0023

From: "Dennis Ware" <tdware@etv.net>
To: <WAYNEHEDBERG@utah.gov>
Date: 4/25/2007 4:44 AM
Subject: Draft Emergency Request - Crandall Canyon

CC: <dware@foundationcoal.com>

Wayne,

The following is a "draft", once I have your initial input I will make any requested additions or clarifications and resubmit.

As a follow up to our conversation Tuesday afternoon, I am providing the following information concerning the proposed excavation and utilization of a temporary evaporation and settling basin proposed to be located immediately to the west of the Crandall Canyon #2 shaft site.

Please see map # 3.7-4 in Volume 16 of the Willow Creek Mine Permit for the location of the #2 shaft in Crandall Canyon. Also, please refer to the 4 current photos of the Crandall Canyon shaft area sent to you last night.

The proposed temporary evaporation and settling basin would be excavated to a size capable of holding up to 272,000 gallons with a freeboard of 1.5 feet below the current stable surface. The basin will be approximately 130 feet long by 40 feet wide and 9 feet deep.

Plateau views the excavation and use of this proposed temporary evaporation and settling basin to be an emergency and therefore requests the most expidious evaluation and approval from the Division. Plateau also thanks the Division for its recommendation to utilize evaporation and settling basin to solve the problem created by the unexpected high TSS water found at the bottom of the shaft.

A brief history of the reclamation and subsequent settling of the shaft is as follows. The #2 shaft was initially backfilled in the fall of 2003 as part of the final reclamation of the Crandall Canyon site. From the fall of 2003 through the fall of 2006 the shaft did not settle at all. In late November of 2006 it was discovered that the shaft had settled an unknown but significant distance creating an immediate safety hazard. A dozer was quickly mobilized and we began pushing the earthen material from the immediate area into the shaft. After several hours of pushing material into the shaft, water that was in the shaft reached the surface and spilled into the Crandall Canyon drainage. Backfilling was halted and a heavy gauge wire mesh was placed over the shaft opening and a secure chain link fence was constructed around the shaft perimeter. These safety measures were taken in

order that we might provide a safe environment while waiting for spring weather to safely reactivate the backfilling operation.

In mid-April a water sample was taken from the shaft and, based on its quality, the Division of Water Quality authorized the discharge of the water in the shaft into the Crandall Canyon drainage. The plan was to discharge (pump) the water from the shaft into the Crandall Canyon drainage and then immediately backfill the shaft.

In mid-April equipment was mobilized, some excavation around the shaft was conducted to gain proper access and a safety platform was constructed over the shaft to facilitate the safe pumping of the water. It was only after the water pipe and pumping system were installed and pumping began that it was discovered that the bottom 96 to 116 feet of water in the shaft was not suitable for discharge into the Crandall Canyon drainage. The problem with this water is high TSS. Since the discovery of the high TSS water Plateau has contemplated using a flocculent to drop out the high suspended solids as well as the idea of pumping and sprinkling the water over the reclaimed land to the west of the shaft. After significant review and discussion it was the Division staff that recommended the use of a temporary evaporation and settling basin.

Plateau views the need for the temporary evaporation and settling basin to be an emergency. By the time the high TSS water was discovered the project was well under way and, based on the prior commitments of manpower and equipment by the general contractor (Nielson Construction) the project must either continue at this time or be delayed for an unknown timeframe not less than three months. With the protective covering over the shaft removed and destroyed and a significant portion of the clean water already pumped from the shaft and the fact that any delay in the project will cause the shaft to refill with water, it is Plateau's opinion that this is an emergency situation.

Plateau is hereby seeking the Divisions approval, on an emergency basis, to build an evaporation and settling basin just to the west of the Crandall Canyon #2 shaft site and pump the high TSS water into this basin. The total quantity of water to be pumped into this basin will range from approximately 226,000 to 272,000 gallons depending upon where the clean and dirty water separation line is located in the shaft. Plateau plans to leave a minimum of 10 feet of water in the bottom of the shaft; this water left in the shaft will be absorbed by the cement and earthen fill which will be placed in the shaft immediately following the pumping of the water.

The evaporation and settling basin will be constructed immediately to the

west of the #2 shaft on the land which was reclaimed and seeded in the fall of 2003 and re-disturbed in December of 2006. The basin will be roughly 130 feet long by 40 feet wide and excavated to a depth of 9 feet. This size could hold 350,000 gallons; however, we will only fill the basin to a level leaving 1.5 feet of freeboard. With the 1.5 feet of freeboard the basin will hold 272,000 gallons which is the maximum amount we intend to pump. The excavated material will be stored next to the basin around the shafts protective fence and will be placed back into the basin when the project is complete and the final reclamation of the site is undertaken.

The basin will be kept at least 30 feet away from the #2 shaft and at least 15 feet from the Crandall Canyon drainage channel. During excavation and use and until final surface reclamation straw bales will be used for alternative sediment control. Pete Hess from the Division will be on site later today and we will mutually determine the quantity and location of the straw bales. It is not anticipated that any additional land will be disturbed as a result the excavation of the basin.

During the pumping of the water into the basin a sample of the water will be taken and analyzed for those parameters as to be requested by the Division. Once the high TSS water has been pumped from the shaft into the basin we will immediately begin backfilling the shaft according to the backfilling plan previously provided to the Division. This backfilling process will take anywhere from 11 to 15 days.

It is currently estimated that the pumping of the clean water will be complete by no later than mid-day Friday, April 27th. It is also estimated that it will take 2 days to excavate the basin; therefore, we would very much like to begin the excavation sometime on Wednesday April 25th. If the Division concurs, excavation should be complete by the time the last of the clean water has been discharged into the drainage. The pumping of the high TSS water into the basin is expected to take from 25 to 30 pumping hours. If we get started this Friday afternoon we will be in a position to begin filling the shaft on Monday April 30th.

It is estimated that it may take several months for the water to settle and or evaporate. It is estimated that from 7 to 9 inches of solids will remain in the basin after the water has evaporated. After the water has evaporation the material removed during excavation of the basin will be replaced. Additional growth media will be placed and the area will be regraded to the approximate original contour that existed prior to the re-disturbance and the area will be seeded. As built mapping will be provided as part of the Phase I bond release application and an additional section will be added to the reclamation section of the permit explaining the settling of the shaft and the procedure used to dewater and backfill the shaft.

I appreciate your understanding of the situation we are in and your willingness to review this proposal on a timely basis.

Thanks Again,

Dennis Ware

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