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State of Utah
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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Michael O. Leavitt
Governor

Lowell P. Braxton
Division Director

June 24, 1998

Jim Jacobs
127 West 1700 South
Orem, Utah 84058

Re: Gordon Creek #3 and #6 Mine Slides, Mountain Coal Company, Gordon Creek #3 & #6 Mines, INA/007/017, File #2, Carbon County, Utah

Dear Mr. Jacobs:

It was a pleasure meeting you last week at the celebration for the Gordon Creek #3 and #6 Mines. I've enclosed the slides for the Gordon Creek #3 and #6 Mine you requested and the article from the Salt Lake Tribune on June 22, 1998.

Wishing you and your family many years of enjoyment on your property at the reclaimed Gordon Creek #3 and #6 Mines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Pamela Grubaugh-Littig'.

Pamela Grubaugh-Littig
Permit Supervisor

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Enclosures

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Monday, June 22, 1998

Back to Nature: Mines Boom, Then Bloom

BY BRENT ISRAELSEN
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

PRICE -- About 12 miles west of town, a narrow dirt road winds up a small, quiet canyon that leads to some 7,000 acres owned by the Cal Jacobs family.

With a variety of grasses, brushes and scrub oak, the canyon is primarily midgrade rangeland that supports varied wildlife: elk, deer, bobcat, mountain lion, golden eagles, beaver and black bear.

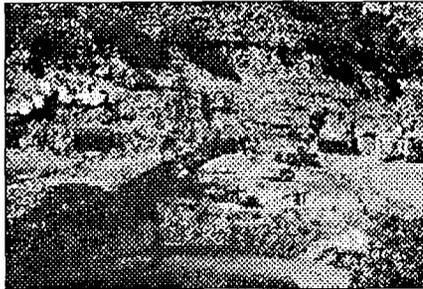
Twenty years ago, the scene was vastly different.

The small canyon hosted two underground coal mines, operated by Mountain Coal Co., a subsidiary of Atlantic Richfield Corp. (ARCO). More than 20 acres of land was torn up to accommodate mining activities and facilities.

The narrow dirt road was more than twice as wide, with double-trailer trucks lumbering regularly up the two-mile-long canyon to retrieve nearly 1.2 million tons of coal from the mines.

Today, remnants of the mines, known as Gordon Creek No. 3 and No. 6, are almost invisible to the untrained eye, thanks to federally mandated reclamation efforts by ARCO.

The road has been reduced to its original size. Vegetation -- a mix of non-native and native plants -- thrives where once stood stockpiles of freshly mined coal. Giant holes, or portals, punched into the side of the canyon have been sealed. A stream bed, formerly a culvert beneath the mining



The top picture is the site of the Gordon Creek No. 3 Mine near Price as it looked in 1976. Below is a view of the canyon today after reclamation and years of monitoring. (ARCO, Michael J. Miller/The Salt Lake Tribune)

operation, has been restored to its natural path.

Last week the reclaimed mines, along with an ARCO mine in Huntington Canyon 30 miles away, gained the distinction of becoming the first sites in the West to complete the "mining-to-reclamation cycle" since passage of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) of 1977.

"We're really proud to be the first ones doing this in the West," said Mary Ann Wright, associate director of the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining (DOG M). "This is our mission: to make sure people operate responsibly in reclaiming the land."

To celebrate, state and federal regulators toured the sites with company officials last week, then held a banquet and ceremony in which regulators formally released the companies from some \$700,000 in bonds.

"Many people in our division were skeptical that coal mines could be reclaimed to their pre-mining state," said Lowell Braxton, acting director of DOGM. "But we're confident we can do it now."

For Dick Pick, president of Canyon Fuel Co., which now owns Mountain Coal, the release of the bonds comes as recognition that his company cares about the environment. Canyon Fuel's three existing mines in Utah account for 40 percent of the state's coal production.

"It's nice to have it done. A lot of our employees use this canyon for recreation. They love to hunt and fish, and they're the last ones who would want to harm the land," Pick said.

Reclaiming the mines is an arduous process that begins with reclamation plans before the mines are opened. In contrast to strip mines in the East and South, most mines in Utah are underground, meaning minimal surface disturbance, typically 10 to 25 acres per mine.

Generally, reclamation consists of:

- Sealing the portals to prevent release of methane gas and to keep people out.
- Removing on-site facilities.
- Ripping up concrete and burying it deep.
- Recounting the area to its natural shape.
- Restoring streams and drainages to their natural courses.
- Planting vegetation to match off-site vegetation.

Then comes the waiting.

The site must be monitored for at least 10 years to ensure the new vegetation is self-sustaining and self-regenerating. The 10-year waiting period is necessary because of the West's arid climate, which can stymie revegetation efforts. In the East, the wait is generally five years.

Waiting has been the hardest part for the Jacobs family,

which leased the property to the coal companies in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The mines closed in the early 1980s.

"We haven't had the use of this land for a long time," said Jim Jacobs.

"We were given almost nothing for it. We didn't know the reclamation thing would take this long."

But Jacobs is pleased with the reclamation. "The land is as good as it used to be," he said.

From a utilitarian view, the land is better than before.

At Jacobs' request, sediment capture ponds from the mine were left behind to serve as watering holes for cattle and sheep. Some of the new vegetation included Great Basin rye and clover, which are grazing feed for domestic livestock as well as for elk. On one slope, a flattened staging area for the mine was left that way, rather than recontoured, to provide Jacobs a better site for grazing sheep.

In Utah, three other mining areas are under reclamation, two in Carbon County and one in Emery County. DOGM, which has been delegated enforcement authority for SMCRA, currently holds \$68.7 million in reclamation bonds on 36 active coal mines in Utah.

With a coal market buffeted by competition from Australia and Indonesia, Utah's coal industry cannot afford hefty federal fines that would come with noncompliance with federal reclamation laws.

"Nobody's arguing in the mining industry that those bonds shouldn't be there," said Tom Bingham, president of the Utah Mining Association.

Last year, Utah produced 28.6 million tons of coal, up slightly from 27 million tons in 1996. Coal jobs employed 2,168 people last year.



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