

0002

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

Manti-LaSal National Forest
350 East Main Street
Price, Utah 84501

Ken Richards
Mike T.,
What do you think
about continuous monitoring
on Little Bear Springs?
Possibly 2820 Tom could
November 27, 1978
work on their plan when
he comes to
get in him
involved.
Fill in Swisher #4.



Mr. Murray Smith
Office of Surface Mining
Post Office Building-Room 270
1823 Stout Street
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Mr. Smith:

We have reviewed the Swisher Coal Company #4 Coal Mining Plan Modification as you have requested and find no problems with the mining plan. The subsidence/hydrologic monitor plans however are not, in their presented form, complete.

Subsidence & hydrologic I assume

Swisher Coal should be encouraged to draft a plan presenting specifics of how their plans are to be accomplished. Of particular concern is the baseline data needed prior to mining. We feel it important that Swisher prepare a report presenting the baseline data accumulated to date, and their plans, along with time frames for obtaining baseline data not presently available.

Their Hydrologic Monitoring Plan should present details of spring locations, including a detailed description of how water flows are to be measured and monitored, how water samples are to be taken for analysis and a description of their plan to monitor water quality. For example, the flow in Mill Fork should be determined by installation of a weir. A continuous flow meter may be appropriate for Little Bear Springs. #

We are working with Swisher on their subsidence monitoring plan. The Forest Service has the capability of doing the necessary photogrammetric work, including taking of the aerial photos, to determine subsidence. This, however does not relieve Swisher of the responsibility. The Forest Service would do this under a cooperative agreement, only to the extent of providing the controlled photography, and analyzing them for subsidence. Swisher would reimburse the Forest Service for this and would be responsible for tabulating and reporting of data. They are also responsible for formulation of the plan.

Status reports, preferably semi-annual, should be prepared to indicate progress of baseline data collection and of monitoring.

The data should be organized, tabulated and evaluated to the extent possible. Maps must be included showing the locations of all monitor stations, mine workings, springs and all surface structures.

The Swisher plan does not include any of the above mentioned items, and gives no time frames, to accomplish the various data collection or monitoring programs.

On two previous occasions the Forest Service has reviewed the Swisher #4 Coal Mine Plans for the short-term lease. We prepared an Environmental Assessment Report and have concurred to the approval of the mining plans (except for the monitor plans). The USGS Conservation Division also prepared an Environmental Assessment for the short-term lease area, which was reviewed and concurred to by the Forest Service. Attached are copies of our letter to the Geologic Survey giving concurrence to mine plan approval.

We would appreciate meeting with you concerning the plan review and the Environmental Assessment at your earliest convenience, to expedite this mine plan approval.

/s/ K. Dale Torgerson

for
REED C. CHRISTENSEN
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures

cc: Ron Daniels, Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining ✓
Salt Lake City, Utah

Manti-LaSal National Forest
350 East Main Street
Price, Utah 84501

2820

July 26, 1978

Jack Moffitt
Area Mining Supervisor
Conservation Division
8426 Federal Building
125 South State Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84138

SL064903
U33454

Dear Mr. Moffitt:

During the past year, the Forest Service prepared an Environmental Analysis Report for the approval of Swisher Coal Company Mining Plan for lease SL064903, and an Environmental Analysis Report for the Readjustment of lease SL064903 and short-term lease U33454. These documents present the constraints and stipulations required by the Forest Service for the Swisher No. 4 Mine and for the short-term lease. These stipulations are briefly summarized as follows:

1. It is generally not anticipated that surface facilities other than those established will be needed for mining these tracts. Should other facilities be required, their impacts will be evaluated and additional stipulations formulated upon receipt of the proposal.

At the conclusion of mining, all unused facilities will be removed and any disrupted sites will be rehabilitated in accordance with 30 CFR 211 and the requirements set forth in the site specific Environmental Analysis Report.

All areas disturbed by the mine or related activities will be rehabilitated, including seeding, revegetation, and other measures needed for stabilization of soils, slopes, and drainages.

2. The company will take the necessary measures to prevent dust and to protect the road from deterioration.
3. Heavy equipment will not be allowed in the creek.
4. A minimum of 10 gallon per minute flow is to be maintained in Mill Creek below the point of diversion.

5. Flow of the Little Bear Spring municipal water supply and other springs and flows will be monitored throughout the active life of the mine, and after mining is completed, such that any changes in quality or quantity of the water can be documented.
6. Wildlife will not be harassed.
7. Power pole designs will conform to that used to prevent problems with all birds.
8. An active fire prevention program will be developed and maintained.
9. A monitor system to study the effects of mining upon the surface and subsurface resources is required. This will include an inventory of all existing resource elements and a documentation of the existing conditions. This monitor system will be developed to comply with requirements of the U.S. Geological Survey and the Forest Service.
10. Drilling by truck-mounted rig will be limited to a road along the ridge between Little Bear and Mill Fork Canyons, which was used for former drilling, but has since been reclaimed. Access to steep slopes or areas which are unstable and where reasonable reclamation cannot be attained, will not be permitted. Each drill site proposal must be examined and approved.
11. Mining will leave sufficient coal adjacent to the escarpments to prevent subsidence effects upon these escarpments.
12. Should resource damage result from the mining of these lease tracts, these damages will be defined and proper mitigation, either by reclamation, replacement or compensation, will be required.

