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

Michael O. Leavitt
Governor

Ted Stewart
Executive Director

James W. Carter
Division Director

355 West North Temple
3 Triad Center, Suite 350
Salt Lake City, Utah 84180-1203
801-538-5340
801-359-3940 (Fax)
801-538-5319 (TDD)

August 5, 1994

TO: Daron Haddock, Permit Supervisor

FROM: Paul Baker, Reclamation Biologist PRB #2 ad

RE: Draft Review, Exploration in Dry and Alrad Canyons, Cyprus Plateau Mining Corporation, CEP/007/038, Working File, Carbon County, Utah

SYNOPSIS

Cyprus Plateau Mining Corporation is proposing to drill exploration holes in Dry and Alrad Canyons. The exploration would be on Bureau of Land Management land and accessed by roads on private and Bureau of Land Management lands. Less than 250 tons of coal would be removed.

The site in Alrad Canyon is within Andalex's permit area for the Centennial Mines. Cyprus plans to extrapolate data obtained from this site and apply it to their adjacent leases. However, since this is within an existing permit area, Andalex needs to amend its plan to identify this proposed activity.

The exploration regulations do not address identification and protection of cultural resources; however, the National Historic Preservation Act requires that cultural resources be identified and protected. Cyprus submitted a cultural resources survey of the area. It mentions one site in the area, the Milburn Mine, that is in the general area and that has been recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The report does not show where this site is; however, the archaeologist who performed the survey said it is in Cordingly Canyon. This canyon is west of Alrad Canyon and would not be affected by the exploration operation. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred in the determination that no cultural resources would be affected.

ANALYSIS

R645-201-200 Minor Coal Exploration Permits

Cyprus Plateau Mining Corporation proposes to drill exploration holes in Dry and Alrad Canyons. Less than 250 tons of coal will be removed. The application shows Cyprus' address and telephone number and the name of a representative who will be present at and responsible for conducting the exploration operations.

The site in Alrad Canyon is within Andalex's permit area for the Centennial Mines. Cyprus plans to extrapolate data obtained from this site and apply it to their adjacent leases. However, since this is within an existing permit area, Andalex needs to amend its plan to identify this proposed activity.

Access to the sites will be on existing dirt roads. However, the road in the Dry Canyon area will be rehabilitated and a new crossing of Willow Creek permitted through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Utah State Engineer.

Cyprus planned to begin exploration in late July. It would continue for about four weeks. Reclamation would continue through September.

R645-202-231 Habitats of Unusually High Value

Exploration will be completed within about four weeks after commencement. Commencement was anticipated to be near the end of July. The proposed period of exploration is within a time period that is not crucial for area wildlife. No adverse effects are anticipated by the Division of Wildlife Resources.

Any use of surface water from the Upper Colorado River drainage constitutes a "may affect" situation for threatened and endangered fish of the Colorado River Basin. However, as of July 5, 1994, the Fish and Wildlife Service is waiving depletion fees for depletions of 100 acre-feet or less.

An ecological evaluation report of the proposed well sites by Steve Viert of Cedar Creek Associates says that no sensitive flora were observed on the well sites. The only sensitive, threatened or endangered plant species likely to be present is canyon sweetvetch (*Hedysarum occidentale* var. *canone*). Mr. Viert mentioned in a telephone conversation that he is familiar with this plant and its habitat requirements and that he did not see it. He felt that the drill site will be far enough away from drainages that it is probably not present.

R645-202-233 Topsoil

Unless otherwise required, the topsoil and native vegetation at the drill sites will be removed, if present, and stockpiled for redistribution during site reclamation. Topsoil will only be removed where required; generally where soils would be directly impacted at the drill site. A competent and responsible person, knowledgeable about soils, will be on the site during excavation and reclamation in order to minimize environmental impacts and assure proper soil extraction (depth, etc.) and replacement. This person will be on the drill site during any type of excavation, construction, or reclamation.

Stockpiled soil will be protected from erosional loss by containment berms. If the topsoil pile is dry and deflating, it will be wetted. Weathered rock and subsoils excavated from the mud pits will be stockpiled separately from the topsoil. Soil loss will be contained by the berms, straw bales, or silt fences.

The commitments in the exploration plan appear to satisfy the regulatory requirements. However, the plan includes the statement that topsoil will only be removed where required. This statement is unclear and should be modified to conform with the regulations. R645-202-233 requires that topsoil be separately removed, stored, and redistributed on areas disturbed by coal exploration activities as necessary to assure successful revegetation or as required by the Division.

R645-202-242 **Revegetation**

The plan contains a revegetation seed mixture stipulated by the Bureau of Land Management. This seed mixture is comprised entirely of native species that are suitable for reclamation in this area.

The reestablished vegetation is required to be capable of stabilizing the soil surface from erosion. The application does not contain a standard by which erosion control could be judged.

FINDINGS

Andalex needs to amend its plan to identify the proposed exploration activity in Alrad Canyon since this site is within their permit area.

The statement that topsoil will only be removed where required needs to be modified to conform with regulatory requirements.

The application needs to contain a standard by which erosion control could be judged.