

Denver Field Branch Bond Release Evaluation Report

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| Permittee: | Coors Energy Company |
| Mine: | Keenesburg Mine |
| Permit No: | C-1981-028 |
| Date of Inspection: | September 26, 2019 |
| Inspection Type: | Partial Phase II bond release |
| Weather: | Sunny and warm with dry ground conditions |
| Operator Representative(s): | Danny Kipp and Ben Moline |
| State Official(s): | Janet Binns |
| BLM Official(s): | N/A |
| OSMRE Official(s): | Tom Medlin (#562) |

Background

This was a partial bond release inspection at the Keenesburg Mine in Weld County, Colorado. Under SL-10 Coors Energy Company (CEC) proposes Phase II bond release on approximately 29.82 acres of reclamation in Areas 31, 32, and 33 where it indicates vegetative establishment in support of the rangeland postmining land use (PMLU) meets the requirements for herbaceous cover and acceptable sedimentology demonstrations have been made in accordance with its approved reclamation plan. The Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS) found the SL-10 application administratively complete on August 28, 2019.

The lands proposed for Phase II bond release lie within the County of Weld, State of Colorado, Section 25, Township 3 North, Range 64 West of the 6th PM. Notification of the proposed bond release was posted in the Fort Lupton Press for four consecutive weeks, beginning July 17, 2019 and ending August 7, 2019. The parcels proposed for Phase II bond release were reclaimed between 2009 and 2015. CEC currently posts a surety bond in the amount of \$1,197,459.85 which covers the entire mine site including the above listed areas. With this application, CEC requests the maximum bond release for Phase II, or 25% of the base bond held for the subject parcels, which equals \$74,247.63.

Colorado outlines the requirements for bond release at Rule 3.03.1 of the Regulations for the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board. For Phase II, up to 85% of the applicable bond amount shall be released upon the establishment of vegetation which supports the approved postmining land use and which meets the approved success standard for cover, based on statistically valid data collected during a single year of the liability period.

Findings

Beginning with the 12.39 acre Area 33 parcel, followed by the 5.54 acre Area 32 parcel, and finishing with the 11.89 acre Area 31 parcel, the inspection Team walked each reclamation unit to visually confirm vegetative cover and species composition data presented in the SL-10 application and physically verify topsand depths averaging two feet. Due to similar aspect, elevation, seed mix and reclamation timing, the three parcels were nearly indistinguishable in appearance. See Figures 1-3. The vegetation was dense, diverse, and chest high in some areas.

Species of note included Indian ricegrass, blue gramma, prairie sandreed, and sand dropseed, in addition to volunteer fringed sagebrush, sunflower, prickly pear cactus, and yucca. Impressively, cheatgrass was nearly absent from each parcel. No evidence of erosion or sedimentation was observed. Randomly selected topsand verification holes measured 1 foot 7 inches at Area 33, 2+ feet at Area 32, and 2+ feet at Area 31. See Figure 4.

Conclusion

The reclamation in Areas 31, 32, and 33 of the Keenesburg Mine permit totaling 29.82 acres evaluated for bond release comports with the permittee's approved permit and support the rangeland postmining land use. Phase II bond release as applied for under SL-10 is recommended. No enforcement actions were taken as a result of this inspection, nor are any pending.

Figures→



Figure 1. Overview of Area 31.



Figure 2. Overview of Area 32.



Figure 3. Overview of Area 33.



Figure 4. Topsand depth verification.



Figure 5. Three very curious pronghorn, Area 33.