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# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Moab District  
P.O. Box 970  
Moab, Utah 84532

3482  
SL-051279  
(UT-065c)

FEB 5 1993

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FEB 08 1993

DIVISION OF  
OIL GAS & MINING

CERTIFIED MAIL - Return Receipt Requested  
Certification No. P 696 298 126

Mr. Tom Paluso  
Chief Engineer  
Soldier Creek Coal Co.  
P.O. Box 1  
Price, Utah 84501

Re: Minor Modification to Soldier Canyon Mine - Severe Bouncing in the Fifth North Section

Dear Mr. Paluso:

On January 26, 1993, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received a telephone request from Soldier Creek Coal Company (SCCC) to modify the approved resource recovery and protection plan (R2P2) for the Soldier Canyon Mine. Price Coal Office personnel inspected the mine, evaluated the situation, and then granted a verbal approval to SCCC for a minor modification to the approved mine plan on January 26, 1993. A formal written request for the minor modification was received on January 28, 1993. The affected coal reserves are located in the Rock Canyon (Lower) and the Sunnyside (Upper) Seams on Federal coal lease SL-051279.

The approved mining plan was to retreat mine the 5th East area of the Rock Canyon Seam. SCCC is now proposing to: 1) stop retreat mining the 5th North section at #15 crosscut (see enclosure 1); 2) abandon the remaining coal reserves and seal the 5th East area of the Rock Canyon Seam; and 3) abandon the coal reserves and seal the 1st South section of the Sunnyside Seam (see enclosure 2).

According to SCCC, starting on January 21, 1993, the 5th North section experienced severe bouncing, which deteriorated the pillars and caused major roof failures in the entire 5th East area. Additionally, the interburden has fractured and allowed air to intermix between the two seams causing ventilation problems. SCCC and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) officials determined that it was not safe to continue extracting the 5th East area of the Rock Canyon Seam or mining the 1st South section of the Sunnyside Seam.

BLM personnel inspected the Soldier Creek Mine on January 28, 1993. During this inspection it was noted that the 5th North section of the Rock Canyon Seam had been retreat mined to #15 crosscut. The area between the #15 and #9 crosscuts was completely deteriorated and

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machinery was turned over. Evidence of pillar bursts were encountered between the #9 and #5 crosscuts. About 2 feet of rib sloughage was also seen at #4 crosscut, this was gradually reduced and changed to floor heave in the 5th East section.

The 1st South section of the Sunnyside Seam was also inspected. During the inspection, rib sloughage and floor heave (up to 2 feet) were observed between #13 and #10 crosscuts. The same condition was also noticed between #6 and #2 crosscuts. The remaining four pillar rows between #10 and #6 crosscuts are in good mining condition except about 16 inches of cap siltstone above the coal seam. Company measurements showed that the section's return air split contained 1.7% of methane gas versus the maximum allowable 1% required by MSHA regulations.

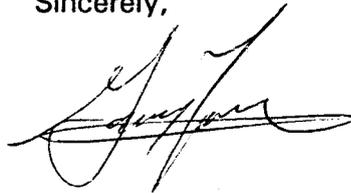
Based on the previous discussion and after consultation with MSHA officials, Price Coal Office personnel agree that mining in the 5th East area of the Rock Canyon Seam could trigger additional bouncing and seriously endanger the miners. About 4,000 tons of recoverable coal are in the middle of the 1st South section of the Sunnyside Seam. In addition to the ventilation problems, access to these reserves is under unstable roof conditions. Rehabilitating and preparing this section to mine 4,000 tons of coal is uneconomical and would be poor mining practice.

Under these circumstances, the BLM has authorized SCCC to stop retreat mining the 5th North section at the #15 crosscut. This confirms the verbal approval given to Soldier Creek Mine personnel on January 28, 1993. In addition, SCCC may abandon the remaining reserves and seal the 5th East area of the Rock Canyon Seam (enclosure 1) and the 1st South section of the Sunnyside Seam (enclosure 2). An estimated 40,000 tons of coal reserves are now considered unrecoverable.

The BLM has determined that the mine plan change is in compliance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, the regulations at 43 CFR 3480, the lease terms and stipulations, and will achieve maximum economic recovery of the Federal coal. A copy of the approved mine map is enclosed.

If you have any questions, please contact Abe Elias in the Price Coal Office at 801/637-4584.

