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State of Utah
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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April 21, 1997

TO: File

THRU: Joe Helfrich, Permit Supervisor 

FROM: Robert Davidson, Soils Reclamation Specialist 

RE: Winter Quarters Coal Exploration, Canyon Fuel Company, LLC, Skyline Mine, ACT/007/005-97B, Folder #2, Carbon County, Utah

SYNOPSIS

Canyon Fuel Company, LLC, Skyline Mine has submitted an application for minor coal exploration within the Winter Quarters Canyon area of Carbon County, Utah, Federal Lease UTU-67939. The surface rights are controlled by the U.S. Forest Service and the coal rights are controlled by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The responsibility of the Division of Oil, gas and Mining is to give comments through the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. This document supplies the soils' Technical Analysis.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

**COAL EXPLORATION: COMPLIANCE DUTIES
OPERATIONAL STANDARDS
TOPSOIL**

Regulatory Reference: R645-202-233.

Analysis:

The soils section adequately describes the soils resources for the exploration areas. There are no prime farmlands or alluvial valley floors within the proposed lease area. The soils are generally sandy loam with dark, organic rich surface horizons. Bedrock is exposed in several locations where the soil thickness thins with little or no cover. Elsewhere, soil thickness varies with each location with deep to moderately deep soils on ridgetops and valley floors, and shallow to moderately shallow soils on steep hillsides.

Five different drill sites include four Winter Quarters Ridge sites 96-3-1, 96-3-2, 96-10-1, 96-11-1 and one Winter Quarters Canyon site 96-2-1. Access to drill sites 96-3-1 and 96-3-2 will include reopening and using a reclaimed road as well as new road construction. The plan states that topsoil will be salvaged. Access to drill sites 96-10-1 and 96-11-1 will require all new road construction from the existing USFS road. Topsoil will be salvaged. The Winter Quarters Canyon site access will require upgrading an existing road and construction of a new road on the steep north hillside of the canyon. Topsoil will not be salvaged from the new road construction due to safety concerns and slope steepness. Soil will be cut from the hillside and used as a portion of the road surface and out slope without any segregation of the topsoil from underlying subsoils and fills. During reclamation, these unsegregated soils and fills will be pulled back to the original contour for reclaiming the hillside. Topsoil will be salvaged from the drill pad.

Generally, the plan states that topsoil will be removed and stockpiled from each area for re-distribution during road and site reclamation. Topsoil will be stockpiled adjacent to each site and will be protected from erosion during storage. However, the plan does not specifically identify how the soils will be protected from erosion during storage.

Findings:

The permittee must provide the following, prior to approval, in accordance with the requirements of:

R645-202-230, the plan fails to specifically identify how stockpiled soils will be protected from erosion during storage.

**COAL EXPLORATION: COMPLIANCE DUTIES
RECLAMATION STANDARDS
TOPSOIL**

Regulatory Reference: R645-202-241 and R645-202-242.100.

Analysis:

After reshaping the land to the approximate original contours, stockpiled soils will be replaced and the soil surface roughened prior to fertilization and seeding. The plan states that

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vegetation re-establishment is the primary means to prevent soil erosion. However, the plan fails to explain alternate erosion-control measures for protecting the soil if vegetation cover does not adequately control erosion.

Findings:

The permittee must provide the following, prior to approval, in accordance with the requirements of:

R645-202-235 and R645-202-242, the plan fails to explain alternate erosion-control measures for protecting the soil if vegetation cover does not adequately control erosion.

cc: Daron Haddock

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