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April 27, 1988

TO: Coal File

FROM: Daron Haddock/ Reclamation Specialist

RE: Thickener discharge pond at Castle Gate Coal Processing Plant
ACT/007/004

On Tuesday morning April 26, 1988, the PFO recieved a phone message from Rich Allison, Castle Gate Coal Co., informing us of a pond failure at their processing facility. He informed us that steps were taken to remedy the situation as soon as possible but some water had flowed off of their permit area.

I drove to Castle Gate and met with Mr. John McCurdy at about 10:00 a.m. that morning. We then toured the site of the incedent. The following are my observations:

The pond is the process water pond just south of the thickener facility. This pond appears to be mostly incised but the south end has a 3-4 foot berm around it. A section of this berm failed (approximately 15-20 feet), allowing water from the pond to run across the lower part of the site, most of it in ditches on both sides of the road. Most of the water ended up in the two lower sediment ponds but due to the volume released, some water overtopped the ditch and flowed along the railroad tracks and eventually into Willow Creek near the UP&L power plant.

Work done to alleviate the situation included rebuilding the failed berm using gob material and cleaning out the sediment in the ditches with a backhoe.

I feel this work is adequate as a temporary fix, but additional work should be required. At the time of this inspection, water in the pond is above the ground level and up on the berm. In a couple of places water is still seeping through the berm, which does not appear to be constructed adequately to act as a dam or embankment. The berm should be reconstructed to meet pond embankment specifications (compacted, topwidth not less than H+35/5, sideslopes not less than 1v:5h, etc.) or, the water level in the pond must be kept below ground level. In addition, possibly sediment control devices such as straw bales or silt fence should be installed below the sediment ponds to treat water in case of future spills.

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In a phone conversation with Mr. Allison this morning, I voiced a concern that perhaps with the company's new long wall operation and the new train loading facility they were processing more coal which led to the additional water in the pond. Mr. Allison did not feel that this was the case. He indicated that the pond is sized to handle one and a half times the volume of the thickener tank. He felt that the plant operator had just failed to clean waste material from the pond prior to dumping the water from the thickener tank into it. Thus it was over filled.

cc: Sue Linner
Harold Sandbeck
Rick Summers
Randy Hardin
Dave Darby
PFO