



## DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

DOUGLAS F. DAY  
Director

1596 West North Temple/Salt Lake City, Utah 84116/801-533-9333

February 22, 1980

#2

Mr. Cleon B. Feight, Director  
 Division of Oil, Gas and Mining  
 1588 West North Temple  
 Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

Dear Jack:

We have reviewed the application for a mining permit by Utah Power and Light Company, Cottonwood portal amendment to the Wilberg Mine. Generally, we find the wildlife resource information inadequate and the wildlife plan almost nonexistent. Enclosed are our comments on this application.

We assume you will provide copies of our comments to Utah Power and Light Company, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and U. S. Forest Service. If you prefer, we will send copies to the above.

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on this application.

Sincerely,

Douglas F. Day  
 Director

Enclosure

REVIEW COMMENTS FOR THE MINE PERMIT APPLICATION FOR THE  
COTTONWOOD PORTAL--UTAH POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY

Section 1 - EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

1.5 - Impacts upon water resources

Springs

The application should be more clear in explaining that the small springs (above mine workings) where flows could be negatively impacted are the only sources of water for livestock and wildlife. Loss of this water would be critical to the survival of many forms of wildlife.

Ground Water

negative impacts to the ground water system above the mine could result in changes within the vegetation community. Such changes could represent a significant, negative impact on livestock and high interest wildlife species.

1.6 - Alternative Water Supply Information

The application does not identify who will be responsible for development of stock tanks and long-term maintenance and periodic haulage of water to such tanks if loss of water on top of East Mountain is experienced. It is suspected that the applicant would be responsible forever, and not just for the life of the project. Also, competition between wildlife and livestock at such man-made water sources would be intense. The question of whether livestock or wildlife may be precluded from some man-made sources is of serious concern.

1.9 - Fish and Wildlife Resources

The state of knowledge for wildlife resources in the vicinity of the mine plan

area has been significantly improved over the data utilized when the application for the Wilberg Mine was filed. Therefore, the wildlife resource information needs to be updated. The applicant has failed to make any contact with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources for such updated information. This would include information relative to species having high interest to the state of Utah and species having high federal interest within the Uintah-Southwestern Utah coal leasing region. A majority of this information is available from Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' Southeastern Regional office in Price, Utah (contact Larry Dalton, Regional Resource Analyst).

The application makes no mention of any evaluations to determine the need for deer crossing structures along the conveyor between the portal and lower loadout facility.

## Section 2 - PROPOSED MINE OPERATIONS

### 2.3.2 - Coal Handling Facilities

The application makes no indication for provisions to allow big game movement over or under the conveyor. Although movement across the proposed conveyor route is believed to be minimal, there has been no attempt to document the points where crossings needed to be provided.

### 2.5 - Relocation or Use of Public Roads

#### State Road 29

The 4.6 miles of this road that would be used for haul purposes pass through crucial-critical winter range for mule deer. It is recommended that speed limits for all traffic during the winter (November 1 through May 15)

be lowered to 40 miles per hour to mitigate for accidental collisions between wildlife and motor vehicles.

#### Cottonwood Canyon Road

It is recommended that any fences to be constructed or reconstructed in association with the mine project meet Department of Transportation standards (type F fence) to allow migration of big game animals. Fence specifications are not included with the application.

### Section 3 - RECLAMATION AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.2.2 - Protection of Hydraulic Balance

##### E. Diversion of Cottonwood Creek

It is agreed that placement of 1400 feet of north Cottonwood Creek in the portal area into a 96 inch diameter conduit would protect the quality of the water, but no discussion is offered concerning the impacts on existing riparian zones, which are of crucial-critical value to local wildlife (at least 70 percent of the vertebrate, terrestrial wildlife of the area utilize the riparian zones), the nongame fishery or proposed mitigation. Additionally, if this segment is to be reclaimed, the applicant needs to provide sufficient base line predisturbance data on the physical characters of the stream to ensure that its characters can be restored. Successful reclamation will allow natural reestablishment of the macrophytes, macroinvertebrates and the nongame fishery.

A similar lack of discussion exists for the section of north Cottonwood Creek at the lower loadout facility that will be placed within a conduit system for protection of water quality and development of surface facilities.

3.2.4 - Fish and Wildlife Plan

The applicants plan is extremely vague and fails to specifically address any potential method, except safeguards for power line contacts by large birds, for avoiding or lessening impacts to wildlife; there are many such procedures that could easily be accomplished by the applicant. There is no discussion for mitigation other than reclamation for impacts on high value habitats. And, the discussion for reclamation with vegetation species of value to wildlife does not specifically address species of plants, rates of application for seed or timing of plantings. Much of this information is available from Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' Southeastern Regional office in Price, Utah (contact Larry Dalton, Regional Resource Analyst).

Section 4 - LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

No comments.