

2.5 LAND USE

According to the Bureau of Land Management's 1980 report "Proposed Wilderness Study Areas", there are no lands within or adjacent to the proposed mine plan area that are considered for wilderness designation (see Map 27).

Lands within Moffat County are, by and large, divided between public lands in the western portions of the County and private lands in the eastern portion. As shown in Table 2.5-1, private land ownership accounts for only 35% of the available surface within the County, with the remaining 65% considered as public land.

The greatest portion of Moffat County can be classified as rangeland and pasture, followed next by forest, dry cropland, irrigated cropland, and built up areas (Orton, 1975). The total of all cropland in Moffat County is 124,297 acres, mostly in wheat and barley (Monarchi and Rake, 1973).

Current zoning in Moffat County focuses on the city of Craig and built up areas around Craig, which occupy less than 1% of the land.

The majority of Trapper Mine's proposed permit area is considered rangeland by the Colorado First Soil Conservation District (USDA 1975). There are no established recreational facilities within the proposed permit area, but presently residents do use portions of it for recreation, such as cross country skiing, snowmobiling and hunting. The heaviest use exerted on these areas occurs during hunting season in the fall of each year.

In contrast, areas used for farming comprises a much smaller portion of the proposed permit area but are subject to heavy pressures created by the constant use of farming equipment, and therefore require more intensive management. Refer to Map 28 for premining cropland areas present within Trapper Mine's proposed mine plan area. Tillage practices for winter wheat, the most common crop, consist of, but are not limited to, disking, seeding, aerial application of herbicides for weed control, harvesting, fallowing every other year, and deep plowing approximately every third year prior to seeding. Farming areas are more susceptible to erosion and soil loss than rangeland because of lack of a permanent vegetative cover, fallow practices, and a general lack of contour farming.

The permit area was expanded with the approvals of PR-7 and PR-11. There was no previous mining within these pit expansion areas.

No areas within Trapper Mine's proposed permit area or adjacent area is considered or has been designated unsuitable for mining.