



# State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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November 4, 1992

Mr. Dee Bray  
Consolidation Coal Company  
12755 Olive Boulevard  
St. Louis, Missouri 63141

Dear Mr. Bray:

Re: Vegetation on Topsoil Piles, Consolidation Coal Company, Emery Deep Mine, ACT/015/015, Folder #2, Emery County, Utah

On October 29, 1992, I conducted a partial inspection at the Emery Deep Mine. As I discussed with you November 2, one of the stipulations to the amendment for reseeded the topsoil piles was that the vegetation be monitored qualitatively each year for at least the first three years. I feel that there is not enough information to be gained this year, from monitoring this vegetation, that money should be spent to fly someone from St. Louis to do the monitoring, or that it is necessary to hire a consultant to do this work. Hopefully, there will be more that can be learned next year.

The middle subsoil pile has clearly had the best plant growth of the three piles, followed by the topsoil pile on the east and the subsoil pile on the west. Best growth on all three piles is on the top where it is relatively flat. There is also a limited amount of growth in the gouges that were made on the sides of the slopes. Even though some plants appear to have become established, plant density is still low, particularly on the east and west piles.

Disturbance of the piles has led to growth of more halogeton and kochia than was present in 1991. The native grasses have not grown sufficiently that they can be identified; hopefully they will spread and produce seed stalks next year. Shrubs that I found are winterfat, shadscale, and fourwing saltbush. Winterfat was by far the most prevalent of the shrubs. I did not see any seeded forbs that I remember. The globemallow has very dormant seed and could still germinate later.

I also looked at the revegetation test plots near the main facilities. Although I did not have a map with me showing which shrubs were alive last year, it appeared that some of them may have died. In the areas where there is no vegetation, I was impressed how smooth the soil surface was. It appears to have little structure and few rocks. The two swale areas continue to show very lush growth. I think that creating microtopographic features like these swales will be a very important aspect of final reclamation.

Please call me if you have any questions about the vegetation on the soil piles, or if I can help you in some other way.

Sincerely,

Paul B. Baker  
Reclamation Biologist