



STATE OF  
COLORADO

Trujillo - DNR, Zach <zach.trujillo@state.co.us>

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## Colowyo Mine Inspection Report

1 message

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**Trujillo - DNR, Zach** <zach.trujillo@state.co.us>

Thu, Jun 1, 2023 at 3:04 PM

To: "Tennyson, Tony (Colowyo)" <ttennyson@tristategt.org>

Cc: DNR DRMS\_CoalAdmin - DNR <dnr\_drms\_coal\_admin@state.co.us>

Tony,

Please see the attached inspection report for the Colowyo Mine (C-1981-019). If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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**COLORADO**  
Division of Reclamation,  
Mining and Safety  
Department of Natural Resources

**Zach Trujillo**  
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**5-31-23.pdf**  
1144K



## COLORADO


Division of Reclamation,  
Mining and Safety

Department of Natural Resources

### PERMIT INFORMATION

<b>Permit Number:</b> C-1981-019 <b>Mine Name:</b> Colowyo Coal Mine <b>Operator:</b> Colowyo Coal Company L.P. <b>Operator Address:</b> Mr Tony Tennyson 5731 State Highway 13 Meeker, CO 81641	<b>County:</b> Moffat, Rio Blanco <b>Operation Type:</b> Surface <b>Permit Status:</b> Active <b>Ownership:</b> Private
	<b>Operator Representative Present:</b>  Tom Fry
<b>Operator Representative Signature: (Field Issuance Only)</b>	

### INSPECTION INFORMATION

<b>Inspection Start Date:</b> May 31, 2023 <b>Inspection Start Time:</b> 08:30 <b>Inspection End Date:</b> June 1, 2023 <b>Inspection End Time:</b> 09:30		<b>Inspection Type:</b> Coal Complete Inspection <b>Inspection Reason:</b> Normal I&E Program <b>Weather:</b> Cloudy	
<b>Joint Inspection Agency:</b>  None		<b>Joint Inspection Contacts:</b>  None	
<b>Post Inspection Agency:</b>  None		<b>Post Inspection Contacts:</b>  None	
<b>Inspector(s):</b>  Zach Trujillo	<b>Inspector's Signature:</b>  		<b>Signature Date:</b>  6/1/23

**Inspection Topic Summary**

NOTE: Y=Inspected N=Not Inspected R=Comments Noted V=Violation Issued NA=Not Applicable

N - Air Resource Protection

R - Availability of Records

R - Backfill &amp; Grading

N - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste

R - Explosives

R - Fish &amp; Wildlife

R - Hydrologic Balance

R - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan

N - Other

N - Processing Waste

R - Roads

Y - Reclamation Success

Y - Revegetation

N - Subsidence

R - Slides and Other Damage

Y - Support Facilities On-site

Y - Signs and Markers

N - Support Facilities Not On-site

N - Special Categories Of Mining

Y - Topsoil

**COMMENTS**

This was a complete inspection by the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (Division) of the Colowyo Mine conducted by Zach Trujillo of the Division on May 31 and June 1, 2023. Tom Fry representing Colowyo Coal Company (Colowyo) accompanied the inspection. The weather during the inspection was slight overcast and ground conditions were dry. Temperatures during the inspection were around 75 degrees fahrenheit.

**AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS – Rule 5.02.4(1):**

All records are kept on site at the Colowyo Mine's office building. Please see the Division's Availability of Records checklist at the end of this inspection report for more detailed information.

**BACKFILL and GRADING – Rule 4.14**

Contemporaneous Reclamation 4.14.1; Approximate Original Contour 4.14.2; Highwall Elimination 4.14.1(2)(f); Steep Slopes 4.14.2, 4.27; Handling of Acid and Toxic Materials 4.14.3; Stabilization of Rills and Gullies 4.14.6:

Spoil was being hauled to the South Taylor Pit for backfill from road maintenance occurring at the in-pit haul road to the South Taylor Pit. No other backfilling operations were occurring during the inspection.

**EXPLOSIVES – Rule 4.08**

Distance Prohibitions 4.08.4; Warnings 4.08.4; Control of Adverse Effects 4.08.4:

Explosives record check was completed during the inspection. Only three blasts have occurred during the 2nd quarter of 2023. A blast was scheduled for the afternoon of June 1, 2023 but did not occur during the inspection.

**FISH and WILDLIFE – Rule 4.18:**

Pronghorn, deer and elk were spotted across the site.