Sincerely,



for Assistant District Manager  
Mineral Resources

2 Enclosures:

1. Rock Canyon Seam Approved Mine Map
2. Sunnyside Seam Approved Mine Map

cc: DM, Moab (UT-065) (w/enclosure)  
SD, Utah (UT-921) (w/enclosure)  
JDOGM, Salt Lake City (w/enclosure)

MINOR MODIFICATION TO  
MINING PLAN APPROVED BY  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Recommended By:

*Alb. [Signature]* 2/4/93  
Mining Engineer (Date)

Approved By:

*[Signature]* 2/4/93  
Chief Price Coal Office (Date)



SOLDIER CREEK COAL COMPANY  
SOLDIER CANYON MINE  
ROCK CANYON SEAM  
APPROVED MINE MAP  
Enclosure 1

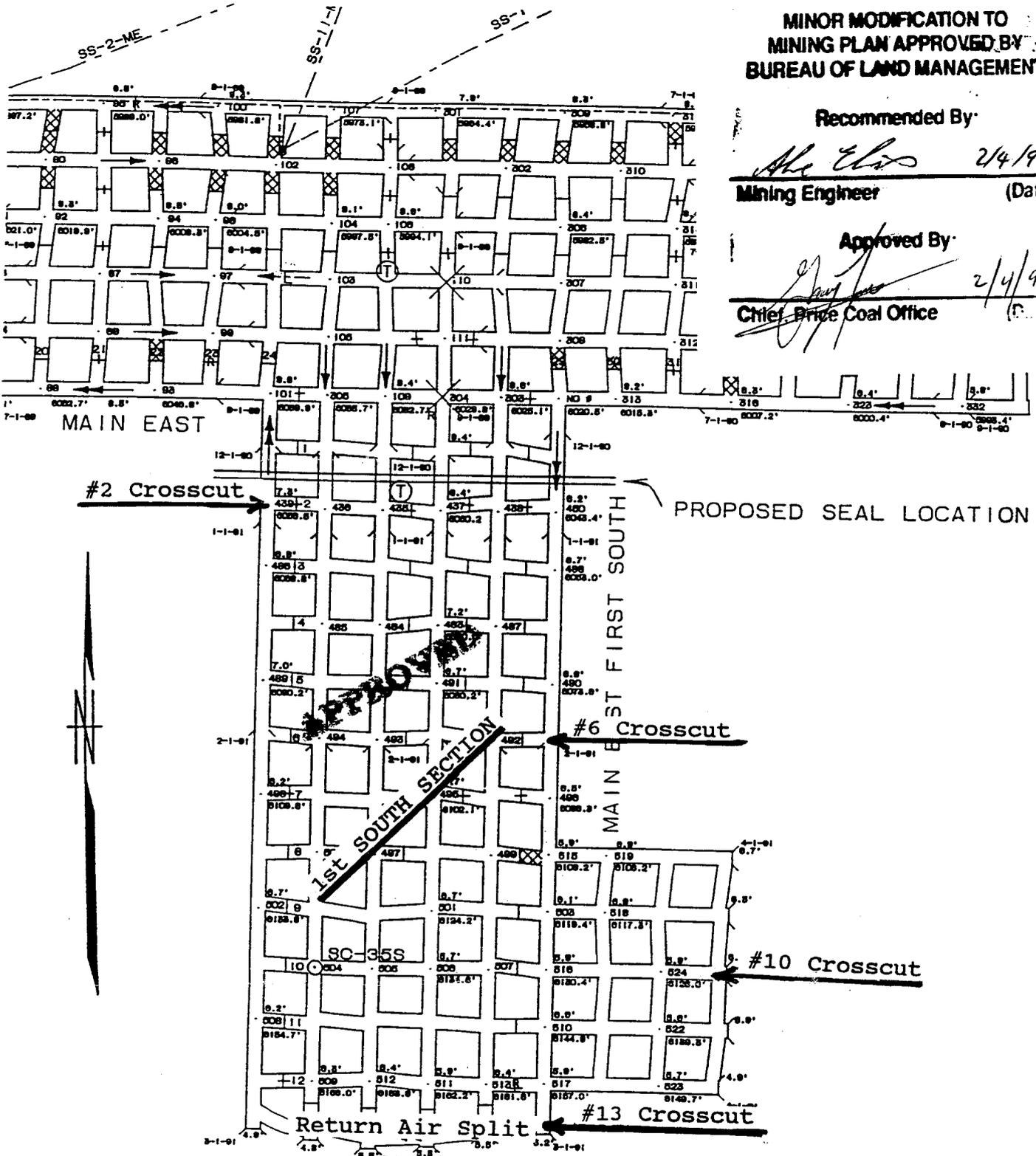
MINOR MODIFICATION TO  
MINING PLAN APPROVED BY  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Recommended By:

*Alc Ellis* 2/4/93  
Mining Engineer (Date:)

Approved By:

*[Signature]* 2/4/93  
Chief Price Coal Office (Date:)



SOLDIER CREEK COAL COMPANY  
SOLDIER CANYON MINE  
SUNNYSIDE SEAM  
APPROVED MINE MAP  
Enclosure 2