



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

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May 2, 2002

TO: Internal File

THRU: Stephen J. Demczak, Sr. Reclamation Specialist/Engineering, Project Lead *sgp by an*

FROM: Susan M. White, Sr. Reclamation Specialist/Biology *SMW*

RE: Muddy Tract Exploration, Canyon Fuel Company, LLC, SUFCO Mine,  
C/041/002-EX02D

**SUMMARY:**

Canyon Fuel Company through Ark Land Company, a subsidiary of Arch Coal Inc., submitted an application to drill a coal exploration hole on March 15, 2002. The one hole is on Forest Service surface and contains SITLA coal. This memo reviews the Biology section.

**TECHNICAL ANALYSIS:**

**COMPLIANCE DUTIES**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 772.13; R645-202.

**OPERATIONAL STANDARDS**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 772.13; R645-202-100.

**Analysis:**

**Biology**

Golden eagle nests are located within a half-mile radius of the proposed drill site. Habitat (1997 Habitat Model) for the Mexican spotted owl has been identified within a half-mile radius of the drill site. The U.S. Forest Service will be conducting surveys for the owl in 2002 and 2003.

**EXPLORATION TECHNICAL MEMO**

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U.S. Forest Service guidelines prohibit drilling before July 15. The U.S. Forest Service will look for sage grouse habitat and conduct goshawk surveys prior to drilling (phone call with Cara Stabb, Manti-LaSal National Forest, on April 30, 2002). The Division will look for U.S. Forest Service comments prior to approval of this application.

Threatened, endangered and sensitive plant surveys have not been conducted. Bob Thompson, U.S. Forest Service Botanist was out of the office for the week when this application was reviewed. Prior to approval, the need for survey work must be reviewed with Mr. Thompson.

The operator proposes to widen to a 14-foot width an existing wheel track that provided access to the cattle pond. Generally, drilling operations do not require that type of clearance. Evidence must be provided that the current two-track is not sufficient transportation for the drilling equipment. The operator must commit to minimizing disturbance.

**Cultural Resources**

The application states (page 4) that a cultural resource evaluation will be conducted in the spring of 2002. This evaluation must be provided.

**Findings:**

The information provided does not meet the minimum regulatory requirements of this section. Prior to approval the Permittee must provide in accordance with:

**R645-202-231**, Threatened, endangered and sensitive plant and animal surveys information must be provided.

**R645-202-231**, The results of the cultural resource inventory must be included in the application.

**R645-301-232**, The two-track road to the drill pad must not be bladed to a 14-foot width. Evidence must be provided that the current two track is not sufficient transportation for the drilling equipment.

**RECLAMATION STANDARDS**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 772.13; R645-202-200.

**Analysis:**

**Revegetation**

**EXPLORATION TECHNICAL MEMO**

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The Division has found that using the extreme surface roughening methods described in The Practical Guide to Reclamation in Utah ([ftp://dogm.nr.state.ut.us/PUB/MINES/Coal\\_Related/RecMan/Reclamation\\_Manual.pdf](ftp://dogm.nr.state.ut.us/PUB/MINES/Coal_Related/RecMan/Reclamation_Manual.pdf)) work better for controlling erosion and establishing vegetation than crimping mulch. A surface mulch can be incorporated during the roughening process. Please commit to using this surface preparation and mulching method.

All organic material grubbed from the drill pad will be salvage to use as a surface mulch during reclamation operations. It is recommended that only materials native to the site be used as mulch. Noxious weed free straw or hay will introduce additional non-noxious weeds.

The seed mixture does not meet the requirements of R645-202-200. The proposed species are not native to the area to be disturbed. The Operator may propose a new seed mixture or the Division will get with the U.S. Forest Service and specify a seed mixture. (Bob Thompson, U.S. Forest Service Botanist was out of the office for the week when this application was reviewed.)

**Findings:**

The information provided does not meet the minimum regulatory requirements of this section. Prior to approval the Permittee must provide in accordance with:

**R645-201-242.100**, The seed mixture must be revised to meet the requirement of this regulation.

**R645-301-242**, The Application must provide a commitment to extreme surface roughening methods as described in The Practical Guide to Reclamation in Utah, ([ftp://dogm.nr.state.ut.us/PUB/MINES/Coal\\_Related/RecMan/Reclamation\\_Manual.pdf](ftp://dogm.nr.state.ut.us/PUB/MINES/Coal_Related/RecMan/Reclamation_Manual.pdf)).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Prior to approval the above referenced deficiencies must be provided.