

UN Advocate



Wild turkey into county

County history, Utah Division of Game and Fish will release a shipment of 25 Rio Grande turkeys in Bob Wright Canyon. An additional 25 turkeys were transported onto DWR property north of the canyon. The key was systematically tested for cooperation with the National Wild Turkey Federation. Utah has brought 850 birds into south-central Utah this year, 151 Merriam turkeys were released into the LaSal Mountains, with the Book Cliffs in the winter. Utah is estimated to have approximately 7,000 wild turkeys. The species can be seen throughout the state and feather coloration has been used to differentiate between the two species. Merriam turkeys prefer mountainous terrain with scrub oak, aspen and ponderosa pine. Rio Grande turkeys have larger back feathers and buff legs. The release occurred on the LaSals in Grand County. Efforts are continuing through the year, a cooperative effort to restore the habitat by the year 2000. The release comes from the NWTF's annual banquet. Utah is a limited-entry opportunity, 10 percent in 1999. For additional information residents may contact the DWR representative.



Mine manager updates status of Willow Creek

By JACKIE ANDERSON
Staff reporter

Willow Creek General Mine Manager John Boylen recounted the events of the mine fire last November for the Carbon County Chamber of Commerce at the Wednesday meeting.

The question that is most likely foremost in the minds of many, pointed out Boylen, remains unanswered. Although we have several ideas as to what caused the fire, we may never know for sure.

The mine manager recounted that four of the longwall crewmen on duty at the time of the fire reported a rush of air that was so strong it knocked them down. He went on to explain that a rush of air is not uncommon and is indicative of a roof fall in the gob, a natural occurrence, though the strength of this particular gust was unusual and perhaps significant.

Also possibly significant to the cause of the fire is the more prevalent level of hydrocarbons (oil) present in the Willow Creek mine than other coal mines in the area.

Boylen informed the chamber that three gas companies are vying to purchase and pipe the oil from the coal company because of its high quality.

Mine rescue teams have spent the past two weeks exploring the bleeders, finding no flame damage, but considerable heat damage, confirmation of MSHA's assertion that the Willow Creek fire is one of the hottest they have seen.

Boylen anticipates getting as close to the fire site within the next two to three weeks as crews may ever get. Mine res-

cue teams will be sealing off the area surrounding the site of the fire.

"The recovery process has been an exciting, learning experience," commented the mine manager.

Boylen went on to explain that crews have spent over three thousand hours under full apparatus with out anyone getting hurt, though he explained crews have had a couple of close calls. One mine rescue member lost consciousness when an incorrectly constructed hose came undone under ground. Fellow crew members responded quickly and appropriately, and no harm came of the incident.

Boylen was abundant in his praise for the professionalism and skills of the mine rescue teams.

"Yes, the rumors are true that the mine is for sale," confirmed Boylen. Willow Creek is up for sale along with all the coal holdings owned by the Cyprus Amax Cooperation.

Miners working for the company for any period of time know that this is no big deal, having seen the mine change ownership numerous times, indicated Boylen.

"There are approximately 100 million tons of coal, the quality of which beats anything in the west, I don't see anyone running from that. It's not easy coal. The seams that were left behind were left for a reason, but we feel it is a very good property, pointed out Boylen.

The mine manager also commented that the company has invested \$170 million in Willow Creek to date, a lot of money to just walk away from.

(Continued on page 2)

Land uses federal inventory

If additional lands should be placed under special protective status as wilderness study areas.

No change in the current management regimes will take place until compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.



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Parent Teacher Conferences

will be held on
February 22nd & 23rd
at 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Midterms will be handed out then. School will not be in session on Friday, February 26th.

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Willow Creek:

(Continued from page 1)

"We have some good contracts to protect, and some damn good coal miners to protect as well, which is why we transferred permanent employees to Star Point," Boylen continued. The Star Point mine has 5 to 6 tons of coal remaining.

Boylen anticipates the resumption of coal production at the Willow Creek facility within the next two months with the running of four continuous miner crews. He also indicated that the company will be training another mine rescue team comprised of their own employees, reducing the cost of importing teams from Shoshone and Twenty Mile mines. The company will be picking up 14 contractors next week in conjunction with the accelerated activity.

Boylen also anticipates longwall production to begin one month either side of September 1.

The fire erupted last November at approximately 2,400 feet underground. Fortunately, all 54 workers manning the Cyprus Amax afternoon production crew on Nov. 25 managed to exit the underground facility without injury.

Willow Creek employees and several local mine rescue teams, assisted by MSHA personnel and heavy equipment operators in the area, immediately focused on sealing the portals to extinguish the blaze at the underground facility.

The concentrated effort concluded successfully at 3 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day 1998. Fourteen days later, crews reentered the mine, and recovery efforts began.



Helper honors chief of city's fire department

After 26 years with the Helper City Fire Department, chief Mike Zamantakis was honored Saturday evening for his service and dedication to the progression of the agency's emergency services and equipment. In cooperation with Mayor Mike Dalpiaz and the Helper City Council, Zamantakis is responsible for the purchase of equipment as rescue truck Zamantakis v firemen's banquet presented with by Gary Prazer

Grazing fee announced for western public lands

The United States Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service have announced the 1999 grazing fee for western public lands.

The fee will be apply to public lands administered by the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service.

The federal agencies have set the fee at \$1.35 per animal unit month (AUM) in 1999, which is the same amount charged in 1998.

The formula used for calculating the fee, established by U.S. Congress in the 1978 Public Rangelands Improvement Act, has continued under a presidential executive order issued in 1986.

An animal unit month is the amount of forage needed to sustain one cow and her calf, one horse, or five sheep or goats for a month.

Under the 1986 presidential executive order, the grazing fee cannot fall below \$1.35 per AUM.

The annually adjusted grazing fee, which will take effect on March 1, is computed by using a 1966 base value of \$1.23 per AUM for livestock grazing on public lands in the western states.

The figure is then adjusted according to three factors- current private grazing land lease rates, beef cattle prices, and the cost of livestock production.

Based on the formula, the 1999 fee remains at the same level as 1998 because there was a small decline in beef cattle prices and a small increase in both private land lease rates and livestock production costs.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages 264 million acres of federal land, most of it in 12 western states, for a variety of public uses and values.

The public uses and values include grazing, outdoor recreation, watershed protection, wildlife habitat conservation, and mining.

The forest service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, manages 191 million acres of federal lands in 44 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Like the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service manages the public lands under its direction for multiple uses, including grazing.

