

# TECHNICAL FIELD VISIT

Utah Coal Regulatory Program

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July 27, 2004

TO: Internal File

THRU: Pamela Grubaugh-Littig, Permit Supervisor *PL*

FROM: Wayne H. Western, Environmental Scientist III/Engineering *WHW*

RE: Technical Field Visit, Phase I Bond Release Mudwater Canyon, Plateau Mining Corporation, Star Point Mine, C/007/006, Task ID #1910

**Attendees:** Johnny Pappas, Plateau Mining Corporation  
Layne Jensen, Earth Fax Engineering  
Wayne Western, DOGM

**Date & Time:**

On June 23, 2004, met at trailhead by relay towers at 2:00 PM and arrived at the site at 3:00 PM stayed until 3:45 PM and returned to trailhead by 5:30 PM. Weather was warm with clear to partly cloudy skies.

**PURPOSE:**

The inspection team conducted the site visit to determine if Mudwater Canyon met the minimum requirements for Phase I bond release.

**OBSERVATIONS:**

Reclamation at Mudwater Canyon was limited due to the remote location. The only access for machinery was through the mine. The type and size of equipment that Plateau Mining Corporation (PMC) could bring through mine was limited. In addition, since PMC had to send all the equipment back into the mine before they sealed the portals that restriction limited the amount of fill that they could place against the highwalls.

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### Highwall Remnants

Mudwater Canyon was a pre-SMCRA site. The limitation for highwall reclamation were:

- The size and type of equipment that PMC could bring through the mine was limited.
- The amount of material available for reclamation was limited because the site was pre-SMCRA.
- PMC had to take the equipment underground before they finished reclamation.

The specific items that the inspection party looked at were:

- Did the highwall remnants pose a safety hazard to the public? The highwall remnants were in competent sandstone. There was no evidence that slope failure occurred in natural rock outcrops. The area is very remote so few people would ever visit the site.
- Did the highwall remnants pose an environmental hazard? The team found the site to be stable. There was no sign of erosion or surface failure. Vegetation had become established which helped control surface runoff.
- Were the highwall remnants compatible with the postmining land use? The postmining land use was wildlife habitat and grazing. The highwall remnants did not interfere with those land uses. The highwall remnants were similar to nature cliffs in the area.

### Cutslopes

Cutslopes or highwall remnants ran across the eastern edge of the site. The cutslopes are in competent sandstone and the area appears stable.

#### Backfill and Grading

The backfill appeared to be stable. The inspection party found no signs of slumps or slides.

### Hydrology

The hydraulic controls at the site were surface roughening, vegetation, and straw bales. The inspection team found no signs of erosion on the areas subject to surface flows. On the north end of the site there is an ephemeral drainage. To control erosion PMC installed straw bales in 2000. The bales are still in place and functional. Vegetation in the ephemeral channel has been established and should control erosion after the straw bales fail.

### RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS:

The Division's recommendation was to grant Phase I bond for the Corner Canyon Facilities. The Division found that the designs, including the retention of highwall remnants and cutslopes, met the requirements for backfilling and grading, including restoring the site to the approximate original contours.

cc: All Attendees  
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