



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Grand Junction Service Center
Northwest Regional Office
711 Independent Avenue
Grand Junction, CO 81505
P 970.255.6100

July 20, 2022

Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety
1313 Sherman St. Room 215
Denver, CO 80203

RE: Technical Revision No. 71

Dear Mr. Wein,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed change in permit boundary for the Snowcap Coal Company, located approximately 5 miles north of Palisade, Colorado. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has a statutory responsibility to manage all wildlife species in Colorado. This responsibility is embraced and fulfilled through CPW's mission to perpetuate the wildlife resources of Colorado and provide sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire future generations. CPW fulfills this mission by responding to requests for comments on wildlife impact reports, land use proposals, and consultations through public-private partnerships.

This project historically operated on 540 acres. No mining activities are currently occurring at this location. Following the conclusion of mining operations and adherence to the Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety's reclamation release criteria, the mine requests a permit area reduction to 317 acres. Within these 317 acres, .4 acres require further reclamation efforts to be eligible for bond release.

This area comprises the following wildlife habitats:

- Mule deer critical winter range
- Mule deer resident population

CPW Land Use Specialist Molly West attended a site visit to observe the quality of the restoration efforts and found it to be representative of the surrounding landscape topography and plant community. The remaining .4 acres of land to be restored does have an overbearing cheatgrass community but also has desirable species present with a high likelihood of increasing abundance. This area is clearly marked with T-posts, and the perimeter is secured with staked waddles to prevent surface erosion.

CPW supports the reduction in permit boundary to 317 acres and the release of restoration bonds retaining .4 acres for Snowcap Coal Mine. CPW recommends that efforts within the remaining .4 acres continue to adhere to the restoration plan in place by controlling erosion



and weeds to ensure that wildlife-friendly vegetation establishes a thriving community to support wildlife needs.

Colorado Parks & Wildlife values the opportunity to provide comments on this proposal. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Bob Morris, District Wildlife Manager, at (970) 255-6115.

Sincerely,



Kirk Oldham
Area Wildlife Manager

Cc. Bob Morris, District Wildlife Manager
Molly West, Land Use Specialist
File.