

Speculation continues regarding water at Skyline

By KAREN BASSO
Staff reporter

A year has passed since workers at Skyline mine located near Scofield hit a water pocket. As a result, water started pouring into the coal mine.

At the time, workers began setting pumps into the water-filled section and clearing as much of the liquid as possible out of the area in order to proceed with mining efforts.

Since then, conditions have changed and several speculations have been formed regarding where the water is coming from.

The presence of water in a coal mine is not a new occurrence. In fact, the Skyline coal production operation is notorious for being a wet mine.

However, the amount of water being released into the section because of the pocket is above normal conditions for the particular coal mine.

Although production has resumed since the incident occurred last August, mine workers continue to pump water out of the flooded area.

According to Skyline's parent company Arch Coal, the coal mine continues to pump an estimated 10 million gallons of water per day.

The water being pumped out of the mine is being released into Eccles Creek and eventually being released into Scofield Reservoir.

Soon after hitting the pocket at the mine, an investigation was launched by Arch Coal to determine the origin of the water.

The results of the initial tests suggested that the water was coming from a new source, one which was thought to have had no exposure to the atmosphere.

The tests conducted by the coal company focused on the presence of the chemical isotope tritium in the water.

Tritium is produced by hydrogen bomb tests and shows up in all surface water on the planet.

The preliminary tests at Skyline revealed little presence of tritium, thus leading officials to



The banks of Electric Lake show the significant amount of water loss the storage facility has suffered in 2002. The water loss has Utah Power officials concerned because the lake serves as the backup cooling supply for the Huntington plant. Last year, underground workers at Skyline encountered a water pocket while

drilling into the wall of the coal mine. The water quickly filled the section and continues to drain into the mine. The company's concern is that the water may possibly be coming from Electric Lake. Therefore, an investigation by Utah Power will ensue to determine where the water from Electric Lake is going.

believe that the water originates from an underground source.

Since the initial testing was completed, little speculation has

been made about the origin of the water. At least, that was the situation until recently.

Utah Power officials recently

became concerned that the water being drained into the Skyline mine may be coming from Electric Lake. The lake is owned

by the power company.

According to Utah Power spokesman Dave Eskelsen, the lake has been losing approxi-

mately 600 acre-feet of water per month for the past several months.

An acre-foot equals about 326,000 gallons and is equivalent to the amount of water an average family uses in a year.

Because the storage level at Electric Lake continues to drop at such a rapid rate, Utah Power plans to launch an investigation to determine whether the water is being lost into the Skyline coal mine.

Electric Lake is an important commodity to the Huntington power plant because it provides the backup supply of cooling water for the electricity generating facility.

The primary source of water in the lake comes from the Huntington Creek. Due to the ongoing drought conditions, it is extremely difficult to secure water supplies.

Because the lake continues to lose significant amounts of liquid on a monthly basis, Utah Power plans to reduce the flow into the creek in order to conserve water.

The power company operates the reservoir under a special use permit with the United States Forest Service, pointed out the officials.

The permit contains a provision which allows Utah Power to reduce the water flow in emergency situations.

While the investigation ensues to determine the cause of the water loss, the power company plans to reduce outflows to six cubic feet per second - or half the 12 cubic feet per second called for in the original permit.

The water flow reduction will not only affect the water levels of Electric Lake, but it will also impact the trout in Huntington Creek.

The reduced water flows could affect the amount of gravel on the stream bottom, which in turn would decrease spawning habitats.

Because there is so many factors at stake, the investigation into the matter is expected to move at an accelerated pace.

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The success of this endeavor will depend on the willingness of our people to work together, to listen to the "customer/visitor" and to be consistent in the delivery of our "brand" package. Once that is underway, and when the area begins to transform, a logo, slogan or mascot can be developed, but there is an incredible amount of work to be done first.

"If we build it, they will come" only happens in the movies. To successfully transform our area into a thriving destination location, we need a good plan. Mr. Larson said it well when he said, "the process takes a lot of time and effort". So true! He also said "do we have what it takes in Carbon County to create such a place?" In this context, "it" is a big word. Do we have the people who want to do it? I believe so. Does the community (broad term) have the desire to make changes? I'm not so sure. Let them participate in the planning and maybe they will step up to the plate. Do we have the time, money and vision to make it happen? I hope so.

