



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

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OK

September 4, 2002

**TO:** Internal File

**THRU:** Mike Suflita, Team Lead *MS*

**FROM:** Susan M. White, Senior Reclamation Biologist/Team Lead *SMW*

**RE:** Tank Seam Access Road and Portal Pad Area, CO-OP Mining, Bear Canyon Mine, C/015/025-AM02B-1

**SUMMARY:**

The Division received an amendment to develop the Tank Seam road and portal on Wild Horse Ridge (WHR). The area is located south east of the existing Wild Horse Ridge Blind Canyon Seam pad. An existing road will access the site, a new road branch from the existing road and a pad area will be constructed. This memo reviews the June 10, 2002 submittal.

No changes to the General Contents or legal and financial portion of the MRP were proposed. Chapter 2 of the current approved MRP was review for right of entry information and no changes to the findings made to the initial permitting of the WHR (refer to TA\_SR98(1)-5b) are necessary. Many of the findings for land use, vegetation and wildlife made in the initial permitting of the WHR apply to this amendment and are not repeated.

**TECHNICAL ANALYSIS:**

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE INFORMATION**

**HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCE INFORMATION**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 783.12; R645-301-411.

**TECHNICAL MEMO**

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**Analysis:**

A cultural resource survey of the proposed portal and road area was conducted by Sagebrush Consultants, L.L.C. The site survey was conducted in October 19, 2001 and the National Register of Historic Places was also consulted for listed or determined eligible properties. No cultural resource sites or isolates were identified during this inventory (Appendix 5-C).

**Findings:**

The information provided meets the minimum Historic and Archeological Resource Information section of the regulations.

**VEGETATION RESOURCE INFORMATION**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 783.19; R645-301-320.

**Analysis:**

The addition of the Tank Seam WHR portals and road will increase the disturbed area by 2.54 acres. A mountain brush/conifer reference area was established to represent this disturbance for bond release standards. Prior to disturbance the WHR Tank Seam area had 62 percent total vegetative cover comprised of 25 percent overstory and 37 percent understory cover. Dominant species were Douglas fir, white pine, pinyon pine, curl-leaf mountain mahogany, and Salina wildrye. Woody species density was 1,117 trees or shrubs per acre.

**Findings:**

The information provided meets the minimum Vegetation Resource Information Requirements of the regulations.

**FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE INFORMATION**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 784.21; R645-301-322.

**Analysis:**

No additional resource information was provided for this permit amendment. Information provided in the initial Wild Horse Ridge permitting is considered adequate, including threatened and endangered plant and animal information.

**Findings:**

The information provided meets the minimum Fish and Wildlife Resource Information section of the regulations.

## **OPERATION PLAN**

### **FISH AND WILDLIFE INFORMATION**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR Sec. 784.21, 817.97; R645-301-322, -301-333, -301-342, -301-358.

**Analysis:**

Because the surface disturbance is in critical winter range, construction should not be started in the winter months from about November 1 until April 15.

Construction will be started outside the nesting season, February 1-August 15. The Permittee is working with DWR in funding a prey base study as mitigation for this and the WHR original disturbance (page 10-26) was permitted. The study will be completed by 2003.

**Findings:**

The information provided meets the minimum Fish and Wildlife Information requirements of the regulations.

## **RECLAMATION PLAN**

### **REVEGETATION**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR Sec. 785.18, 817.111, 817.113, 817.114, 817.116; R645-301-244, -301-353, -301-354, -301-355, -301-356, -302-280, -302-281, -302-282, -302-283, -302-284.

**Analysis:**

**General requirements**

A seed mixture for the Mountain Brush/Conifer vegetation type is provided in Table 9.5-3. A diverse native seed mixture is provided that should allow the postmining land use of to be achieved. No other changes in the reclamation plan are required and findings are the same as those detailed in the initial WHR permitting.

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**TECHNICAL MEMO**

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**Standards for success**

A new Mountain Brush/Conifer Reference Area was established for the Tank Seam pad and road in the WHR area (Appendix 9-H and Plate 9-1). There are some differences in species composition between the reference area and proposed disturbed area; the reference area is similar enough that it is considered an acceptable standard.

The reference area had 1261 woody plants per acre, and the proposed disturbed area had 1117. Considering the plant communities and the topography, 1000 plants per acre is considered an attainable and acceptable standard for success for woody plant density. In addition to this number standard and in consideration of the value of this area for wildlife the Permittee has committed to the woody plant density and an additional diversity standard that at least half of the woody plants (by number) will be comprised of mountain mahogany, skunkbush, and vasey big sagebrush (Section 9.3.6). The standard was established in consultation with the Division of Wildlife Resources.

**Findings:**

The information provided meet the minimum Revegetation requirement of the regulations

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Division should approve the amendment.