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STATE OF UTAH
NATURAL RESOURCES
Oil, Gas & Mining

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August 1, 1984

TO: Memo to Coal File

FROM: Lynn Kunzler, Reclamation Biologist

RE: Refuse pile test plots and Unit Train Revision, Plateau Mining Company, ACT/007/006, Carbon County, Utah

On July 25, 1984, Lynn Kunzler and Tom Portle of the Division met on-site with Clem Parkin of Getty Oil and Ben Grimes of Plateau to review the refuse pile test plots and asertain impacts to said test plots due to anticipated installation of the proposed Unit Train Loadout facilities and observe the effectiveness of wildlife mitigation that has been implemented.

Test Plots

Resolved: Plateau will not disturb the test plots until after 1985 data is collected, thus providing three full years of data from all plots. After installation of the proposed Unit Train facilities, most of plots B2 (20" subsoil w/100 lbs/acre 16-16-8 fertilizer) and C1 (10" subsoil w/100 lbs/acre 16-16-8 fertilizer) and about 1/2 of plots B1 and C2 (soils same as B2 and C1, fertilizer rate doubled) will be destroyed.

It was decied that three years of data should be sufficient to determine the effects of the fertilzer rate and soil/subsoil depth on initial establishment. However, three years is not adequate to determine the long range establishment or the possible effects of the underlying refuse material. It may be possible to obtain sufficient data form the remaining portions of plots B1 and C2, however, if data from each plot differs significantly from closely related plots or varies greatly year to year, it may be necessary to redo test plots for the affected treatments. The division will make ths determination after reviewing the 1985 data.

Sampling proceedures for the test plots will include:

Cover - a tenpoint frame will be located along 9, 50' transects in each subplot (each plot being divided into three subplots - upper slope, mid slope and lower slope and each subplot being divided into three replecations). Each sample unit will consist of 100 pins.

Production - herbaceous (grass and forb) species will be clipped in 3, 1/4m^2 quadrates along each cover transect.

Density - a meter-wide belt transect along each cover transect will be utilized to determine woody plant density

These sampling proceedures are acceptable to the Division and should provide adequate data for statistical analysis.

Unit Train

Wildlife Mitigation

Background: In 1982, Plateau Mining Company initiated enhancement of a 40 acre tract of land in critical winter habitat. Enhancement activities included removal of overmature woody vegetation by blading and disking to promote sprouting, seeding with species of known food value for wildlife and building small catchment basins in an ephemoral drainage. Within a few months of completion, the catchment basins had silted in. Rather than a continued maintenance program, a guzzler is being installed to replace the catchment basin in the spring and summer of 1984.

Observations and Discussion: Brush piles as a result of the blading were scatered throughout the area, providing habitat for small mammals, most of the seeded grass and forb species were doing well and were in abundance. Transplanted browse species were also doing well. One species of particular concern as to how well it was performing was kochia prostrata (an introduced species). Discussions with Clem Parkin indicated that it had been seeded, but no specimens had been found. After transversing the area twice looking for this species, one plant was finally located. The plant was less than six inches high and had been heavily browsed. Surveys to quantify the vegetation response will be done in the next two weeks.

The guzzler installation was nearly complete and had a three-wire (barbed) fence around it to prevent use by cattle. Although there was about six inches of water in the guzzler, there was no physical evidence that it was being used. This is probably due in part to an abnormally wet year with water readily available throughout the general vicinity and construction/installation activities were still being finished. Vegetation was sparse within several feet of the guzzler and could also be a contributing factor to its low use. This could be remedied by planting/seeding species to provide hiding cover around the guzzler.

Conclusion: At this point in time, the enhancement activities could be considered a success in increasing the carrying capacity and improving habitat conditions to absorb wildlife displaced by the proposed Unit Train facilities and the waste pile expansion. Continued monitoring of the site will demonstrate the level of enhancement achieved.

LK:grc
cc: Allen Klein, OSM
Ben Grimes, Plateau Mining Company
Clem Parkin, Getty Oil Company
Sue Linner, DOGM
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