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State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

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October 2, 1991

Route to Susan Han
file # 1007/1007
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DIVISION OF
OIL GAS & MINING

Mr. Karl R. Housekeeper, Environmental Engineer
Sunnyside Reclamation and Salvage, Inc.
P.O. Box 99
Sunnyside, Utah 84539

**Subject: Deterioration of the Fisheries in Grassy Trail Creek
Below the UPDES Discharge Site**

Dear Mr. Housekeeper:

On September 18, 1991, Wildlife Resources personnel conducted an examination of the Grassy Trail Creek fishery below the Sunnyside Mine to assess a report of a recent discharge causing diminution to the stream. The examination revealed a build-up of coal fines in the stream below the mine's discharge site which apparently had not been filtered by the mine's sedimentation pond. It is also suspected that discharges have altered the water quality, because of the change in algae type below the mine discharge site. Photographs enclosed with this letter identify the dramatic difference between the stream environments above and below the mine discharge site.

Grassy Trail Creek is a natural reproducing fisheries. It is the Division's concern that the deposition of coal fines and turbidity will inhibit the benthic fauna population and retard growth of the fisheries. This site has caused problems with the fisheries in the past from which the fisheries have not fully recovered. Three different spills have been reported, in March of 1977 mine discharges were identified as causing development of black slime on the rocks and bottom of the stream, and on March 24 and April 15 of 1989, Sunnyside Reclamation and Salvage, Inc. (SRS) spilled soluble oil into the creek.

This Division has previously identified the need to establish a lower hydrocarbon discharge level to effectively maintain this fishery. We would like your cooperation limiting the discharge of particulates and ensure that the natural stream chemistry is maintained below the mine discharge site. The photograph of the discharge pipe and of the drainage channel below the discharge pipe identifies that a relatively large discharge took place, which was accompanied by a substantial amount of coal fines. Utah's Coal Mining Rules require an operation plan to protect fish and wildlife (R614-301-330) and that those plans are carried out (R614-301-351).

Mr. Karl R. Housekeeper, Environmental Engineer

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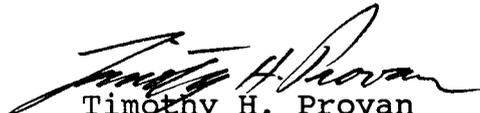
The regulations also require that the hydrologic balance be maintained (R614-301-731.121).

The best mitigation for this problem is to ensure that only clean discharges take place. It is hoped that if this practice is carried out, that natural flushing of the stream will restore the substrate. If the current facilities or practices cannot be accomplished to control contaminating discharges, then alternate sediment control structures or treatment methods should be used to treat the mine discharge.

We recognize Sunnyside Reclamation and Salvage's commitment to promote environmental standards. The Division intends to promote and maintain this fisheries because of its location and productivity. We hope to work with SRS recognizes its productivity and to benefit the environment and community.

If you have any further questions, please coordinate with the Regional Habitat Manager, Ken Phippen (telephone 637-3310), in our Southeastern Regional office.

Sincerely,


Timothy H. Provan
Director

cc: Ken Phippen, Div. Wildlife Resources, Price
David Ariotti, Div. of Environmental Health, Price
Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining
Utah Bureau of Water Pollution of Control

SUNNYSIDE RECLAMATION AND SALVAGE (SRS)
Mine Water Discharge

Photographs

1. Confluence of mine discharge into Grassy Trail Creek. Note change in clarity of stream before and after mine discharge enters stream (arrow indicates direction of stream flow).
- 2, 3, and 4. Stretch of stream below mine discharge. Note dark color of stream and coal fine line on rocks and stream banks.
5. Ponds below mine discharge appear turbid and show coal fine levels along banks.
6. Lower sedimentation pond at SRS. Note coal fine level along embankments.
7. Sedimentation discharge pipe indicating level of water discharged from the pond. Note moist fines - still not dry from recent discharge.
- 8 and 9. Channel below discharge pipe contains coal fines. Discharge flowed under containment boom.
10. Algal growth which occurs only below mine discharge.