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United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Manti-La Sal National Forest
Supervisor's Office
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File Code: 2820-4
Date: February 25, 2002

Mary Ann Wright
Associate Director, Mining
Division of Oil, Gas & Mining
1594 West North Temple, Suite 1210
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-5801

Incoming
C/015/018
Copy Aaron

Dear Ms. Wright:

The initial review of the Mine Plan for the Mill Fork Lease, ML-48258 has been completed. Enclosed are the comments that need to be addressed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either Karl Boyer or Carter Reed at the above address and telephone number.

Sincerely,

Orlando Garcia for

ELAINE J. ZIEROTH
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures

cc: D-2/3

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DIVISION OF
OIL, GAS AND MINING

Mill Fork Tract MRP Comments
February 15, 2002

1) Biology Section
Threatened & Endangered Species

The Raptor Location Map, MFS1852B, shows that panels in the upper seam underlie a tended golden eagle nest in T16S, R6E, SE 1/4 Sec 1. This needs to be addressed in the MRP. This nest and any other tended or active nests located during the annual surveys must be protected from subsidence unless a take permit is acquired through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

2) Biology Section
Baseline Data

Vegetation and Wildlife – The Biology Introduction states that the vegetative, fish and wildlife information was taken from the Data Adequacy document and the Mill Fork EA. The Vegetation Map, MFS1821B, was also taken from the same sources. The deer and elk habitat maps are a little better than those presented in the Data Adequacy Study. Concentrations of vegetation and wildlife are not presented, i.e., estimated numbers of plant species, deer, and elk are not presented. Provide data on the estimated numbers of deer and elk in the Mill Fork Tract and the trend in population (up or down) of each herd so that future comparisons can be made.

The Vegetation Map, MFS1821B, does not adequately represent the plant communities characteristic of the dominant overstory and understory species present in each area. Greater mapping detail showing the areal distribution and abundance of each species needs to be presented. The Manti-La Sal National Forest is in the process of compiling a series of detailed vegetation maps in digital form. This new information is now available for the Mill Fork Tract and could be presented in the Mill Fork MRP in place of the map presented. The greater detail depicted in the Forest Service map provides better baseline data to make future comparisons with. The vegetation data can be obtained from the Forest Service.

The Biology Section does not address methods of monitoring future changes in vegetation. State Coal Lease ML 48258 Special Stipulation #7 requires, among other things, that a monitoring system should be established that measures and quantifies the progressive and final effects of underground mining activities on vegetation.

3) Land Use and Air Quality Section

The MRP must provide more detail in discussing current surface uses and demonstrate that these uses will continue as post-mine uses. The MRP must address Forest Plan Management Units and whether Forest Service Management Emphasis (uses) would be affected.

4) Land Use and Air Quality
Cultural Resource/Paleontological Surveys

Pages 4-3 and 4-4 discuss the Cultural Survey, i.e., acres surveyed, methodology, names of the people involved, but only one line, the last sentence on page 4-4 mentions the Paleontological Survey. At the bottom of page 4-4 the MRP briefly states "no paleontological loci were identified". A discussion such as that devoted to the Cultural Survey also needs to be incorporated in the Paleontological Survey. Provide some details such as who conducted the survey, the areas covered, methodology, and any other pertinent information.

5) Engineering Section

The Subsidence Control Plan states that the two overhead powerlines will not be undermined. The northern powerline is east (outside) of the area to be mined, so this is not a concern. However, the southern powerline crosses the southwest corner of the southernmost panel in the Hiawatha Seam. The narrative states on pg. 5-21 that the Utah Power transmission line in T16S, R6E, Sec 22 will not be undermined. The mine plans must agree with the narrative and correctly portray this. As the mine plans are drawn now, they show that the transmission line is within the subsidence zone of the two southernmost panels in the lower seam. The protection method for the powerline must be discussed in detail (angle of draw, structural features in the area that could affect subsidence, etc.)

Page 5-21 states "If the well is to be undermined, an appropriately sized radius barrier will be left around the well." This statement leaves open the possibility that the production well in T16S, R6E, Sec 23 could be undermined. The well cannot be undermined. The narrative and the mine plans must make this point clear. An appropriately sized buffer zone around the well needs to be shown on the mine plans and a detailed discussion of how the buffer zone was determined is needed. Additionally, the lessee/operator must commit to coordinating mining activities with Merit Oil Company to assure that protection measures are acceptable to both parties.

The Subsidence Control Plan, pg. 5-22, states that there is a 22° angle of draw buffer zone along the Joes Valley Fault. The mine plans do not agree with the narrative. The 22° angle of draw is from the western edge of the lowest mined coal seam to the surface expression of the fault. Map 1825D (Hiawatha Overburden) shows that the coal panels extend too far to the west. As the mine plans are presented, the subsidence zone would extend into the fault in certain locations. The mine plans need to be revised to be consistent with the narrative.

