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STATE OF UTAH
NATURAL RESOURCES & ENERGY
Wildlife Resources

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FILE
ACT/O&M/009 #2

J. Smith
To Mary

Scott M. Matheson, Governor
Temple A. Reynolds, Executive Director
Douglas F. Day, Division Director

Copy to: *Steve*
Mary
Pam

JIM

MAY 09 1984

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MAY 2 1984

DIVISION OF OIL
GAS & MINING

(copy to Lou Hamm
OSM via Steve Menger
✓ 5/10/84)

May 1, 1984

Dr. Dianne R. Nielson, Director
Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining
4241 State Office Building
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Attention: James Smith

Dear Dianne:

The Division has evaluated Trail Mountain Coal Company's most recent response to the Apparent Completeness Review for the Mining and Reclamation Plan at the Trail Mountain Mine. Enclosed are the Division's specific comments and recommendations. Generally speaking, the company fails to provide a detailed and specific mitigation plan. The wildlife section in the appendices volumes are in need of significant editorial review.

Thank you for an opportunity to review the MRP and provide comment.

Sincerely,

Acting Director

William H. Geer
Acting Director

UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES' COMMENTS
RELATIVE TO TRAIL MOUNTAIN COAL COMPANY'S RESPONSE
TO THE APPARENT COMPLETENESS REVIEW
FOR THE MINING AND RECLAMATION PLAN (MRP)
AT THE TRAIL MOUNTAIN MINE

Volume I

No comments.

Volume II

Appendix IX

Page 1, paragraph 2 - The MRP must identify the acreage for each habitat type disturbed. This will aid in formulation and evaluation of a mitigation plan.

Page 14, containerized stock - The inference that containerized transplant stock will be planted at 90 individuals per acre can only be acceptable if seeding success along with the transplants brings the percent of individual specimens up to the acceptable level, based upon a reference area.

Page 34 (Table 2), 35 (Table 3), and 36 (Table 4) - Each of the species identified as transplants from containerized stock should also be included as seed in the seed list.

Page 36 (Table 4) - Rubber rabbit brush should be replaced with big sagebrush. The rabbit brush is an invading species and will be present without seeding effort. Also, the sagebrush would be a preferred and more palatable species for big game that utilize the area.

Appendix X

Section 10-1 - The wildlife distribution maps could be improved by utilization of larger scale maps specific to the mine plan area.

Note: Appendix X does not have a wildlife mitigation plan. Recommendations for such a plan was provided by the Division to the applicant on May 22, 1981. The applicant must in the MRP identify impacts to wildlife, their high-valued habitats and appropriate mitigation. The primary issues that should be addressed include;

- (1) Training of mine personnel concerning the wildlife and mitigation in which employees can participate as company representatives. (The Division is of an understanding that the company has initiated this action with the "Coal Mining and Wildlife" training slide-tape series made available by the Division. However, this action should be identified in the MRP.)

- (2) Mitigation for loss of at least 2,000 linear feet of riparian habitat when the stream was culverted. The MRP must identify the acreage of this and other high valued habitats (critical and high-priority) that are disturbed. It is possible that off site mitigation is most practicable due to the narrow canyon nature of the manipulatable portion of the mine plan area. Reclamation of these sites at abandonment is not sufficient mitigation since the riparian-wetland type is of critical value to wildlife.
- (3) Mitigation, if needed, for loss of water as well as riparian-wetland vegetation if seeps, springs or other surface water sources are impacted by mining activities.

Appendix Volumes

Page 3-27, 3.4.1, presentation of land-use - The MRP should identify that the land-use was and will be wildlife habitat.

Page 3-28, 3.4.1.1, projected impacts on current and future land use - The loss of riparian-wetland habitat at the mine is of significance due to its critical value to local wildlife.

Page 4-6, 4.3.2, mine plan area land use - Same comment as page 3-27, 3.4.1.

Page 4-8, 4.4.3.1, effect of operation on land use - Operations have resulted in loss of at least 2000 linear feet riparian-wetland habitat along Cottonwood Creek. This habitat type is of critical value to local wildlife; thus, impact to wildlife are considered to be significant.

Page 10-2, paragraph 3 - All comments in this paragraph are irrelevant and should be deleted, since the formal consultation was made between DWR and DOGM (June 9, 1981) concerning the level of wildlife information needed in the MRP. This letter (consultation) is in Volume II, Section 10 of the applicant's most recent submittal of response to an ACR.

Page 10-6, top half of the page - DWR's comments dated July 1, 1981 and May 6, 1982 for page 10-6 remain valid.

Page 10-7, 10.3.1, wildlife habitats in the mine plan area - The applicant fails to recognize the existence of riparian-wetland habitat on the mine plan area. This was earlier pointed out in DWR comments of May 6, 1982 for page 10-7.

Page 10-36, Table 10-8 - This data is not needed since the species list publication supersedes.