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

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September 17, 1998

TO: File

THRU: Daron Haddock, Permit Supervisor

FROM: Paul Baker, Reclamation Biologist

RE: Topsoil Pile Expansion Area, Canyon Fuel Company, LLC, Soldier Canyon Mine. ACT/007/018-98C, Folder #2, Carbon County, Utah

**SUMMARY:**

Canyon Fuel has submitted a proposal to store topsoil from the Dugout Mine at the topsoil storage area for the Soldier Canyon Mine. Much of the information needed for this proposal is already in the existing mining and reclamation plan.

**ANALYSIS:**

**VEGETATION RESOURCE INFORMATION**

Regulatory Reference: R645-301-321

**Analysis:**

Attachment 3-1 of the proposal includes a vegetation study of the area proposed to be disturbed. Perennial vegetative cover was found to be 42.7%, and the dominant species was Wyoming big sagebrush. The site appears to have previously used for agriculture, and the vegetation includes some weedy species, such as snakeweed and cheatgrass.

The current mining and reclamation plan includes information about a reference area to be used as a revegetation success standard for this area.

**Findings:**

Information provided in the proposal is considered adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations.

## **FISH AND WILDLIFE INFORMATION AND PROTECTION**

Regulatory Reference: R645-301-322 and -333

### **Analysis:**

As identified in the existing mining and reclamation plan, the expansion area is in critical deer winter range; however, the application says the site does not appear to be of unusually high value to wildlife. Critical habitat is within the definition of habitats of unusually high value, so this statement in Section 3 of the application should be changed.

In about 1990, the applicant proposed a new waste rock disposal area in the area of the sewage lagoons and paid the Division of Wildlife Resources for habitat improvements to mitigate for this disturbance. The waste rock site was never built, so it is reasonable that the 1990 mitigation could be applied to the topsoil pile expansion area.

### **Findings:**

Information provided in the proposal is not considered adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations. Prior to final approval, the applicant must provide the following in accordance with:

**R645-301-322**, The existing mining and reclamation plan identifies the topsoil storage expansion area as containing critical deer winter range. Critical habitat is defined as habitat of unusually high value. Therefore, the statement in Section 3 that the site does not appear to be of unusually high value to wildlife should be changed.

## **INTERIM AND FINAL REVEGETATION PLANS**

Regulatory Requirements: R645-301-331 and -341

### **Analysis:**

The existing mining and reclamation plan contains both interim and final revegetation plans that are considered adequate. The applicant will need to continue efforts to control weeds

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on the adjacent topsoil piles.

**Findings:**

Information provided in the proposal is considered adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The application contains one minor deficiency that should be corrected prior to approval.