topsoil removal operation begins where the previous year's operation left off and proceeds through the area where overburden drilling and blasting is projected to be during the following June-July (refer to Maps M10 series). Because these operations require this type of scheduling, a fairly large area where topsoil has already been salvaged is maintained in front of each pit. For the most part, development drilling is confined to this area and the concentration of the drilling is at the expected pit ends. (This is where the croplines and economic stripping limits occur).

Some development drilling occurs outside of the topsoiled area but is still contained within the permit area. Development drilling varies each year, but is usually no more than twenty sites. Each site, which is approximately .25 to .33 acres in size, may include two development drill holes. One is a plug-drilled hole and, if required the second is a cored hole. Sealing, casing, reclamation and appropriate management of development drill holes are discussed in Section 3.3.2.

In any given year, under the most extreme conditions, the most coal removed by development drilling is less than 15 tons. This estimate, assumes a maximum of 400 holes per year, an average of 10 feet of coal per hole, and a maximum hole size of $5\text{-}^5/_8$" diameter.

Blowout control at the Trapper Mine is not necessary and will not be used. The Trapper Mine mine plan area is located on the south flank of the Big Bottom Syncline. This type of geological location is not typical of oil or gas producing areas. To date, drill data do not show any indications of gas or oil deposits within the mine plan area, and there are no indications of geothermal resources.

This section shall satisfy the regulatory authority's requirements that written notice of intention to explore for coal be submitted prior to exploration. The type of drilling to be conducted will be within the mine permit area (refer to Map M4) and is referred to as development drilling rather than exploration drilling. (See Section 3.6.3.9 for additional details.)