The Price area and Carbon county in general has a rich history to be proud of. We have a world class museum, a top rated hospital, a great wave pool, and hard working people. It would be a shame if we don't address the future presentation of our "brand" correctly. It could affect our kids, our property values, our jobs and our future incomes.

ces of drought

rapid growth without suffering the costs of additional fire suppression? Can we adequately meet the water needs for not only human consumption but also for wildlife and livestock?

Utah is mostly a desert; planning and conservation efforts must not be mounted just in times of crisis, but all the time. A few lifestyle changes and with proper management of our natural resources, we

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Mo is definitely different with the largest difference being that the New Zealand dollar is valued at about 45 percent of the American dollar. Their coins begin with the nickel and include the 10 cent coin; 20 cent, 50 cent, \$1 and \$2, while their bills begin at \$5.

I spent three days showing Michael some of the sites in the area and if anybody can cover a lot of ground in three days it's me. We spent a day in Nine Mile Canyon and visited all five

of the museums in the two counties. We camped out on the San Rafael River, just under the Wedge, toured the Cleveland Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry, watched the sun set through Delicate Arch and spent a day hiking the Canyonlands. We enjoyed the mysteries of Goblin Valley and he was able to photograph the sun rising over Dead Horse Point near Moab.

Another thing I found interesting is Michael's concerns while camping of the reptiles and wild animals. In New Zealand there are no snakes, no

poisonous spiders and no cougars or mountain lions.

Life is very short and I always welcome learning about other people and what their day to day life is like. There is no better way to understand another culture than to host a visitor from that country.

I must say that Castle Country certainly sells itself. The activities, the museums, areas of interest and the incredible beauty of southeastern Utah makes it very easy to be an excellent tour guide.

Letters:

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sanctuaries, Lyndon Johnson handed enemy forces the tactical and strategic initiative. They could come out of those safe areas at their time and pleasure, take us on, and then go back into those sanctuaries to take care of their wounded, regroup, and get re-equipped. We were denied the tactical and strategic initiative by Lyndon Johnson. The lies and deception of the Johnson administration were so morally wrong, and the enormity of it all is just finally coming out."

In addition to interviewing General Moore, William F. Jasper wrote two major cover story articles: "Vindicating Our Veterans" and "Seven Myths about the Vietnam War."

The first article provides moving accounts of the heroism of Moore's men at the battle of the la Drang. But it also notes that the lessons of Vietnam are applicable today. It points out, for instance, that the same one-world cabal that has mired us in one no-win war after another will do the same with the "war on terrorism" unless stopped.

We Were Soldiers has created new interest in learning the truth about Vietnam. So too has the escalating war on terrorism, which is spreading to dozens of countries and which (we are told) will last for decades.

James Franklin Rinehart
Price

Speculation continues regarding water at the Skyline Mine:

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No testing is currently being conducted by Arch Coal at the Skyline mine site.

However, according to company spokesman Deck Slone, Arch Coal is aiding Utah Power's investigation by providing information.

"This investigation is a cooperative effort. Our company is providing Utah Power with the information which we have in order to aide their studies. Our engineering staff continues to share their data about the carbon dating tests which were ran earlier this year. Arch Coal plans to work hand-in-hand with the power company during this investigation," explained Slone.

Although water continues to enter the mine, production has resumed at Skyline. The coal company produces three to four million tons of coal per year. Despite water problems, this average is expected to be met again this year.

Despite the coal mine and the power plant being located near one another, the mine does not provide coal to the Huntington Plant like many Carbon County residents assume. In fact, the coal produced at Skyline is shipped to various locations across the country including Nevada Power. The primary coal source for Huntington Plant comes from Utah Power owned Deer Creek Mine which is located near the power plant.

As the studies continue, one thing remains the same. Skyline Mine has too much water while Electric Lake does not have enough.

**Please remember that
the deadline for
submitting items
for the FYI section
is Tuesday at 5 p.m.**