At the top of page 5-22 the Subsidence Control Plan states that the Emery Water Conservancy District flow monitor and solar powered telemetry transmitter are expected to be undermined in T16S, R6E, Sec 23. Prior to the Mill Fork MRP being approved, PacifiCorp must commit to coordinating with Emery Water Conservancy District regarding their plans to undermine the flow monitor and that PacifiCorp agrees to repair any and all damages to the flow monitor at PacifiCorp's own expense.

State Coal Lease ML 48258 Special Stipulation #9 states that surface subsidence should be prevented that would "cause the creation of hazardous conditions such as potential escarpment failure and landslides." Pages IV-2 and IV-3 of the Mill Fork EA discuss escarpment failure as a probability in some areas. The Engineering Section of the Mill Fork MRP, page 5-22, states that the Castlegate will be undermined and page 5-27 provides details on the undermined sections of Castlegate Sandstone. PacifiCorp must demonstrate that there will be no safety hazards to roads or facilities from falling rock by utilizing a rock fall simulation analysis.

The Subsidence Monitoring Plan discusses the photogrammetry methods used. Include a full sized map (equal in size to the mine plans) that shows the locations of the permanent control monuments to be surveyed and targeted for elevation control. The monuments should overlay the mine plans. The photogrammetry monitoring must include control points outside of subsidence areas. In the past there have been problems correlating base elevations for each year's comparison. One way to alleviate this problem would be to survey the monuments each year with GPS, then adjust the model to fit. The photogrammetry needs to be supplemented with GPS measurements or conventional ground surveys, especially in steep terrain and heavy timber.

Subsidence Monitoring Plan, Page 5-27: Is 2800 feet correct for the length of the Castlegate Sandstone outcrop to be undermined along the south slope of the left fork of Crandall Canyon? It looks closer to 5000 feet. Please correct the discrepancy.

Figure R645-301-500a shows the gateroad entry centers as 50'x100'. The caption below the figure states that the dimensions are 80'x100'. Please make the correction.

The Reclamation Plan must state that all underground equipment will be removed unless specific approval to abandon such equipment has been granted by the appropriate regulatory authorities.

6) Corner Monuments

State Coal Lease ML 48258 Special Stipulation #16 states that the lessee will replace all damaged, disturbed or displaced corner monuments, their accessories and appendages. This needs to be addressed in the MRP.

7) Reclamation of Forest Service Owned or Protected Surface Improvements

The MRP must state that Forest Road 50244 and any other developments in the Mill Fork Tract will be inspected annually for damage and that any damages will be repaired at the expense of the lessee. With regard to FR50244, the minimum requirement will be an annual inspection to check for tension cracks and buckling, followed by regrading of the road surface as necessary to restore trafficability.

8) Hydrology Section

Hydrologic Map MFS1851D: The legend in the lower right corner doesn't have the corresponding symbols for the formations. The map needs to be revised.

Pages 95-96: The figures presented show that the discharge rate from PacifiCorp's total permit areas ranges from about 2.3% to 3.5% of either of the creeks' average flows, not less than 2% as stated. The narrative needs to be revised.

Hydrologic Monitoring: In Mill Fork there are two surface water monitoring stations shown on Hydrologic Monitoring Map MFS1851D. A third monitoring station is needed upstream from the Mill Fork Graben and below the forks.

Provide site-specific rationale why each spring was chosen for monitoring. Page 98 (Subsection R645-731-200, Water Monitoring) lists the criteria that were used for choosing the monitoring sites but does not explain how each criterion was applied to each site. Evidently each criterion was weighted differently for each site and then a decision was made why to include specific sites. Provide a discussion in which the rationale for choosing each site is presented.

In Subsection R645-301-731.800, Water Rights and Replacement, page 101, replacement of lost water at Little Bear Spring must be specifically addressed.

Nine additional sites have been chosen by the Forest Service to be included in the quarterly spring and surface water monitoring. These additional sites have been chosen because of their importance to range management in the Mill Fork Tract area. Most of the sites have undergone some form of development. The additional sites have been plotted on the enclosed Hydrologic Monitoring Map, MFS1851D and are listed below.

