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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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May 20, 1991

Mr. Clark Johnson, Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
Ecological Services
2060 Administration Building
1745 West 1700 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104-5110

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Re: Permit Application, Blue Blaze Coal Company, Blue Blaze Mine, ACT/007/020, Folder #2, Carbon County, Utah

The permit states that no threatened or endangered plant or animal species or their critical habitat occur within the permit area.

The proposed mine site, the abandoned Consumers Mine, was visited by a biologist from your office in 1981. Power lines were considered unsafe to raptors; however, hazard was slight due to positioning (see attached).

If these statements are still current, please sign, date, and return this letter. If these statements are not current, please send the Division a current species list of endangered or threatened plant or animal species which could potentially be in the permit area and advise as to power poles.

an equal opportunity employer

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Pamela Grubaugh-Littig
Permit Supervisor

Yes, we concur with this letter _____
Signature

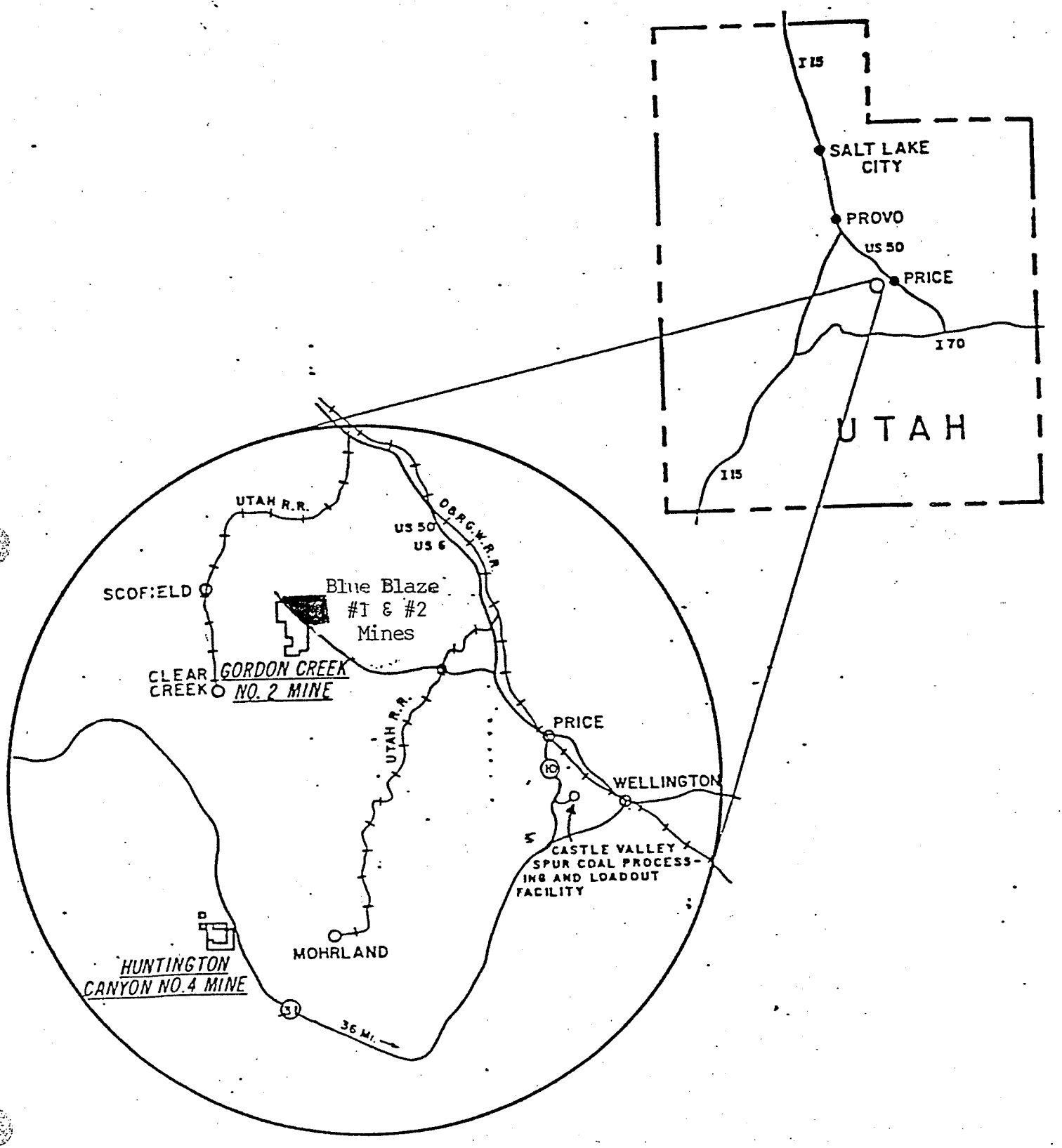
Title_____ Date _____
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

SMW/jbe
Attachment
cc: Susan White
AT007020.01

Figure I-1

Blue Blaze Coal Co.

AREA OF OPERATIONS



aspen cavities for breeding and open pinyon/juniper for winter foraging.

10.4 Potential Impacts on Fish and Wildlife

Wildlife impacts typically can be catergorized into three groups: loss or modification of habitat, disturbance, and mortality.

The limited amount of surface disturbance associated with the Blue Blaze No. 1 and No. 2 Mines will result in a total habitat loss of about 7.4 acres during the life of the mine. With the mining done previously, this loss of habitat has already occurred. Virtually all of the mine activity is confined to the Mountain Brush and Middle Elevation Conifer habitat types, and it does not appear that this loss of habitat has had a significant impact on wildlife in the permit area.

Disturbance of furtive species results from the levels of noise and activity associated with an operational mine. Thus, most larger species of birds and mammals (including, for example, deer, carnivores, and raptors) tend to avoid a working mine site. Most of these species are likely to move freely around the mine site on weekends and to quickly re-inhabit the area after decommissioning.

Two types of mortality potentially are associated with operation of the coal mines; raptor electrocution on unsafe power poles and mammal roadkills. A raptor hazard survey was conducted in the area in conjunction wiht baseline field studies. The results of this survey indicate that the four-phase line running from the substation at the abandoned townsite of National (Figure 10-1) represents a potential hazard because of the closeness of two conductors on one side of the cross-arm (Figure 10-4). However, the actual hazard probably is slight, because (1) the positioning of the poles relative to adjacent topography would tend to limit use, (2) most of the raptors commonly present in the area are not frequent users of powerline perches, and (3) the least safe pole designs are near the active mine, where raptor use probably is minimal. This conclusion was confirmed by raptor biologist Ron Joseph and Bruce Waddell of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who visited the site in August 1981.

The powerpoles below National are somewhat safer, with three well-separated phase lines. However, the ground wire should be clipped to form a 4" - 6" gap below the crossarm to eliminate the risk. These poles also appeared to receive little use in the study area. A few km to the east, along the haul/access road, these poles are a more prominent feature on the flat landscape (Figure 10-5) and appeared to receive somewhat more use probably especially during the winter.