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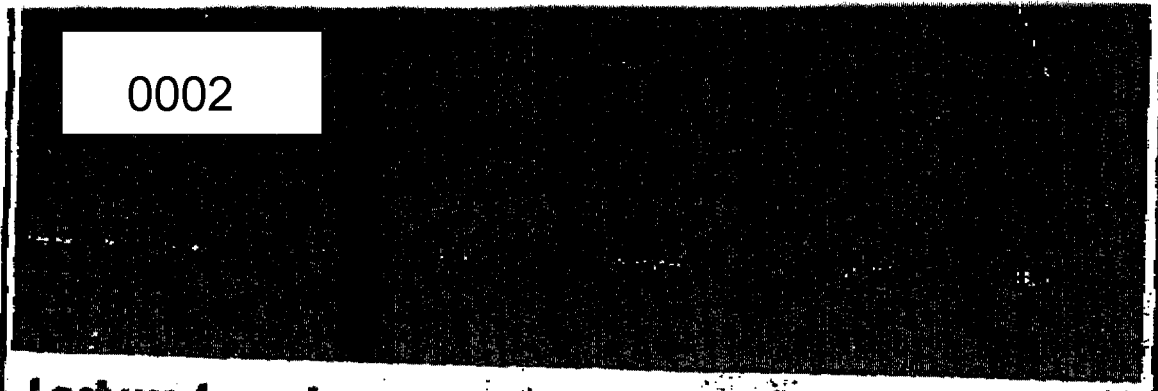

Lest we forget

Family members of the 27 miners killed in the Wilberg Mine five years ago remembered the event in many ceremonies last Tuesday. Both the Wilberg and Cottonwood mines were closed for one day in observance of the tragedy.

Utah coal industry cannot afford a severance tax on coal, he explained. The tax credit would face its greatest opposition from proponents of such a tax.

"I submitted the bill last year and couldn't get it out of committee. At least by filing the bill this year we can show we don't need any additional taxes," said Dmitrich. "The coal industry cannot tolerate any additional taxes and still be competitive with neighboring states."

Dmitrich patterned the proposal after similar laws in Colorado and Oklahoma. Such

government will probably be most important."

Because education is in need and social programs have been cut in the past, dealing properly with all areas of state government will be a challenge, according to Dmitrich.

"There's not enough money in Utah to make everyone happy. We'll have to take care of the priorities," he said.

The state representative will be making an effort to change the bill submitted by the Utah Liquor Tax Force, which he says discriminates

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Once again

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Mine oil spill kills fish in Grassy Trail

By LAYNE MILLER
Staff writer

Sunnyside Reclamation Salvage in Sunnyside has been the cause of another fish kill in Grassy Trail Creek.

Division of Wildlife Resources personnel said an oil spill early last Sunday morning has decimated the fish population in 3.3 miles of the creek. A similar spill in March killed over 1,500 wild rainbow trout, wiping out the entire population in the same stretch of water.

Larry Dalton, DWR fisheries biologist, said the most recent spill killed all the fish that were reinvading the stretch. "We don't know exactly how many fish were killed because the water was so murky we couldn't see to the bottom," Dalton said. Officials electro-fished the stream and no fish came to the top, indicating the kill was total.

The spill is creating a controversy between the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining and the DWR. Even thought the DOGM admits "there clearly was an unapproved oil spill," they don't agree with the cleanup suggested by the DWR. "They (DWR) would like to see the stream vacuumed, but some biologists believe that would also vacuum up the micro-invertebrates the fish eat," said Lowell Braxton, DOGM official. He said SRS officials claim the stream is cleaner now, even after the spill, than it was before 1980.

Braxton said the mine was fined approximately $6,000 after the March spill and it will be reprimanded for the spill last weekend. He said the mine has not paid the first fine, but is appealing the fine and the citation. He did not know how SRS would be reprimanded this time.

SRS mine manager Bill Ballas said the mine has done everything it can to keep this type of thing from happening, including voluntarily building a bigger retention pond to hold the mine's runoff water. "We did that voluntarily," said Ballas, "no one told us to do it."

He said the spill was created when a pipe filled with hydraulic fluid feeding the number one longwall broke, releasing the fluid into the stream.

Dalton said, "The toxic level was seven times higher than the acceptable level for the fish."

Officials believe the fish are native to Grassy Trail Creek. The Colorado cutthroat trout probably survived there for some time, as long-time residents of Sunnyside tell of catching fish in the stream 30-40 years ago.

DWR officials claim they are pushing DOGM to take more severe action against the company because of their "apparent lack of concern" about the environment. Dalton said, "This seems to happen frequently up there." He said other area mines are easier to work with than SRS. "They (the other mines) do more for the environment than is even required of them," he said. To prove his point, Dalton said the March spill in Sunnyside has yet to be cleaned up. "There just seems to be a lack of care on the mine's part," he said.

One official, who wished not to be identified, suggested that DOGM is going easy on SRS because if the company goes under, as Kaiser did, the state of Utah will be responsible for the cleanup, because of the Kaiser bankruptcy. He explained DOGM allowed Kaiser to post its own bond for the reclamation of the area, so when they took out bankruptcy, the state was left holding the bag. "If SRS goes under, the state will be liable for the reclamation," he said.