



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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INSPECTION REPORT

Partial: Complete: Exploration:
Inspection Date & Time: October 23, 1997
Date of Last Inspection: September 11, 1997

Mine Name: Gordon Creek Mines #3 & #6 County: Carbon Permit Number: ACT/007/017
Permittee and/or Operator's Name: Mountain Coal Company
Business Address: P.O. Box 591 Somerset, Colorado 81434
Type of Mining Activity: Underground X Surface Prep. Plant Other
State Officials(s): David W. Darby
Company Official(s): Dan Guy
Federal Official(s): none
Weather Conditions: Partly Cloudy, no rain
Existing Acreage: Permitted- 668 Disturbed- 28 Regraded- Seeded- 28 Bonded- 28
Increased/Decreased: Permitted- Disturbed- Regraded- Seeded- Bonded-
Status: Exploration/ Active/ Inactive/ Temporary Cessation/ Bond Forfeiture
Reclamation (X Phase I/ X Phase II/ Final Bond Release/ Liability Year)

REVIEW OF PERMIT, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS & PERMIT CONDITION REQUIREMENTS

Instructions

- Substantiate the elements on this inspection by checking the appropriate performance standard.
 - For complete inspections provide narrative justification for any elements not fully inspected unless element is not appropriate to the site, in which case check N/A.
 - For partial inspections check only the elements evaluated.
- Document any noncompliance situation by referencing the NOV issued at the appropriate performance standard listed below.
- Reference any narratives written in conjunction with this inspection at the appropriate performance standard listed below.
- Provide a brief status report for all pending enforcement actions, permit conditions, Division Orders, and amendments.

	EVALUATED	N/A	COMMENTS	NOV/ENF
1. PERMITS, CHANGE, TRANSFER, RENEWAL, SALE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. SIGNS AND MARKERS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. TOPSOIL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. HYDROLOGIC BALANCE:				
a. DIVERSIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. SEDIMENT PONDS AND IMPOUNDMENTS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. OTHER SEDIMENT CONTROL MEASURES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. WATER MONITORING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. EFFLUENT LIMITATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. EXPLOSIVES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. DISPOSAL OF EXCESS SPOIL/FILLS/BENCHES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. COAL MINE WASTE/REFUSE PILES/IMPOUNDMENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. NONCOAL WASTE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. PROTECTION OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. SLIDES AND OTHER DAMAGE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. CONTEMPORANEOUS RECLAMATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. BACKFILLING AND GRADING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. REVEGETATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. SUBSIDENCE CONTROL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. CESSATION OF OPERATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. ROADS:				
a. CONSTRUCTION/MAINTENANCE/SURFACING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. DRAINAGE CONTROLS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. OTHER TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. SUPPORT FACILITIES/UTILITY INSTALLATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. AVS CHECK (4th Quarter-April, May, June) _____ (date)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. AIR QUALITY PERMIT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. BONDING & INSURANCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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GENERAL COMMENT

A Phase III bond release inspection as conducted on site by Utah Division of Oil Gas and Mining staff. Participants reviewing the minesite included: Lowell Braxton, DOGM Director; Pam Grubaugh- Littig , Susan White, Sharon Falvey, Jesse Kelly, Bob Davidson, and myself. We met Paige Beville, ARCO and Dan Guy, Blackhawk Engineering, on site. We walked the reclaimed site to evaluate any deficiencies which would keep the operator from obtaining bond release.

Notice of the Phase III bond release site visit was sent to adjacent landowners and published in newspapers.

Prior to looking at the site I told Paige Beville that the Division had a responsibility to evaluate the concern presented by the Stamatakis brothers claiming a relationship between the dead aspen at the mouth of Coal Canyon and mining of the Gordon Creek #3 and #6 Mine.

We walked the reclaimed site to evaluate any deficiencies which would keep the operator from obtaining bond release. A complete review and summary needs to be done and is scheduled for November 20, 1997.

2. Signs and Markers

The permit sign was observed on the gate. The sign contained all required information.

4. Hydrologic Balance

a. Diversions

It was apparent that storms had hit the area since the last inspection. The access road and side slopes revealed rills that were not present during the last inspection. The heavy vegetation covering the old disturbed areas provided protection and no damage was observed.

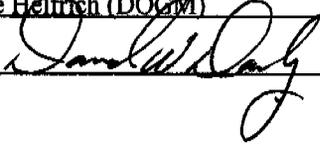
Remnant silt fence and rock gabion structures along the access road were no longer needed to filter runoff. I asked that they be removed to keep flow in the channel.

We walked down the main stream channel. On abandonment the operator had received permission to collapse a culvert and backfill the channel and reestablish the stream on the surface. At one time during the reclamation period a sinkhole had developed, but was filled. As we walked along the channel, over the culvert we noticed a low area about 6 feet in diameter and 4 to 6 inches deep. We thought it could be a collapsed area but was not positive. The low area had animal burrows in it and appeared old. No other problems appeared with the culvert area.