We have reviewed the Swisher No. 4 proposed mine plans received from your office for the short-term lease (an extension of their original mine plan) and find no problem with this proposal.

According to the subsidence plan submitted by Swisher, they point out that they are working with the Forest Service on a monitoring program based on aerial photography. We are in the process of finalizing our Forest Monitoring Plan and will shortly draw up a cooperative agreement with Swisher to jointly initiate a study. We feel that the hydrologic monitoring as submitted will remain generally unchanged. The subsidence monitoring plan will change. This will necessitate Swisher resubmitting a new plan which will incorporate the new material when the cooperative agreement is finalized.

The third plan submitted, dealing with O.S.M. Regulations pertaining to the access road and sedimentation ponds, deserves some comment. The argument Swisher used to request a variance to the sediment pond is erroneous. They stated that sediment to Mill Fork Creek is not a problem. This is not true! In the brief time (1-1/2 years) that Swisher has operated the No. 4 mine, the operation has degraded the creek to an unacceptable level. Coal dust has entered the creek from surface runoff from the lower yard, coal dust blowing off the uncovered trucks, and illegally using bug dust last winter to treat the roads. We agree with the need for sediment ponds; however, we disagree with their proposed locations. To trap all materials transported by surface runoff, Swisher proposes putting settling ponds in Mill Fork Creek. The settling ponds should be between the mine site and the creek in order to keep the contamination out of the creek.

We understand that Swisher has asked to be granted a variance for the access road. We agree with Swisher's attempt to gain this variance.

The reclamation bond requirement of \$1,600 for the mine site is much too low. The company estimates six weeks to do the work. The bond should be on the order of \$10,000.

We concur with the mining plan, but cannot concur with the subsidence hydrologic monitoring plans. As mentioned above, we are working with Swisher on a plan which will be both acceptable to Swisher and to us. It will incorporate the requirements as outlined by the U.S. Geological Survey guidelines.

If you have questions or desire further comment, please contact us.

Sincerely,

W. H. Boley

For
REED C. CHRISTENSEN
Forest Supervisor

cc: Bill Johnson - R.O.

FThompson:gd

A.A.

Manti-LaSal National Forest
350 East Main Street
Price, Utah 84501

2820

September 6, 1978

Mr. Jack Moffitt
Area Mining Supervisor
USGS, Conservation Div.
8426 Federal Building
125 South State Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84138

SL-064403
U-33454

Dear Mr. Moffitt:

As requested by you, we have reviewed the first addendum to the Environmental Analysis, Swisher Coal Company No. 4 Mine. Following are our comments:

Please refer to our letter of July 26, 1978. Since this letter, we have prepared an Environmental Analysis for the short-term lease sale (U-33454) which was requested by the Bureau of Land Management. This was done in order to separate the lease sale from the readjustment of lease SL-064903 which Environmental Analysis Report was done previously. Our July 26 letter also contains our conditional concurrence and comments from our review of the mine plan, dependent upon the development of an acceptable monitoring plan.

We concur with your conclusions that the proposed action does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment in the sense of NEPA, and the environmental impacts of the proposed action are not likely to be highly controversial. We, however, do feel that the Environmental Analysis should incorporate the following suggestions.

Page 2, third paragraph - Not clear what will be mined in three years.

Page 3, third paragraph - There are no oil and gas wells, but the area is under oil and gas lease.

Fourth paragraph - Mine water will also be used for mining, not just water from Mill Creek.

Page 6 - The Forest Service review of the proposed monitoring plans concluded them to be inadequate. Since this review, we have been working with Swisher to develop acceptable plans. To date this plan has not been finalized. Until these plans are acceptable, we cannot concur to approval of the subsidence/hydrologic plans referred to in this report.

Page 7, first sentence top of page - We would prefer the area to be revegetated, not just seeded.

Page 9 through page 15 - The Forest Service Environmental Analysis Report for the short term lease sale was rewritten by the Forest Service on August 3, 1978. A copy was sent your office August 8. This revised report better describes the environment than did the previous report. It also is directed toward the short term lease area and not so much to the existing approved operation. The way you have presented this in your Environmental Analysis gives the impression that impacts are going to occur on the short term lease area which actually have already occurred and exist on the Federal lease being mined. These impacts will never exist on the short term lease area, which is the area being considered by the Environmental Analysis.

Because the mining of the short term lease will be from portals off the tract, no surface ingress will occur. Therefore, many of the items, i.e., erosion control, air pollution, etc., as discussed are incorrect for the short term lease area.

On page 11, last paragraph - This statement is not true as no surface disturbance is proposed. There will be no added impacts to those which exist at the existing mine.

May we suggest that you incorporate the information from the Forest Service Environmental Analysis Report into your Environmental Analysis for these environmental sections.

Page 15 - We would prefer the areas to be revegetated not just seeded.

The short term lease area is located within a RARE II area. See page 25 and 26 of the Forest Service Environmental Analysis Report for detailed discussion.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM H. BOLEY
Forest Engineer

cc: R.O. - 2800

FThompson:gd

4-11