

the permit, additional activities are not expected to modify critical habitat of any endangered or threatened plant species.

2.04-11 Fish and Wildlife Resources Information

The mine site occupies land which is immediately adjacent to the Middle Fork of the Purgatoire River in what is locally termed "Stonewall Valley". The physical developments related to the underground mining of coal include the east and west mine portals with accompanying buildings and related activities; and the refuse disposal areas resulting from nearly 30 years of mining. These structures, activities and refuse areas occupy approximately 155 acres within a strip which straddles the Middle Fork for a distance of nearly two miles. The midpoint of mine activity is roughly 1.5 miles west of the confluence of the Middle and North Forks at Vigil, Colorado.

A study of the fish and wildlife and their habitats has been completed by Dwight R. Smith of Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. This study covers the general permit area which will be affected by the New Elk Mine and reclaimed Golden Eagle Mine through the life of the operation. Site specific information and literature are included as Exhibit 16, Fish and Wildlife Information.

To supplement the existing fish and wildlife study conducted by Dwight R. Smith of CSU in 1980, (Exhibit 16, Fish and Wildlife Information), a site reconnaissance survey was conducted on January 18 and 19, 1984. This visit provided habitat evaluation and mapping, a raptor and big game survey, and general species occurrence for the surface facilities expansion area. Observations were made by recording sightings of species, scat, tracks, nests or dens, and other sign. No statistical data was collected during the reconnaissance.

Vegetation of the area dictates wildlife habitat. As shown on Map 10, vegetation, conifer shrub, mountain shrub, disturbed area, and riparian/stream habitats occur within the permit area. Because of previous mining activities and other human disturbance, these habitats within the existing mine facilities are not considered to be