



COLORADO DIVISION OF RECLAMATION, MINING AND SAFETY
MINERALS PROGRAM INSPECTION REPORT
PHONE: (303) 866-3567

The Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety has conducted an inspection of the mining operation noted below. This report documents observations concerning compliance with the terms of the permit and applicable rules and regulations of the Mined Land Reclamation Board.

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| MINE NAME: Fisher Pit | MINE/PROSPECTING ID#: M-1977-163-SG | MINERAL: Sand and gravel | COUNTY: Lincoln |
| INSPECTION TYPE: Surety Release Inspection | INSPECTOR(S): Amy Eschberger | INSP. DATE: July 23, 2015 | INSP. TIME: 10:45 |
| OPERATOR: Lincoln County | OPERATOR REPRESENTATIVE: John DeWitt | TYPE OF OPERATION: 112c - Construction Regular Operation | |

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| REASON FOR INSPECTION: Surety Release Requested | BOND CALCULATION TYPE: None | BOND AMOUNT: NA |
| DATE OF COMPLAINT: NA | POST INSP. CONTACTS: None | JOINT INSP. AGENCY: None |
| WEATHER: Clear | INSPECTOR'S SIGNATURE: <i>Amy Eschberger</i> | SIGNATURE DATE: August 4, 2015 |

GENERAL INSPECTION TOPICS

This list identifies the environmental and permit parameters inspected and gives a categorical evaluation of each. No problems or possible violations were noted during the inspection. The mine operation was found to be in full compliance with Mineral Rules and Regulations of the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board for the Extraction of Construction Materials and/or for Hard Rock, Metal and Designated Mining Operations. Any person engaged in any mining operation shall notify the office of any failure or imminent failure, as soon as reasonably practicable after such person has knowledge of such condition or of any impoundment, embankment, or slope that poses a reasonable potential for danger to any persons or property or to the environment; or any environmental protection facility designed to contain or control chemicals or waste which are acid or toxic-forming, as identified in the permit.

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| (AR) RECORDS----- <u>Y</u> | (FN) FINANCIAL WARRANTY----- <u>NA</u> | (RD) ROADS----- <u>Y</u> |
| (HB) HYDROLOGIC BALANCE----- <u>Y</u> | (BG) BACKFILL & GRADING----- <u>Y</u> | (EX) EXPLOSIVES----- <u>NA</u> |
| (PW) PROCESSING WASTE/TAILING---- <u>Y</u> | (SF) PROCESSING FACILITIES----- <u>N</u> | (TS) TOPSOIL----- <u>Y</u> |
| (MP) GENL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE- <u>Y</u> | (FW) FISH & WILDLIFE----- <u>N</u> | (RV) REVEGETATION---- <u>Y</u> |
| (SM) SIGNS AND MARKERS----- <u>Y</u> | (SP) STORM WATER MGT PLAN---- <u>Y</u> | (SB) COMPLETE INSP---- <u>Y</u> |
| (ES) OVERBURDEN/DEV. WASTE----- <u>Y</u> | (SC) EROSION/SEDIMENTATION--- <u>Y</u> | (RS) RECL PLAN/COMP-- <u>Y</u> |
| (AT) ACID OR TOXIC MATERIALS----- <u>NA</u> | (OD) OFF-SITE DAMAGE----- <u>Y</u> | (ST) STIPULATIONS----- <u>NA</u> |

Y = Inspected and found in compliance / N = Not inspected / NA = Not applicable to this operation / PB = Problem cited / PV = Possible violation cited

OBSERVATIONS

This was a surety release inspection of the Fisher Pit (Permit No. M-1977-163-SG) conducted by Amy Eschberger of the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (Division) in response to a Full Release request (SL-01) that was received by the Division on June 25, 2015. Mr. John DeWitt represented the operator, Lincoln County during the inspection. The site is located approximately 3 miles west of Genoa, CO, north of I-70. The site can be accessed from the west off of Co Rd 28. The access road continues eastward to access the Hoffman Pit (Permit No. M-2005-044), which is another county operated site. The affected land is owned by Shriners Hospitals for Children. The approved post-mining land use is rangeland.

This is a 112c operation permitted for 36.90 acres to mine sand and gravel for county road maintenance and construction. The maximum mining depth is approximately 20 feet. The majority of this site was mined by Colorado Division of Transportation (CDOT) before the permit was transferred to the county in 1987. CDOT mined the series of gravelly ridges located in the southern portion of the site, and conducted reclamation work of these areas before handing the site over to the county. County operations took place mainly in the northeastern portion of the site. According to the last four annual reports submitted by the operator, this site has been inactive since July 2010.

