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State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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April 25, 1997

TO: File

THROUGH: Joe Helfrich, Permit Supervisor 

FROM: Paul Baker, Reclamation Biologist 

Re: Upper Huntington Canyon Exploration Plan, Canyon Fuel Company, Skyline Mines, ACT/007/005, Folder #2, Carbon County, Utah

Canyon Fuel Company has proposed to drill two exploration holes in upper Huntington Canyon in Emery County. The Bureau of Land Management is the permitting agency, and the Division and Forest Service provide comments.

The following are comments and suggestions about the plan:

1. The application discusses two options for the access road and says the applicant prefers option 2. A larger area would be disturbed or redisturbed using option 2; however, this option avoids Huntington Creek and some smaller drainages. This option is strongly preferred.
If option 1 is chosen, the applicant would need to obtain appropriate permits from the State Division of Water Rights and possibly the Army Corps of Engineers.
2. The application says the applicant intends to use vegetation as the primary sediment control method. Vegetation would probably not be established until the next summer. A layer of straw, possibly crimped with hand tools, would provide better interim surface protection until the vegetation became established.
3. On page 12, the plan says topsoil will be protected from erosion and disturbance during storage, but it does not say how this will be accomplished.
4. The application says the area will be double bonded. The Division's exploration regulations do not require a reclamation bond.

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5. On page 15, the application says, "The seed mixture shall be 99% pure live seed containing a maximum of 1% weeds none of which are noxious." It is almost impossible and certainly unrealistic to have a seed mixture with 99% pure live seed. There is no need to have a commitment like this in the application as long as the applicant plants the proper amount of pure live seed.
6. The applicant has committed to do a ground survey for goshawks in the late spring or early summer. The exploration would happen late enough in the year that there will probably not be any adverse effects on goshawks or other raptors. Any nests should be protected, but if there are active nests, they should be rechecked for activity before disturbance begins. If these nests are still being used, the exploration activity should be delayed.