currently approved Plate is not accurate relative to the pit sequence being followed in actuality. The legend included on Plate 5-1C (9/13/2002 submittal) reports the projected mineable tons from both the upper and lower O'Connor seams, as well as the cubic yards of burden to be moved to recover the coals. The calculated stripping ratio for each pit is also shown.

The 9/13/2002 submittal depicts all pertinent property boundaries with the associated surface ownerships.

The Division is not in the business of telling a permittee how to conduct their respective coal extraction process, as the types of equipment available and that equipments capability is normally not described within a mining and reclamation plan. These factors, plus others that may not be understood by Division personnel, are critical in developing an operation that is efficient and cost productive. Hence, the Division does not critique a pit sequence as has been developed by the permittee. It is the permittee's responsibility to make the coal extraction process, which includes all backfilling and grading requirements (as reviewed and approved by the Division) cost productive. All backfilling and grading requirements that have been reviewed are adaptable to the revised coal recovery sequence; hence, another review of those requirements is not necessary. All permit conditions relative to back filling and grading remain in effect, regardless of the pit sequence being utilized.

Findings:

The revised Plate 5-1C, as submitted September 13, 2002 adequately addresses the requirements of the R645 coal rules.

RECOMMENDATION:

The revision to the mining and reclamation plan (Plate 5-1C) should be approved as submitted.