

EXPLORATION TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Utah Coal Regulatory Program

August 9, 2006

TO: Internal File

THRU: Stephen J. Demczak, Environmental Scientist/Engineering, Team Lead *SD by ar*

FROM: *JCH* Joseph C. Helfrich, Environmental Scientist/Biology, Cultural Resources

RE: Minor Coal Exploration Plan, Consolidation Coal Company, Hidden Valley Mine, C/015/007, Task ID #2604

SUMMARY:

On July 19, 2006 the Division received an application from Consolidation Coal Company to drill nine coal exploration holes on the Hidden Valley property. The drilling project can be located on the Walker Flat 7.5 minuet quadrangle map, in sections 17 and 18 of T. 23 S., R6E. The project is intended to facilitate the collection of data from the underlying coal seam. This memo will address the Biology and Cultural Resource sections of the regulations.

EXPLORATION TECHNICAL ANALYSIS:

COMPLIANCE DUTIES

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 772.13; R645-202.

OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 772.13; R645-202-100.

Analysis:

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Biology

Page 6 section 230 of the application references a vegetation survey of the proposed drill hole locations performed by Mt. Nebo Scientific, (Appendix A). Vegetation communities described in the report include saltbush, shadscale, greasewood, and pinyon-juniper. According to the survey when compared to the current T & E plant species list for Emery County there were no T & E species located within the proposed drill site locations. Wildlife is also described in this section with the proposed drill site locations being categorized by DWR as elk winter range. The application also includes the following wildlife information:

- A map outlining the Elk winter range,
- A current Threatened and Endangered species list for the county where the proposed drilling is located and a brief explanation regarding the presence or absence of T & E species located within the proposed drill site locations,
- A current raptor survey and a discussion regarding the status of any nests located within ½ mile of any of the proposed drill site locations and,
- A commitment to schedule a site visit with the Biologist from the Division and/or the DWR in the event drilling activities extend into the elk winter range exclusionary period, approximately November 20 through March 15.

Findings:

The information provided is adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations.

HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCE INFORMATION_{[sm:]1}

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 783.12; R645-301-411.

Analysis:

The application includes a cultural resource inventory for the nine proposed drilling locations, Appendix B. Montgomery Archeological Consultants under the guise of Rigden Glaab and Michele Martz conducted the survey in March of 2006. As noted, two sites previously documented were identified in the project area. The site will be flagged during drilling operations to prevent disturbance. A copy of the survey was forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Office. The Division received their concurrence by way of "E" mail correspondence on 8/11/2006.

Findings:

The information provided is adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations.

RECLAMATION STANDARDS

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 772.13; R645-202-200.

Analysis:

Revegetation

The application includes a seed mix to be used in reclamation of the drill sites as outlined in Appendix A. Appendix A also includes a map of the locations of the nine drill holes and a description of the vegetation communities and reclamation techniques for each drill hole location.

Findings:

The information provided is adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The application is recommended for approval.