

0033

February 21, 1985

TO: Coal File, Inspection and Enforcement Folder
FROM: Sandy Pruitt, Mining Field Specialist *SP*
RE: Wilberg Mine, Utah Power and Light Company, ACT/015/019,
Folder #7, Emery County, Utah

Larry Guymon was contacted at Emery Mining Corporation (EMC) office in Huntington on January 30, 1985 to discuss the current status of the Wilberg Mine site. The Wilberg Mine is presently under a "K order" (closure order) by MSHA. The operator must obtain plan approval from MSHA prior to any action. Also, MSHA is restricting the number people allowed at the mine site. The K order is effective until the fire is controlled and the bodies of the trapped miners have been recovered. Due to the access restrictions, an inspection of the mine site was not attempted at this time. The following information on the mine surface conditions was provided by Larry Guymon.

EMC and Utah Power and Light Company (UP&L) had affected several areas inside and outside of the Wilberg Mine permit area in their mine rescue and fire control attempts. Larry Guymon described these as follows:

UP&L installed a pipeline with five collection basins (the largest being approximately 75 feet long by 20 feet wide and 5 to 6 feet deep) along the Wilberg Mine access road. A highway encroachment permit was obtained. Depending upon their intent for the pipeline, a BLM right-of-way may also be obtained. The pipeline is needed to supply water for fire control since the Wilberg Mine water became unavailable. The pipeline and basins will remain intact until the mine fire is extinguished.

An area next to the waterfall was affected by a cave-in of an adjacent intake portal and the portal sealing operation. A cave-in of a small burned area also occurred at the waterfall side of the diversion. EMC built a small ramp to access the area to spray gunnite over the cave-in. The week before this inspection smoke from the fire was escaping through another fissure near the waterfall. The ramp was utilized again for access to maintain the gunnite. Due to the extreme cold temperatures outside the portal seals at that time and the extremely high temperatures inside the mine, the gunnite seals were stressed and would crack. Therefore, the seals needed to be frequently maintained to minimize oxygen feeding and attracting the fire nearer to the coal outcrop. EMC will need to retain the ramp for emergency use for an indefinite time frame.

The South lease portals were sealed with gunnite over frame work or dirt. The drain for undisturbed drainage located immediately adjacent to the men and materials portal was blocked by dirt in sealing the portal. Larry Guymon thought that the drain might be reopened prior to spring runoff. A D3 dozer was utilized to blade a road 7 to 10 feet wide for access to the belt line portal from the adjacent fan portal pad. Larry Guymon mentioned that the South lease fan and belt portals were their main access into the mine now and may be reopened for the recovery process.

The Miller Canyon breakouts were permanently sealed using helicopters which reportedly resulted in no surface disturbance.

EMC attempted to drill a ventilation hole down to the trapped miners at the start of the fire. This drill hole is located above the 5R section.

DOGM was contacted by phone while several of these activities were underway. Once the Wilberg Mine fire is under control, the bodies are recovered, and MSHA has removed the present restrictions, EMC has committed to repair the disturbances back to their original condition to the extent possible.

Larry Guymon has tentative plans to build a water retention pond at the base of the waterfall in order to supply water for mining and fire control. He thought that EMC would be able to provide plans for DOGM review prior to its installation without any problem (at that time).

Several SMCRA compliance actions underway at the Wilberg Mine were forestalled by the mine fire. Larry Guymon reported that the asphalt berm around the sediment pond was complete to within 30 feet and the runoff drain near the truck loadout still needed to be installed to complete implementation of the abatement plans for NOV N84-7-10-1.

The first cell of the sediment pond had been bypassed to begin excavation to improve the pond lining. Excess fill material removed from waste rock cell #6 to be used for the pond lining was used to seal the mine portals.

Following this inspection LaMar Bishop of MSHA was contacted on February 19, 1985 for his report on the status of the Wilberg Mine. He stated that MSHA is restricting access and the number of personnel at the mine. He reported that activities at the mine site are pretty congested at present. EMC was pumping Carbon Dioxide into the mine to help extinguish the fire. Mr. Bishop said that

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MSHA had no authority to prevent DOGM inspections of the mine surface, that would have to come from the mine operator. He recommended that an inspection not be conducted until things calm down some more, possibly by March. Inspectors should therefore continue to consult with the mine operator prior to any attempt to visit the mine site.

re
cc: Donna Griffin, OSM
Larry Guymon, Emery Mining Company
Ron Daniels, DOGM
Joe Helfrich, DOGM
Mary Boucek, DOGM

Statistics: See Deer Creek memo dated February 7, 1985.
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