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

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May 19, 1997

TO: File

THRU: Joe Helfrich, Permit Supervisor *JH*

FROM: Susan M. White, Senior Reclamation Biologist *SMW*

RE: Success Standards, Mountain Coal Company, Huntington #4 Mine, ACT/015/004-97B, Folder #2, Emery County, Utah

Synopsis

Mountain Coal Company submitted a permit amendment to change the vegetation success standards for the above referenced mine. The amendment was received May 14, 1997. The amendment is associated with the Divisions analysis of the Phase III Bond Release Application received in April, 1996. The amendment meets the requirements of the regulations and can be approved.

REVEGETATION

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR Sec. 785.18, 817.111, 817.113, 817.114, 817.116; R645-301-244, -301-353, -301-354, -301-355, -301-356, -302-280, -302-281, -302-282, -302-283, -302-284.

Analysis:

Standards for Success.

The regulations, for areas previously disturbed by mining that were not reclaimed, are that the vegetative ground cover will be not less than the ground cover existing before redisturbance and will be adequate to control erosion and achieve the approved postmining land use. The Division's interpretation, at this time, is that continuously mined sites also apply to this standard.

The permit states (page 3-67a) that the reclamation will be considered successful if the upper and lower reclaimed areas are at least equal to or greater than the pinyon-juniper reference areas when cover, production, and shrub density are compared.

The reclaimed pumphouse and pond area disturbance is less than 1 acre in size.

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No reference area was established for this riparian area, instead a transect 100 feet above and 100 feet below the disturbance will be used as a cover comparison area. Density of woody species will meet a technical requirement of 2000 woody species per acre along the riparian corridor.

A separate diversity success standard is proposed (page 3-67b) for the riparian and pinyon -juniper reclaimed areas. The standard for the riparian area is based on the average number of species found in the meter square quadrants and compared to the comparison area. The MacArthur index will be used to compare diversity to the reference area for the pinyon-juniper community. This index integrates the number of species and the degree to which frequency of occurrence was equitably distributed among those species.

Findings:

The amendment meets the requirements of this section of the regulations.

RECOMMENDATION

Amendment 97B, Success Standards may be approved and incorporated into the permit.

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cc: Permit Binder
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