



State of Utah
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

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December 14, 1993

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DIVISION OF
OIL, GAS & MINING

Charles J. Jankiewicz
Manti-LaSal National Forest
Price Ranger District
599 West Price River Drive
Price, Utah 84501

Dear Charlie:

The Division of Wildlife Resources has reviewed the proposed readjustment of Federal Coal Lease SL-051221 held by PacifiCorp. We have the following comments and recommendations regarding this action.

The Rilda Canyon area provides important wildlife habitat which is utilized by a variety of species. This area has been classified as critical elk winter range and high-priority mule deer summer range. There are also a number of raptor nests located in the canyon, including golden eagle and Cooper's hawk nests. Water sources within the canyon support riparian vegetation. These sources and their riparian communities support an important fishery and provide critical habitat for a number of other aquatic and terrestrial species. Readjustment of this lease should consider the potential impacts of underground coal mining on important wildlife habitats.

Underground mining can impact wildlife habitat in a number of ways. The most significant impacts result from surface disturbance for mining facilities and subsidence of the surface due to the removal of coal. The application of the Forest Service Special Stipulations will help reduce any impacts to wildlife resulting from mining activity within the lease area. We want to emphasize the importance of these stipulations as they provide guidelines for reducing impacts due to surface disturbance and subsidence.

We are particularly concerned with the effect of subsidence on available water sources and raptor cliff nests. We fully support those stipulations calling for the monitoring of subsidence and water sources. Pacificorp has participated with DWR in conducting annual raptor surveys of the lease area. We urge that this practice continue so that the impacts of mining on raptors can be better understood.

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Charles J. Jankiewicz

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It is important that, if impacts due to subsidence are detected, appropriate mitigation measures be implemented in order to replace lost habitat values. Again, we support those stipulations which outline appropriate mitigation for impacts to wildlife habitat.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this action. We support your efforts to coordinate mining activities with the protection of other natural resources, including wildlife. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Ken Phippen, Regional Habitat Manager.

Sincerely,



Miles Moretti
Regional Supervisor

Copy: Ralph Miles, DWR
Pamela Grubaugh-Littig, DOGM

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