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State of Utah
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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June 17, 1999

TO: File

THRU: Daron Haddock, Permit Supervisor

THRU: Joe Helfrich, Permit Supervisor

FROM: Wayne Western, Senior Reclamation Specialist

RE: Miller Canyon Portal Closure, PacifiCorp, Cottonwood/Wilberg Mine, ACT/015/019-99B, File #2, Emery County, Utah

Summary:

The Permittee wants to modify the reclamation plan for the Cottonwood/Wilberg Mine so they can close the portals in Miller Canyon. The Miller Canyon portals were developed as breakouts in October 1981. The portals were used for intake purposes until the Wilberg fire in December 1984. At that time the portals were temporarily sealed. One portal was reopened in 1985 so that crews could inspect the Wilberg mine. That portal was resealed in 1987.

RECLAMATION PLAN

BACKFILLING AND GRADING

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR Sec. 785.15, 817.102, 817.107; R645-301-234, -301-537, -301-552, -301-553, -302-230, -302-231, -302-232, -302-233.

Analysis:

The Permittee's backfilling and grading plan for the Miller Canyon portals consist of sealing the portals with rock and then covering the rocks with topsoil. The topsoil will then be seeded. The vegetation will reduce erosion thereby protect the backfill.

The Division considers the backfilling and grading plan adequate because:

1. The rock backfill is stable. The Permittee plans to hand place the rock backfill

which will give the material a high safety factor.

2. The plan will eliminate any highwalls. The portals were constructed as breakouts. There was very little surface disturbance caused when the portals were constructed. The backfilling plan calls for the elimination of any highwalls (steep surfaces) caused by mining.

Findings:

The Permittee met the minimum requirements of this section.

MINE OPENINGS

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR Sec. 817.13, 817.14, 817.15; R645-301-513, -301-529, -301-551, -301-631, -301-748, -301-765, -301-748.

Analysis:

The Applicant proposes to seal the Wilberg mine portals in Miller Canyon. The portals were used for air intakes until the Wilberg Mine fire in December 1984. At that time the portals were temporarily sealed. The more easterly portal (portal #1) was reopened in 1985 for exploration purposes after the mine fire. The portals were permanently sealed in 1987. Portal #1 has a 2-inch water monitoring pipe. Small quantities of discharge occur at that point. Recent field investigation of the portals revealed that there has been some caving of the portal openings. The pipe in portal #1 has been pinched off allowing mine discharge water to flow freely over the rock ledge onto the canyon floor.

Backfill material will be transported to the site by helicopter. A staging area will be located along the side of County Road 506 in Cottonwood Canyon. Approximately 48 CY of material will be needed to backfill each portal. Most of the backfill material will be rock of various sizes.

French drains will be constructed in each portal. The French drains will be constructed by placing rocks in the portals and then wrapping filter fabric around the French drain. The existing 2-inch water monitoring pipe will be removed by the helicopter and disposed.

R645-301-551 requires the Permittee to seal all underground openings as required by the Division and be consistent with MSHA, 30 CFR 75.1711. The intent of R645-301-551 is to prevent access to the underground working and to keep acid or other toxic drainage form entering ground or surface water. The Division is concerned that over time caving will continue and entrances could be created.

The Abandoned Mine Reclamation staff reviewed the portal closure plan. They believe that the backfill and seal will be adequate. The AMR staff recommends that native material be used as backfill when possible because of the lower cost.

Findings:

The Permittee met the minimum requirements of this section.

BONDING AND INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR Sec. 800; R645-301-800, et seq.

Analysis:

Determination of bond amount.

The Division reviewed the cost for closing the portals located in a remote location. The Division determined that the increase reclamation cost would be less than a 5% increase and that there is no reason to adjust the bond amount at this time.

Findings:

The Permittee met the minimum requirements of this section.

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cc: Paul Baker
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