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State of Utah  
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DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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~~DIVISION OF OIL, GAS & MINING~~  
FIELD VISIT FORM  
TECHNICAL

**Date:** September 19, 1996

**Time:** 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

**Mine:** Convulsion Canyon

**File Number:** ACT/041/002, Folder #2

**DOGM Staff:** Paul Baker, Mike Suflita, Pete Hess

**Other Attendees:** Kris Kravits

**Purpose:** To look at three proposed exploration sites.

**Observations:** Southern Utah Fuel Company (SUFCo) plans three exploration drill sites on top of the plateau above the mine. These would be drilled in about July and August of 1997. All three of the sites are near drill sites that were proposed in 1993

The first one we saw was near the South Fork of Quitchupah Creek at about the same location as site 96-24-1. On the north side of the creek is a closed road and an area commonly used by hunters as a parking lot. The drill site would be near the middle of this area. The operator is aware of the need for sediment control, and I don't think there should be any problem with the proximity to the creek. There is a potential for sediment, oil products or drilling fluids to get into the creek.

The other two sites were both in draws below Big Ridge. Neither of the sites is near a perennial stream, but the easternmost is next to an ephemeral drainage. SUFCo needs to be sure the drill rig does not get too near this ephemeral drainage: it has vertical walls, and it is actively eroding. There are two places we found where water has piped under the surface forming a type of natural bridge. If a vehicle got too close, the side could collapse.

Apparently, the Forest Service wants SUFCo to rip and scarify the roads or wheeltracks after they've been used, but SUFCo feels they have had better success just spreading seed and mulch and walking over it with a tracked piece of equipment. In this way, existing vegetation is not taken out.

We looked at a road that was reclaimed two years ago and estimated vegetative cover to be about

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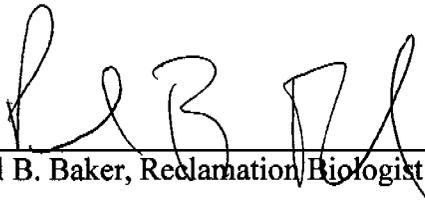
30%. Undisturbed areas had about 70% cover. I saw no evidence of erosion problems, though, so the area probably meets the exploration revegetation performance standards.

The reason the road has less vegetative cover than adjacent areas may be because someone is still periodically driving on it. However, I think it is also possible the reclamation method may have had an influence on the amount of vegetation. An area used as a road, even for just a short period by a limited number of vehicles, would probably have fairly compacted soils. In particular, the surface would probably not have very good places for seed to germinate and establish even if a tracked vehicle pushed it in.

I think SUFCo might have better success if they could lightly scarify just the track areas. This way, existing vegetation would remain but seed could get below the surface on the more compacted areas.

Recommendations/Conclusions: SUFCo should look at the possibility of lightly scarifying the road tracks before seeding them. Otherwise, we saw no problems with the operation or reclamation plans.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Paul B. Baker, Reclamation Biologist

on September 20, 1996