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United States Department of the Interior
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
Reclamation and Enforcement

[REDACTED]
DENVER, COLORADO 80202

Brooks Towers
1020-15th Street

FEBRUARY 13, 1980

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[Signature]

MR. RON DANIELS
COORDINATOR OF MINED LAND DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
1588 NORTH WEST TEMPLE
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84116

Dear MR. DANIELS:

Enclosed please find copies of on-site inspection reports. The inspections were conducted within HIDDEN VALLEY MINE during the period of DECEMBER 4, 1979.

If you have any questions or problems, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

Murray I. Smith
Chief, Division of Inspection & Enforcement

RECEIVED

FEB 15 1980

DIVISION OF
OIL, GAS & MINING

REGION V ON-SITE INSPECTION REPORT

SOLDIER CREEK COAL COMPANY
HIDDEN VALLEY MINE
P.O. Box AS
Price, Utah 84501

DATE: December 4, 1979
TIME: 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
WEATHER: Clear and cool
COUNTY & STATE: Emery County, Utah
TYPE OF INSPECTION: Initial
COMPANY OFFICIALS: Tom Palusco and Dave Spillman
STATE OFFICIAL: Joe Helfrich
OSM OFFICIAL: Gary Fritz
STATE PERMIT NO: PRO/015/022
MSHA I.D. NO: 4201407

GENERAL COMMENTS

The purpose of this inspection was to review the progress of the proposed mining operation in Sections 17 and 18 of T23S, R6E. In Price, Utah, I reviewed the company's proposed mining and reclamation plan along with sample data that is being collected for baseline studies prior to the mining. I also physically reviewed the proposed minesite to determine if any additional development was being conducted that was not authorized by Utah's Division of Oil, Gas, & Mining Exploration Permit (PRO/015/022). Routine inspections will be scheduled for this area to monitor the proposed mining operation.

COMPLIANCE WITH INTERIM REGULATIONS

717.11 General Obligations

The company is revising and submitting additional information for their proposed mining and reclamation plan per requests by the Division of Oil, Gas, & Mining. Mr. Spillman disagreed with a couple of the revision requests that OSM's Division of Technical Analysis & Research had forwarded to the Division of Oil, Gas, & Mining for incorporation into their revision request letter to the company. Mr. Spillman said our staff had misinterpreted two samples and their corresponding analysis as something which would possibly have a detrimental effect on reclamation, as indicated in their mining and reclamation plan. He was drafting a response explaining our oversight of the findings listed in Section 5 of their proposed mining and reclamation plan.

717.12 Signs and Markers

No signs were posted at the public access to the property. Signs are not required until the company begins to mine.

717.15 Disposal of Excess Rock and Earth Materials on Surface Areas

The company is going to build a preparation plant on the site. Refuse produced in the cleaning process will be truck transported to an area on the southern side of the permit. This area does not appear to contain springs, or wet weather seeps. However, an arroyo that is about ten feet deep in places, is running through the area to Ivie Creek. There was no water in the arroyo at the time of the inspection.

Mr. Palusco said the company had not done any strata tests below the proposed disposal area. He said that they planned to undermine the area; therefore, they were not worried about the underlying strata. The subsurface drainage may be adversely affected unless the company is sure of the underlying geology of the refuse disposal area.

717.17 Protection of the Hydrologic System

Ivie Creek, the only surface water flow on the permit area, runs west to east, generally dividing the Hidden Valley site. It is classified as an intermittent stream and is being monitored on a monthly basis by the company. Mr. Palusco drove us through the creek to reach the proposed portal area. On the way, he pointed out two of the three monitoring sites. The third site is on the western edge of the mine property where the stream first crosses the permit boundaries.

Groundwater is being monitored through exploratory drill wells on the property. Four of the holes are flowing or have flowed under artesian pressure. The company has been monitoring three of these holes and are planning to develop a fourth one. These holes are located on the western half of the property, the rest of the drill holes on the area are dry.

The company does not have these wells winterized so they close them off in the winter. Consequently they are not monitoring the groundwater regime during this period. Mr. Palusco said they were going to be winterized when mining got underway because they needed the water for the mining machines.

Of the dry test holes, I saw one which had not been closed or piped and capped for further use. It should have been closed if it was not going to be used. The number of additional holes that have been left open are unknown, but should be checked during a future inspection.

An unimproved county road goes by the proposed mine area. The contract for improving the road, which includes blacktopping and straightening, has gone out for bids.

The portal area has two exploratory shafts driven in the upper and lower seam areas. There was no evidence of any additional development at the site since the adits were installed. The portals were fenced off and signs prohibiting access to unauthorized personnel were posted.

717.17 Protection of the Hydrologic System (cont.)

There was no effort on the company's behalf to save topsoil.

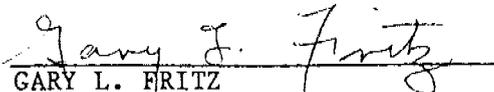
There was also a small wash or arroyo that was filled in to allow dozer access to the lower seam area. There was no culvert on any other drainage device which would allow flow through the drainage. However, there was no evidence of erosion resulting from the diversion of the overland flow.

CONCLUSION

These were several of the areas in question after completion of my inspection:

1. Subsurface drainage management and protection for the proposed refuse disposal site.
2. Test holes that were not closed.
3. Topsoil loss at the test portal site.
4. Drainage blocked at the proposed portal area.

However, the company appears to be putting a good faith effort into development of the area. They are answering all of the revision requests and are gathering baseline data in accordance to the interim standards.


GARY L. FRITZ
RECLAMATION SPECIALIST