



State of Utah

Department of
Natural Resources

Division of
Wildlife Resources

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1 December 2004

Pam Grubaugh-Littig
Division of Oil, Gas & Mining
1594 W. North Temple #1210
PO Box 145801
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-5801

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DIV. OF OIL, GAS & MINING

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RE: Recommendation for discontinuance of Horizon Mine's helicopter raptor survey

Dear Ms. Grubaugh-Littig,

At the request of Horizon Mine, we feel that if the one cliff face in the SW1/4 of the SE1/4 of section 8, T. 13 S., R. 8 E., were protected from subsidence and subsequent spalling, that there would be no further need to conduct raptor surveys by helicopter.

In the past Horizon mine has conducted raptor surveys by helicopter at the request of the Division of Wildlife Resources and Oil, Gas, and Mining. The most recent survey was conducted in 2001. On this survey one inactive golden eagle nest and one dilapidated golden eagle nest were found, along with one inactive American kestrel nest. All three of these nests were on the same cliff face.

Other than this one cliff face, the rest of the permit area and surrounding 1-mile buffer is coniferous or aspen forest. These habitat types have a closed canopy and high tree density that does not allow visibility into nest sites from a helicopter, therefore this is not a useful technique within this mine permit area.

Possible nesting raptor species within the conifer and aspen habitats include red-tailed hawk, goshawk, cooper's hawk, and sharp shinned hawk. Ground survey methods would be more applicable if there were serious threat to nest destruction.

Thank you for taking these recommendations into consideration for future raptor surveys on the Horizon Mine permit area. If you have questions about these comments, please call Chris Colt (Habitat Program Manager) at 435.636.0279.

Sincerely,

Derris Jones
Regional Supervisor

cc: Horizon Mine