The channel sections where the access road which crossed the main stream channel to the sedimentation pond is very stable. The channel is well vegetated. The high water mark from recent storms was easily recognized on the plants.

Mailed to: James Fulton (OSM/Denver), Paige Beville (MCC)

Given to: Joe Helfrich (DOGM)

Inspector's Signature:  David W. Darby #47 Date: 11/12/97

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b. Sedimentation Ponds

The sedimentation ponds contained water. We walked the embankments and down the spillway. It was questioned if the grouted spillway was allowed to remain for final bond release. The pond and its structures were left at the request of the landowner who committed to maintain the pond for cattle and wildlife. The pond infrequently receives flow only after winter and during heavy precipitation events. No discharges have been reported during the last ten years. During this past month unsubstantiated claims suggest that precipitation event approaching, if not surpassing the 100 year-6 hour event, have occurred in the area, but the pond did not completely fill or discharge.

9. Protection of Fish, Wildlife and Related Environmental

Steve Stamatakis (not present, but discussed area earlier on October 3, 1997) pointed out a stand of aspen trees at the mouth of Coal Canyon, the same canyon in which the Gordon Creek #3 and #6 mine portals are located. A stand of aspen, all similar in age and occupying the valley floor, apparently died catastrophically. Steve Stamatakis claims that the ground surrounding the trees became saturated with groundwater produced as a result of mining, killing the trees. He proposed that the water issuing from the seeps came from Beaver Creek, reducing the flows in Beaver Creek and increasing the flow of Gordon Creek.

Dan Guy discussed mining activities in the Gordon Creek #3 & #6 mining operations. Groundwater was contacted in the Gordon Creek #3 mine after mining through 14 foot fault (graben). The mine had to pump approximately one million gallons of water from the mine daily. The mine workings are located in a fault block, the south side of the block and limit of mining lies against a 40 foot fault. This fault block is part of the down thrown block of Fish Creek graben (Figures 6-1 and 6-2, Horizon MRP). The National Mine workings were developed on the adjacent side of the fault. Some of the National workings extend across the fault and lie west of the Gordon Creek #3 Mine workings. Dan mentioned that a couple times during the development Gordon Creek #3 operations broke into the National workings, but were sealed off. The fault intersects the creek in Coal Canyon at about the 7400 ft level.

A group of people hiked up the west side of the canyon mouth to observe the clone of dead trees and to determine where the water saturating the canyon was issuing. An evaluation of the geologic features (on site and in the office) reveals a potential connection for transmitting ground water from the National/Gordon Creek #6 Mines and the spring area. It is more difficult to establish a connection from Beaver Creek to the National/ Gordon Creek #3 and #6 Mines. The National Mine had mined in the graben block west of the Gordon Creek Mines (in the Hiawatha seam, Plate 1-3, Gordon Creek #3 and #6 Mines MRP). A small chance of any connection would be if water was intercepted at the faults bordering of the graben and transmitted to the to the minesites. This chance sounds feasible, however, there is no information to show if the faults are permeable or not.

The spring area appears to be located at the interface between the Star Point Sandstone and the Mancos Shale. Similar springs exist in the Wasatch Plateau in relationship to the Star Point Sandstone. The sandstone units of the Star Point Sandstone contain higher porosities that hold and transmit groundwater more readily than the fine grains of the Mancos Shale. When water hits the Mancos Shale it tends to move laterally sometimes coming in contact with the surface as a spring. The flow appears to follow the parabolic shape of the canyon mouth where the Star Point sandstone intersects Coal Canyon. More water flows from the north and west side of the canyon than the east side, however seepage was noticed on the east side of the creek and road, alluding to the theory that the flow comes from a deeper source such as a formation supplied from the fault or overlying strata.

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Inspector's Signature: David W. Darby

David W. Darby #47 Date: 11/12/97

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The voids in the mine could hold water more readily and transmit to adjacent areas. This is likely the scenario that is taking place at the National/Gordon Creek #3 and #6 mines. Water emanates from spring on both sides and in the bottom of the canyon even though the creek cuts through the eastern side of the canyon. This leads me to believe that the water is coming horizontally along the contact than from a particular source. Young trees are once again growing at marshy meadow above the dead trees. Beaver are no longer at the site.

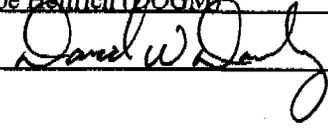
The spring was obviously at the site prior to development of the #3 and #6 mines. This is known because the miners noticed the meadow area and trees. Some have reported that the trees were killed when Beaver Built a large dam across the marshy meadow. This theory for the dead trees has been expressed by several people who has worked in the area, including Mel Coonrod and Pat Axelsen. They indicate the cause of the dead aspen are the result of large beaver ponds built by a couple of beaver.

13. Revegetation

The site showed very good vegetation recovery. Only a small area on the upper pad revealed a lack of growth, but Susan White classified it as negligible. Apparently it was an area that had suffered a subsidence crack in the past and was filled in. Vegetation is slowly growing back on the spot.

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