



IN REPLY REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior

## OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING

Reclamation and Enforcement  
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320  
Denver, Colorado 80202-5733

August 27, 2003

Mary Ann Wright  
Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Oil, Gas and Mining  
P.O. Box 145801  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5801

*J. King*  
*8/27/03*

RE: Modification to Experimental Practice, West Ridge Mine

Dear Ms. Wright:

We have received the proposed changes to the approved experimental practice at the West Ridge Mine. The changes are necessitated by the alternative backfilling plan for the larger portal area cut face. As a result of the revised plan approximately 0.74 acres of buried topsoil will be affected. This represents only 15.5% of the area that is the subject of the experimental practice. As part of the plan, before the 0.74-acre area is reclaimed the buried topsoil currently in place will be salvaged resulting in no net loss of topsoil. There will not be any increase in the disturbed area.

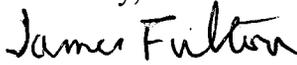
Under 30 CFR 785.13(h) any revisions which propose significant alterations in the experimental practice shall, at a minimum, be subject to notice, hearing, and public participation requirements of section 773.6 of this chapter and concurrence by the Director. Revisions that do not propose significant alterations in the experimental practice shall not require concurrence of the Director.

We have reviewed the changes proposed by West Ridge Mine and determined that they do constitute a significant alteration of the approved experimental practice and OSM's concurrence is not necessary. This determination is based on the fact that the experimental practice itself is not being altered, only the acreage on which it is being implemented. Also, the topsoil on the area to be affected, which has been stored in place as allowed under the experimental practice, will be salvaged as required by the topsoil salvage regulations in the State program. The change does not adversely affect the environmental protection afforded the site. Nor does the loss of 15.5% of the in-place topsoil storage area adversely affect the ability to determine the effectiveness of the experimental practice.

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DIV. OF OIL, GAS & MINING  
*9/2/03*

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed changes to the experimental practice. If you have any questions regarding our decision please contact Robert Postle at (303) 844-1400, extension 1469.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Fulton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "J" and "F".

James Fulton  
Division Chief