June 23, 1988

TO: FILE

FROM: Randy Harden, Reclamation Engineer

RE: South Fork Portal Breakout, Skyline Mine, Southern Utah Fuel Company, ACT/007/005, Folder #2, Carbon County, Utah

Summary

A meeting was held on June 15, 1988 at the Skyline Mine to discuss the proposed portal breakout at South Fork. Representatives from the USFS, DWR, DOGM, and the operator was in attendance. The meeting and site visit to South Fork was a preliminary meeting to discuss concerns or requirements for development of the new ventilation portals. In conclusion, three alternate sites were selected for the portals, including the initial proposal by the operator. None of the agencies expressed any real concern or problems associated with the portal breakout.

Analysis

A presentation of the site location was made by Keith Zobell and Craig Hilton of Utah Fuel Company. The presentation included the need for the new ventilation portals, their intended use and timing for reclamation of the site. Upon conclusion of the presentation, a site visit at the proposed portal location was conducted.

The proposed site called for the improvement of an existing Forest Service road, to the extent that would be required to move equipment on the site, development of a Class III road across the drainage and the excavation of a portal pad approximately 150 by 50 feet into the embankment of the hillside. Portals are to be driven from within the mine to the face-up provided at the portal pad. A total of three openings would be required in order to achieve sufficient ventilation in the area scheduled for mining. Additionally, the opening would serve as an emergency escape way for the mine.

The Skyline Mine accomplishes ventilation by positive head (blowing the air into the mine). The ventilation breakout would not require the installation of a fan at the breakout. No facilities would exist at the breakout other than the portals themselves. Locked guards would be placed over the portals to prevent unauthorized access into the mine from the surface.

Upon visiting the site, some concerns primarily from the USFS were expressed. Ira Hatch indicated that he would like to see the crossing of the stream to be only temporary and that any culvert placed in the channel be removed upon the completion of the development of the portal pad. It was suggested that rather than installing and removal of a culvert crossing two times, that an arched steel crossing be installed. By the installation of the arch, the existing stream channel would not have to be so drastically disturbed as would be required by the installation of a culvert. If properly sized, the arch would then be allowed to remain for the life of the mining operation and would only be removed upon final reclamation of the site. Skyline indicated that this suggestion had merit and would consider the cost of the steel arch in lieu of a culvert design.

Due to the steep slope conditions of the stream channel at the proposed stream crossing, alternate sites were investigated by the group. The proposed design called for the grade of the access road to pass over the coal seam while crossing the stream channel to minimize the amount of coal that would have to be excavated during construction of the road.

Alternatives discussed at the site for consideration included a direct approach to the coal seam perpendicular to the stream channel while locating the portal facilities closer to the stream itself. Significantly less disturbance would be required for the site. This alternative would all but eliminate the access road required to the portal pad.

A second alternate to the proposed site was to move the portal pad further to the east, which would require lengthening of the access road to the portal pad. This location would allow the portals to be sited at a greater distance from the stream channel. It was also noted by Skyline that the slope of the hillside was substantially less at this site than the other two proposed sites. This reduced slope would significantly increase the size of the portal pad in order to construct the face ups for the portals.

Regardless of the tentative site location, Skyline indicated that a final survey and determination of the location, condition and extent of the coal seam at the proposed sites had not been determined. The final location of the portal pad and breakout facilities could most likely not be determined until further exploratory digging at the site was made utilizing a backhoe.

The use of the soil sampling auger of the Division was offered in assistance to helping locate the coal seam and lessen the amount of exploratory work which would be required in construction of the portal breakout. Skyline will procure the auger from the Division during the next site inspection or when convenient in the next few weeks.

Based on review of the alternatives and opinions of those attending the meeting. Skyline intends on further evaluating and modifying the proposal to suit those needs.

JRH/as
cc: S. Linner
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