

August 8, 2003

TO: Internal File

THRU: Karl Housekeeper, Environmental Scientist/Team Lead

FROM: Jerriann Ernstsens, Ph.D., Environmental Scientist/Biology

RE: Discontinuance of Vegetation Monitoring, Plateau Mining Corporation, Star Point Mine, C/007/006, Task ID #1618

**SUMMARY:**

The Division received an amendment on June 27, 2003 to address the discontinuance of vegetation infrared-image monitoring at the Star Point Mine. This memo reviews the vegetation portion pertaining specifically to the Revegetation: Standards for Success section of the amendment.

**TECHNICAL ANALYSIS:**

## **RECLAMATION PLAN**

### **REVEGETATION**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR Sec. 785.18, 817.111, 817.113, 817.114, 817.116; R645-301-244, -301-353, -301-354, -301-355, -301-356, -302-280, -302-281, -302-282, -302-283, -302-284.

**Analysis:**

---

TECHNICAL MEMO

---

**Revegetation: Standards For  Success**

The Permittee is required to monitor the effects of mining subsidence on vegetation. Monitoring includes the application of infrared imaging of the area. Patrick Collins of Mt. Nebo Scientific, Inc. analyzed the images from years 1980, 1993, and 1998. The results showed there were no significant changes in vegetation imagery among the three years. Dr. Collins summarized that mining operations of the Star Point Mine have not significantly affected the vegetation. The 1998 annual report provides Dr. Collins' analysis and discussion of the vegetation-imagery evaluation.

In 2002, the Permittee found subsidence cracks. The Division examined the cracks, but could not determine when the cracks occurred. The Division usually assumes that 90% of all subsidence from longwall operations occurs within six months of initial mine operations. Based on the data in Appendix D of the MRP, the Division has no reason to make another conclusion. Because the Division previously approved amendments to discontinue subsidence monitoring and the site appears stable, the Permittee may cease subsidence monitoring of vegetation.

For the record, Star Point Mine ceased mining operations in February 2000. The Star Point Mine is currently in the process of transferring the refuse pile and topsoil borrow area to Sunnyside Cogeneration Associates (SCA). Plateau Mining Corporation indicates that it will not conduct reclamation activities on those two areas. SCA will assume responsibility for two disturbed areas as described in their new permit.

**Findings:**

Information provided in the application is considered adequate to meet the minimum Revegetation Standards for Success section of the Reclamation regulations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Approve the application to cease infrared monitoring of vegetation.