

August 20, 1981

Memo to Coal File: .

RE: Price River Coal Co.  
Braztah Complex  
ACT/007/004  
Carbon County, Utah

On August 14, 1981, Susan Linner, Mary Ann Wright and Lynn Kunzler of the Division met with Craig Kling of Mariah Associates, consultant to Price River Coal Company. During a tour of the proposed vegetation reference areas on the minesite, Mr. Kling pointed out what he believed to be a Cooper's hawk's nest. He stated that he had seen adult Cooper's hawks in the area in June and July. At those times, the adult had been defensive of the nest site, calling and staying in the area. On the 14th, we saw no Cooper's hawks near the nest site.

The nest is in Crandall Canyon, in a 40-50 foot ponderosa pine tree on the south bank of Crandall Creek, an ephemeral stream. The nest is approximately 20-25 feet above the ground near the tree trunk on a horizontal branch. The tree was climbed so that closer examination of the nest could be made. The nest was a broad, fairly flat twig platform. It was lined with bark and two to three evergreen boughs, which were wilted. There was one egg in the nest. It was very cold and had obviously been abandoned. There were also some worn feathers stuck in the nest material indicating that an adult had incubated the egg at one time. Other than that, the nest was very clean, showing no signs of young having occupied it. The egg was white with no blotches on it. It measured 44 mm X 28 mm. The contents were liquid, indicating that the egg may have been unfertilized. It is recommended that this egg be analyzed to determine fertility.

Since Cooper's hawks generally lay clutches of 4-6, it is possible that this one-egg clutch was laid by a one-year old female in her first nesting attempt. It is doubtful that the egg was abandoned due to human disturbance (the road is within 30 yards and surveyors have been laying out the new road) since the adults appeared to be defending the nest site in June and July. It may have been finally abandoned after a couple of months of incubation when it failed to develop.

According to Stephen Jones (BLM technical note 335) Cooper's hawks probably mate for as long as both birds are alive and return to the same tract of woods (and often the same nest) for nesting each year. It is suggested that this nest site be monitored next spring to determine if the pair returns.

SCL  
SUSAN C. LINNER  
RECLAMATION BIOLOGIST

cc: OSM

SCL/btm

Statistics: See Price River memo dated August 17, 1981.