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State of Utah
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

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DIV. OF OIL, GAS & MINING

November 22, 1996

Mr. Carter Reed
United States Department of Agriculture
Manti-La Sal National Forest Supervisor's Office
599 West Price River Drive
Price, Utah 84501

Copy Dave, Joe, Pam
ACT/015/009 #2
FAX Bill M
@ RFO

Dear Carter:

This letter is in response to your request for comments from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources on Pacificorp's application to modify Federal Coal Lease U-64375. These comments are to be considered in the preparation of a forthcoming environmental analysis conducted by the Manti-La Sal National Forest on this proposed modification of the Trail Mountain Mine.

The area being considered for extension parallels the northern border of Straight Canyon. An escarpment of Castle Gate sandstone juts out in a continuous band along this portion of Straight Canyon. This escarpment provides ideal nesting habitat for birds of prey. Raptors are known to nest along this sandstone ledge in Straight Canyon from Joe's Valley Reservoir to the southeast near the Black Diamond Mine. Several documented raptor nests lie immediately to the east of the proposed area (Figure 1). Raptors nesting here include golden eagles and red-tailed hawks. The critical nesting period for these birds occurs from February 15 to July 15.

Raptor surveys should be conducted annually to determine nesting status of these raptors. Any backfilling that is to be permitted should be done far enough away or at an angle that would preclude any material from spalling onto the Castle Gate escarpment. In addition, any authorized backfilling in the proposed extension area should be performed during the seven month period of each year (July 16 to February 14) when these raptors do not engage in breeding activities. These precautions should prevent any harm or harassment to current or future raptors nesting near the proposed mine extension.

Sincerely,

Miles Moretti

cc: UDWR Habitat Section SLO
Utah Division of Oil Gas and Mining
UDWR SERO

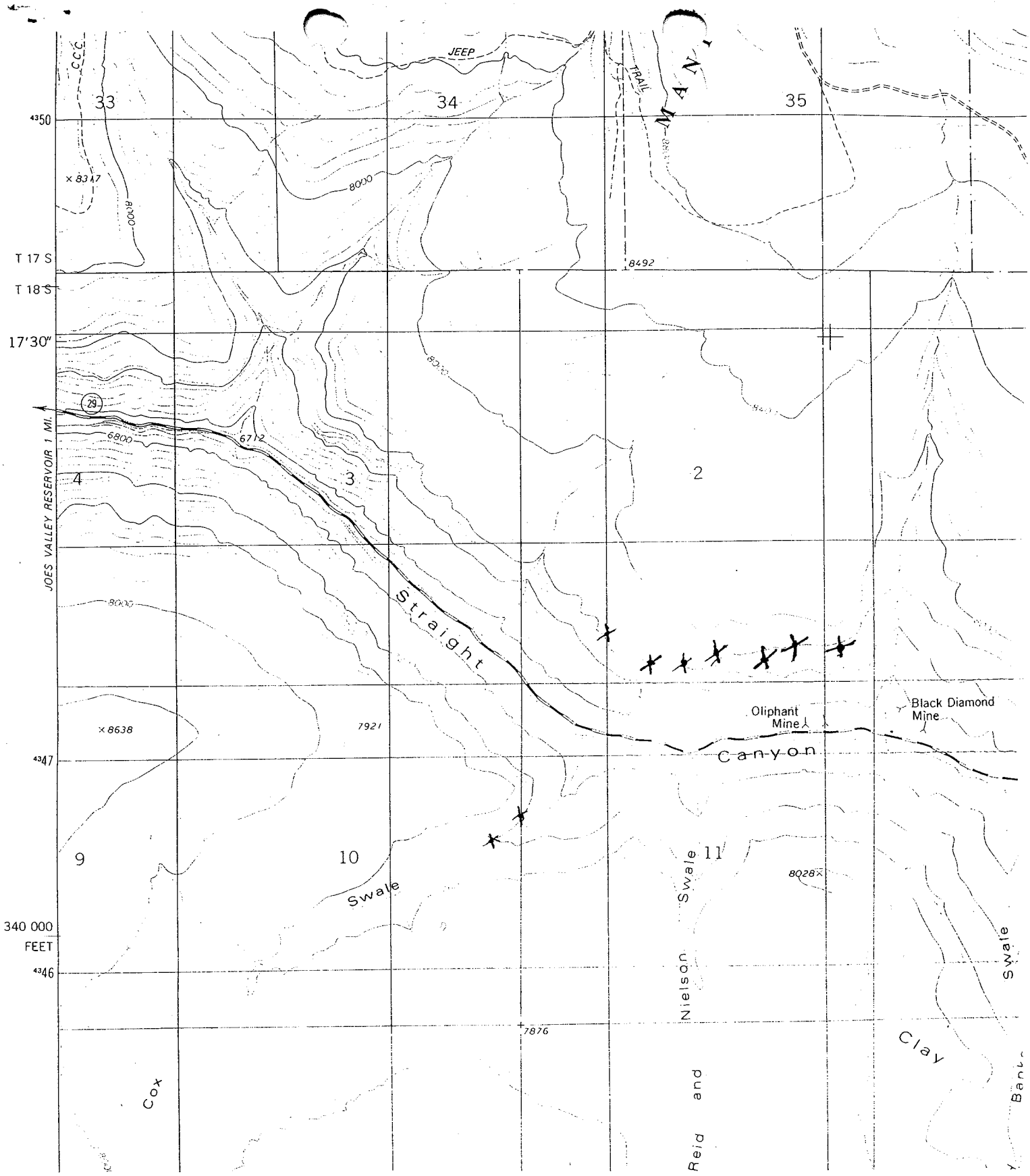

Figure 1. Raptor nest locations in the vicinity of the proposed Pacificorp modification of Federal Coal Lease U-64375, Straight Canyon, Emery County, Utah. An "x" denotes the location of a raptor nest. This map from the USGS, 7.5' Mahogany Point Quadrangle.