1) Joes Valley Trough #1
   T16S, R6E, SE1/4 SE1/4 Sec 3

2) Joes Valley Trough #2
   T16S, R6E, NE1/4 SE1/4 Sec 10

3) Otteson Hole #1
   T16S, R6E, SW1/4 NE1/4 Sec 22

4) Cedar Post Spring
   T16S, R6E, SW1/4 NE1/4 Sec 22

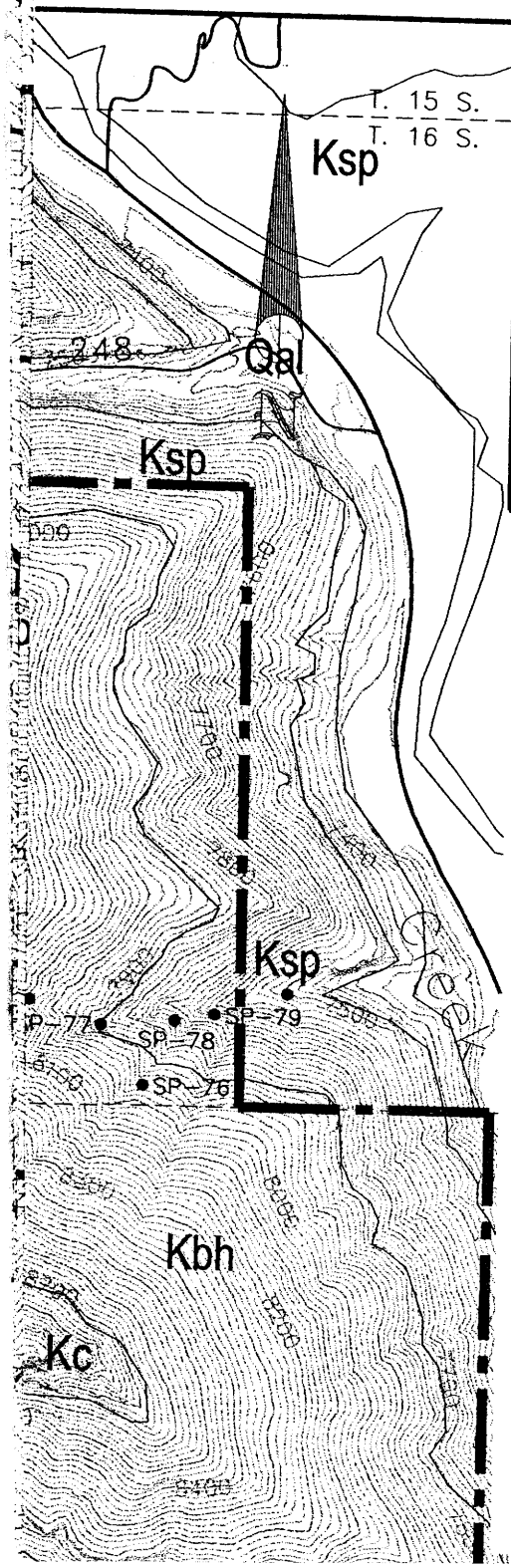
5) Otteson Hollow
   T16S, R6E, SE1/4 SE1/4 Sec 22

6) Mill Fork Pond (SP2-42)
   T16S, R6E, SW1/4 SE1/4 Sec 11

7) Grants Spring
   T16S, R6E, NE1/4 SW1/4 Sec 23

8) Rilda Pond
   T16S, R6E, NE1/4 SE1/4 Sec 23

9) Mill Fork Ridge Trough
   T16S, R6E, NE1/4 NE1/4 SE1/4 Sec 12



ENERGY WEST
MINING COMPANY
HUNTINGTON, UTAH 84528

DEER CREEK MINE
MILL FORK LEASE ML-48258
HYDROLOGIC MONITORING MAP

DRAWN BY: K. LARSEN	MFS1851D	
SCALE: 1" = 1000'	DRAWING #:	
DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2001	SHEET 1 OF 1	REV. ___

LEGEND

- MILL FORK LEASE PPOPERTY BOUNDARY
- COAL LEASE BOUNDARY
- DEER CREEK MINE PERMIT BOUNDARY
- FAULT (DASHED WHERE INFERRED)
- AREAS OF SURFACE FLOW (Documented Fall 2000-01)
  BLUE = SURFACE FLOW RED = DRY
- BLIND CANYON SEAM MINE WORKINGS (EXISTING)
- HIAWATHA SEAM MINE WORKINGS (EXISTING)
- GENWAL RESOURCES PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- GENWAL RESOURCES LEASE APPLICATION BOUNDARY
- EM-169 DRILL HOLE

SPRING LEGEND

- MFB02 SURFACE WATER MONITORING LOCATION
- SPRING LOCATION (1994-1995 SURVEY)
- GPS LOCATED 2000
- GPS LOCATED 2001
- SPRING LOCATION (1992 SURVEY)
- SPRING LOCATION (1991 SURVEY)
- SPRING LOCATION (1989-1990 SURVEY)
- SPRING LOCATION (1987 SURVEY)
- SPRING LOCATION (1985 SURVEY)
- SPRING MONITORING LOCATIONS (GENWAL RESOURCES)
- SPRING MONITORING LOCATIONS (ENERGY WEST)
- 93-2139 GROUND WATER RIGHTS
- 93-198 SURFACE WATER RIGHTS