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

INSPECTION REPORT

Michael O. Leavitt
Governor
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Executive Director
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Partial: XXX Complete: Exploration:
Inspection Date & Time: 12/17/96 / 3:15p.m.-7:00p.m.
Date of Last Inspection: 12/9/96

Mine Name: Willow Creek Mine County: Carbon Permit Number: ACT/007/038
Permittee and/or Operator's Name: Cyprus Plateau Mining Corporation
Business Address: P. O. Drawer PMC, Price, Utah 84501
Type of Mining Activity: Underground XXX Surface Prep. Plant Other
Company Official(s): John Borla, Ben Grimes
State Officials(s): Peter Hess Federal Official(s): None
Weather Conditions: Very Cold, Teens, Snow, Windy
Existing Acreage: Permitted- 11,500 Disturbed- 40 Regraded- Seeded- Bonded- 56
Increased/Decreased: Permitted- Disturbed- Regraded- Seeded- Bonded-
Status: Exploration/ XXX Active/ Inactive/ Temporary Cessation/ Bond Forfeiture
Reclamation (Phase I/Phase II/Final Bond Release/Liability Year)

REVIEW OF PERMIT, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS & PERMIT CONDITION REQUIREMENTS

Instructions

- 1. Substantiate the elements on this inspection by checking the appropriate performance standard.
a. For complete inspections provide narrative justification for any elements not fully inspected unless element is not appropriate to the site, in which case check N/A.
b. For partial inspections check only the elements evaluated.
2. Document any noncompliance situation by referencing the NOV issued at the appropriate performance standard listed below.
3. Reference any narratives written in conjunction with this inspection at the appropriate performance standard listed below.
4. Provide a brief status report for all pending enforcement actions, permit conditions, Division Orders, and amendments.

Table with 5 columns: Item, EVALUATED, N/A, COMMENTS, NOV/ENF. Rows include items like PERMITS, CHANGE, TRANSFER, RENEWAL, SALE; SIGNS AND MARKERS; TOPSOIL; HYDROLOGIC BALANCE; DIVERSIONS; SEDIMENT PONDS AND IMPOUNDMENTS; etc.



INSPECTION REPORT
(Continuation sheet)

Page 2 of 3

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(Comments are Numbered to Correspond with Topics Listed Above)

9. PROTECTION OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

The following relates to the breach in the berm at the Willow Creek Preparation plant thickener pond on December 17, 1996 at 1:45 p.m.

The Price field office received notice of the situation at 2:30 p.m. I had been on an inspection at the Soldier Canyon Mine; I received notice of the situation when I returned to the office at approximately 2:50 p.m.

I arrived on site at 3:12 P. M. The breach had received a quick repair, but was still leaking, (less than one gallon per minute, I would guess). I proceeded to the plant office where I met a CEntry employee; I asked him to call the plant operations board to see that all feed had been shut off to the thickener pond. He did, and confirmed that the water draining from the thickener to the pond had been shut off. About this time, Mr. John Borla, site manager, and Mr. Ben Grimes, senior project engineer, made an appearance. In speaking to these gentlemen, I issued a verbal cease operations order regarding all coal processing operations that deal with the thickener and the related pond, (i.e., any operation which would put additional water into this pond).

The preparation plant is presently trying to wash coal which contains unusually high percentages of refuse. The plant's refuse circuits were never designed to wash coal containing this much rock. John Borla informed me that their recovery is right at 30 percent. A problem had developed with the rakes in the thickener; the operations board was receiving high torque readings from the thickener rakes drive motor, probably indicating a seized rake. The thickener was being drained to the thickener pond in order to free the rake. It appears that none of the plant personnel were aware that the thickener pond did not have enough capacity to hold the contents of the thickener.

INSPECTION REPORT
(Continuation sheet)

Page 3 of 3

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9. PROTECTION OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL
VALUES -continued-

According to Exhibit 3.4-4, "Castle Gate Preparation Plant Thickener Overflow Pond", when the pond bottom is at elevation 6122.50', the volumetric capacity of the pond is 2.1 million gallons. The volumetric capacity of the thickener is 1.3 million gallons, leaving an excess capacity (when pond is clean) of .8 million gallons. The sediment level in the thickener pond at the time of the incident is not known at this time. Also, the "typical x-section Pond A-A" on the aforementioned exhibit shows a berm on the raw coal silo side of the pond with a bottom width of 15 feet, a top width of 5 feet, and a height of 2.94 feet. The berm which blew out did not appear to meet these specifications. Based on conversations with Mr. Ben Grimes and Mr. Dave Ariotti, engineer with the SEU District Health Department, approximately 300,000 gallons of water and sediment flowed through the breach.

Note: This inspection report does not constitute an affidavit of compliance with the regulatory program of the Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining.

Copy of this Report:

Mailed to: Cyprus Plateau Mining Corporation Marcia Petta (OSM)
Given to: Joe Helfrich (DOGM) Filed to: Price Field Office
Date: January 2, 1997

Inspector's Signature:  #46
Peter Hess