At the time of the inspection, the weather was clear, warm and sunny, and the ground was dry. A permit identification sign was posted at the main site entrance off of Co Rd 28 (**Photo 1**). The haul road that traverses the site was in use by the Hoffman Pit operation. The portion of the site located south of the haul road had slope gradients of 3H:1V or flatter, and a fairly diverse and well-established vegetative cover (**Photos 2-14**). According to the operator, disturbed land in the southern portion of the site was retopsoiled and seeded many years ago, with some interseeding completed by the county since that time. Vegetation in these areas now includes a fairly dense stand of native grasses such as blue grama, western wheatgrass, and sand dropseed, some forbs, sand sage, and yucca. Much smaller populations of yellow sweet clover, Canada thistle, wild sunflowers, horseweed, and field bindweed were also present amongst the grasses and shrubs, but did not appear to be hindering the growth of desired vegetation. There were portions of the southeastern ridge tops where bedrock was outcropping at the ground surface. These areas had less vegetative cover due to the rocky surface. However, these more sparsely vegetated areas were negligible compared with the rest of the fairly densely vegetated southern portion of the site. The Division has determined that the southern portion of the site (south of the haul road) and the northwestern portion of the site (north of the haul road) have been reclaimed in accordance with the approved reclamation plan, and are releasable at this time.

The most recently mined northeastern portion of the site showed different results from reclamation efforts. The south- and southwest-facing mined slopes were graded to 3H:1V or flatter, and appeared to be stable with some vegetative cover. However, the vegetation in these areas consisted primarily of yellow sweet clover and weeds such as field bindweed (**Photos 15-22**). There were some grasses growing in these areas, but not much along the slopes (see **Photo 20**). According to the operator, topsoil was never replaced in this area. This might at least partially explain the difference in vegetative growth here compared with the areas south of the haul road where grass establishment was more successful. The Division has determined that the northeastern portion of the site is not releasable at this time. The Division recommends the operator replace topsoil in this area, particularly along the slopes, and reseed with the approved seed mixture. This area will also require proper weed control and management to keep the weeds from outcompeting the grasses. A topsoil stockpile remains on site just southwest of the mined area north of the haul road. According to the operator, the previous landowner requested that the stockpile not be disturbed due to its grass cover. This stockpile is barely recognizable as it blends in well with the surrounding topography and has adequate grass growth. If this topsoil is not used for reclamation, the operator will need to import topsoil, which will require the submittal of a Technical Revision to the approved reclamation plan.

The Division will not approve the Full Release request (SL-01) submitted by the operator. However, per the Division's recommendations, the operator submitted an Acreage Reduction request on 07/27/2015 (AR-01) to release all but the northeastern portion (7.6 acres) which requires additional reclamation work. This request also states the operator's desire to withdraw the Full Release request. No objections were received by the Division within the comment period that ended on 07/11/2015. Therefore, the Division will withdraw the Full Release request and approve the Acreage Reduction request for a permit area reduction of 29.3 acres (see enclosed Google Earth image). The approval letter will be mailed to the operator under separate cover.

It should be noted that the Division received a comment from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Hugo Field Office indicating that portions of the site, particularly the recently mined area north of the haul road, requires "a greatly improved grass component" and weed control. This comment was forwarded to the operator on 07/20/2015.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1. View of permit sign posted at main site entrance off of Co Rd 28. Note adjacent permit sign posted for Hoffman Pit, accessed by the same road.



Photo 2. View looking south across reclaimed southwestern portion of site.



Photo 3. View looking west across reclaimed southwestern portion of site.



Photo 4. View looking south across reclaimed southwestern portion of site.



Photo 5. View looking west across reclaimed southern portion of site.



Photo 6. View looking northwest across reclaimed southern portion of site.



Photo 7. View looking west across reclaimed southern portion of site.



Photo 8. View looking south across reclaimed southern portion of site.



Photo 9. View looking east across reclaimed central portion of site.



Photo 10. Representative close-up view of vegetation present in reclaimed southern portion of site.



Photo 11. View looking west across reclaimed southeastern portion of site.



Photo 12. View looking west across reclaimed southeastern portion of site.



Photo 13. View looking south across reclaimed southeastern portion of site.



Photo 14. View looking northwest across reclaimed southeastern portion of site.



Photo 15. View looking east across south-facing mined slope located in northeastern portion of site. Note vegetation is patchy and consists primarily of weeds.



Photo 16. View looking north across south-facing mined slope located in northeastern portion of site. Note vegetation is patchy and consists primarily of weeds.



Photo 17. View looking west from top of southwest-facing mined slope located in northeastern portion of site. Note vegetation is patchy and consists primarily of weeds (foreground).



Photo 18. View looking northwest across southwest-facing mined slope located in northeastern portion of site. Note vegetation is patchy and consists primarily of weeds.



Photo 19. View looking east across south-facing mined slope located in northeastern portion of site. Note vegetation is patchy and consists primarily of weeds.



Photo 20. Close-up view of ground in northeastern portion of site, showing some grasses present in places.



Photo 21. View looking northwest across southwest-facing mined slope located in northeastern portion of site. Note vegetation is patchy and consists primarily of weeds.



Photo 22. View looking east across northeastern portion of site, showing southwest-facing mined wall in background.

Inspection Contact Address

John DeWitt
Lincoln County
P.O. Box 39
Hugo, CO 80821

Enclosure(s): Google Earth image of site with Division markings

CC: Wally Erickson, DRMS

M1977-163-SG / Fisher Pit / Lincoln County

Red Line = 36.9 acres = Approved Permit Area

Blue Line = 7.6 acres = Revised Permit Area (with AR-01 approval)

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M1977-163-SG

Google earth

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1000 ft

