

February 17, 1988

TO: File

FROM: Lynn Kunzler, Reclamation Biologist *ly*RE: Degasification Well, Castle Gate Coal Company, Castle Gate Mine Complex, ACT/007/004, Folder #2, Carbon County, Utah

Castle Gate Coal Company's proposed plan to drill degasification wells has been reviewed and found to be inadequate for approval. However, with the following conditions, the plan could be approved.

Condition UMC 817.97 - (1) - 1k

Castle Gate coal company shall not perform any construction or drilling activities within the critical big game winter range associated with the proposed site between November 1 and May 15, of any given year.

Condition UMC 784.13(b)(5)-(1)-1k

Castle Gate Coal Company should reduce the rate of seeding of mountain big sagebrush from 2 pounds/acre to .2 lbs/ac.

Discussion

The area of the proposed well is within an area designated as critical winter range for two species of big game, namely mule deer and elk. To adequately protect these animals while they occupy this range during crucial (winter) periods, the above condition for approval is needed. This condition is in concert with special condition #2 of the BLM which limits mine-related drilling activities (exploration) on critical big game winter ranges throughout the permit area.

The seeding rate for mountain big sagebrush is excessive and should be reduced to .2 lbs./ac. The reduced rate is expected to provide for the establishment of sufficient shrubs for the land use of the reclaimed site.

cc: S. Linner
D. Darby

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