



STATE OF UTAH  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
Wildlife Resources

Big mine fill  
CC L. Braxton  
S. Linner

Norman H. Bangerter, Governor  
Dee C. Hansen, Executive Director  
William H. Geer, Division Director

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April 18, 1986

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Dr. Dianne R. Nielson, Director  
Utah Division of Oil, Gas & Mining  
355 West North Temple  
3 Triad Center, Suite 350  
Salt Lake City, UT 84180-1203

Attn: Lowell Braxton  
Susan Linner

Dear Dianne:

The Division has evaluated Genwal Coal Company's February 1, 1986, resubmittal of a Mining and Reclamation Plan (MRP) for Tract I as a mid-permit review at the Crandall Canyon Mine. The following is offered for your consideration.

### Volume I

Page III-19, 3.4.6.1 - The MRP is in substantial error regarding fisheries and must be corrected. Crandall Creek, which flows immediately adjacent to the entire length of the south border of Tract I (note, it flows through the 1.7 acre parcel of Tract I leased from Beaver Creek Coal Company) is a high-priority valued Class III fishery. Trout are evident in the stream about 2,000 feet downstream from the S.E. corner of Tract I. This area supports natural reproduction of 278 (±II) cutthroat trout per mile with a standing trout biomass of 53 lb./surface acre.

If the applicant at some later date elects to bring UP&L electric service to the mine, raptor nesting must be addressed. (Note, file correspondence dated September 25, 1985, from John Livesay to Jim Burris.)

Page III-20, 3.4.6.2 - It should be noted that during 1981, when the company was preparing plans to culvert 1,000 linear feet of the stream on the permit area, culverting and associated loss of riparian habitat was recommended only upon appropriate mitigation (reference file memo November 6, 1981 from Douglas F. Day to Cleon B. Feight). To date the culvert has not been installed, however, confines of physical space in the surface facilities area could necessitate such. When such action becomes imminent, a mitigation plan needs to be affected. Also note that this culvert would require a "permit to alter a natural stream" issued by the Division of Water Rights.

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Paragraphs concerning elk, mule deer and moose are in substantial error. Appropriate data was provided to the company in March of 1981. (Reference file memo dated March 10, 1981 from John Livesay to Bill Wollen.) This data included maps for seasonal distributions of all big game (including moose) associated with the project.

Page III-20 and X-5 - If losses of 0.5 acre or 3,000 sq. feet (the MRP is unclear on this area) of critical valued riparian habitat in the lower 2 km of the canyon occurred under the auspices of Utah's coal mining regulations, mitigation is required. To date the company has not prepared a mitigation plan or affected such. The indication in the MRP on Page III-34 (second to last paragraph) that a seed list for such mitigation exists should be more exacting. The seed list, reclamation technology and area for mitigation need to be defined.

Page IV-4 through IV-6, 4.4.2 - The use of wildlife on the permit area is not limited to just big game animals. As many as 239 different species of vertebrate wildlife have potential to utilize the environs associated with the project. Relative biological value of seasonal use areas has earlier (3-10-81) been identified to the company.

Page IV-6, first paragraph - Livestock use of the riparian zone has caused substantial and noticeable degradation to this critical valued habitat type. Selection of a riparian reference area should give consideration to fencing. This same protection should be given to riparian mitigation areas.

Page 7-27, 7.1.4 last paragraph and 7-29 first paragraph - All permanent seeps and springs are ranked as being of critical value to wildlife. Without an indepth and specific study to determine wildlife use of springs, the cursory evaluation of such by the applicant is not meritorious of a conclusion. The company was provided a synopsis of the Division's position concerning seeps and springs/wildlife relationships March 10, 1986. The MRP needs to be corrected to this position. Similar comments have been provided in earlier MRP reviews (12-18-85 and 9-6-85).

## Volume II

Chapters 9 and 10 are redundant to the extent that "Terrestrial Wildlife and Habitat" report (pages 40-66) prepared by Valley Engineering is presented in each chapter. Therefore comments on Wildlife and Habitat will only be made for Chapter 10. Also, note that all comments within the MRP relative to fish are inaccurate and need to be corrected.

Page X-2, 10.3 -Crandall Creek is a trout fishery (reference comments for page III-19). The applicant was made aware of this as early as May, 1981 in the U.S. Forest Service's environmental assessment report for the applicants Huntington River bridge crossing and Crandall Canyon road.

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Page X-5, last paragraph - The moose herd from 1973 through 1979 showed signs of slowly increasing. However, illegal harvest, habitat losses and disturbance by man has since reversed that trend.

Page X-6 , 10.6 through 10-8 - No activities associated with the mine should allow turbidity in Crandall Creek to increase more than 10 units above background measurements as determined by nephelometric turbidity units.

Chapter X, page 43 of "Terrestrial Wildlife and Habitat Report" - Comments relative to bald eagles are in substantial error. Appropriate information was provided to the applicant 3-10-81. Bald eagles during the winter season are regularly observed in the Huntington Canyon area and would be expected to utilize the environs of Crandall Canyon.

Chapter X, page 46 of "Terrestrial Wildlife and Habitat Report" - The Williamson's sapsucker has been documented to utilize (nest) the environs of the Huntington drainage typical to those found in Crandall Canyon. The applicant must appropriately correct the MRP.

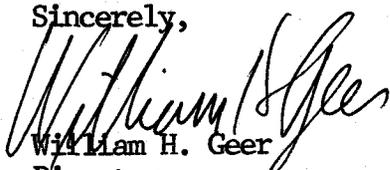
Chapter X, page 49, 55 and 56 of "Terrestrial Wildlife and Habitat Report" - All amphibians and reptiles in Utah are protected species. Six amphibian and eighteen reptilian species have potential to inhabit the project area. This data was provided to the applicant 3-10-81. The MRP needs to be appropriately corrected. Similar statements can be made for birds and mammals.

A detailed recommended wildlife mitigation plan was provided the applicant on 3-10-81. The mine must commit to educating its personnel concerning protection of the wildlife resource. A coal mining/wildlife training film has been developed by the Division for industries' use. It is available for the cost of copy reproduction.

Page 12-12, 12.4.3 - The MRP as it discusses subsidence relative to seeps and springs is in substantial error. All permanent seeps or springs are ranked as being of critical value to the wildlife resource and not as "an insignificant resource". Mitigation in the form of water replacement is anticipated when daily flows at seeps or springs are reduced by 50% or more. (Reference file memo dated March 10, 1986 from John Livesay to Andy King.)

Thank you for an opportunity to review and provide comment.

Sincerely,

  
William H. Geer  
Director