**HYDROLOGIC BALANCE - Rule 4.05**

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Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 4

Drainage Control 4.05.1, 4.05.2, 4.05.3; Siltation Structures 4.05.5, 4.05.6; Discharge Structures 4.05.7, 4.05.10; Diversions 4.05.4; Effluent Limits 4.05.2; Ground Water Monitoring 4.05.13; Surface Water Monitoring 4.05.13; Drainage – Acid and Toxic Materials 4.05.8; Impoundments 4.05.6, 4.05.9; Stream Buffer Zones 4.05.18:

### East Pit

The entirety of the Final East Pit Ditch (FEPD) and North Trib. East Pit Ditch (NTEPD) and Prospect Ditch were inspected. The FEPD was flowing from contributing seeps along the southern slope. The FEPD remains in the same condition from the previous inspection that occurred on May 11, 2023. For more information, please refer to the inspection report dated May 18, 2022. Water flow from the FEPD is directed to the South Collection Ditch before being conveyed to the Prospect Pond. No issues were observed with the Final East Pit Ditch or the South Collection Ditch. The NTEPD and Prospect Ditches were stable and was dry. Stock ponds associated with both the NTEPD and Prospect Ditch held water with no discharge. NTEPD was stable with no issues however cutting was observed in the lower part of the Prospect Ditch.

The Streeter and Prospect Pond were inspected. These ponds receive surface runoff associated with the East Pit. Both ponds held water and were discharging at the time of the inspection. Sediment levels in the Streeter Pond are high. The mine representative stated that they were aware of the issue and it is scheduled for clearing. No issues were observed with the Prospect Pond.



Streeter Pond.



Intersection of Final East Pit Ditch and South Collection.

### West Pit

All ditches associated with the West Pit were inspected. This included the Taylor, East Taylor, Taylor Trib., and Buckskin Ditches. All ditches were stable with no issues observed outside of one portion of the lower East Taylor Ditch near the intersection with the Taylor Ditch. Based on discussions with the mine representative, an intense storm occurred at the end April which saw significant flows occur down this portion of the East Taylor Ditch. Based on precipitation gauges located at the mine, approximately 0.49 inches of precipitation fell within 24 hours

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and of that 0.49 inches, 0.41 inches fell in the span of an hour. Due to the relative steepness in this section of the ditch along with the associated surface runoff from the storm event, cutting has occurred within the ditch. It also appeared that the water had breached or “jumped” outside of the ditch at an area where there was a slight bend just prior to the intersection with Taylor Ditch. While the East Taylor Ditch remained stable at the bend, rock, and small sized rip rap and minor riling was observed in the area between the two ditches at the location of where the water jumped. Any water leaving the East Taylor Ditch was immediately captured by the Taylor Ditch before flowing to the East Taylor Pond. Due to the relatively small distance between the ditches where the water breached, the erosion was minimal and based on the experience at the site, it is the Division’s opinion this area will self-heal over time. However, the East Taylor Ditch is in need of repair from the cutting that occurred as well as all noted rip-rap replaced back to the East Taylor Ditch.



Cutting at East Taylor Ditch.



Breached area of East Taylor Ditch.

The East Taylor Pond was inspected. The pond held water with discharge at the time of the inspection.

#### South Taylor Pit

The Section 28 and Section 29 Ditches were inspected. These ditches intercept disturbed runoff from the southern crest of the South Taylor Pit which eventually reports to the Section 28 Pond. Both ditches were stable.

Section 16 Pond which receives disturbed runoff from the eastern crest of the South Taylor Pit was inspected. This pond held water with no discharge. No issues were observed. The West Taylor Pond was also inspected. This pond currently receives discharge for the West Taylor Fill underdrain as well surface runoff from the fill as well. The pond held water and was discharging at the time of the inspection. No issues were observed.

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Section 16 Pond.



West Taylor Pond.

### Collom Pit

All ditches associated with Collom were inspected. This included Ditches D1, D2, D3 and D4. Ditches D1 and D4 convey surface runoff from the Collom Excess Spoil Pile to the Sidehill and Section 26 Ponds. Ditch D1 is armored with rip rap while the D4 not. Ditches D2 and D3 also convey surface runoff associated with the Collom Excess Spoil Pile but to the Section 25 Pond. Both of these ditches are lined with rip rap. All ditches noted were stable with no issues.

Section 36, Section 25 and Middle Ponds were inspected. These ponds are associated with Collom Pit and run in series with each other. Each of these ponds held water with discharge. Each pond was stable, well vegetated with no issues observed. The Sidehill and Section 26 Ponds were also inspected and associated with the Collom Pit. A slump has begun to occur along the upper slope of the hill in which the Section 26 was built along. Currently the slump is not impacting the pond or the pond's capacity. This area is currently being monitored by Colowyo. Overall, both ponds stable at the time of the inspection.

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Approximate outline of slump at Section 26 Pond.

#### GENERAL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

Highwall mining activities have completed in the South Taylor Pit. All highwall mining entries have been backfilled.

Weed spraying crews were onsite during the inspection. Weeds, most notably Thistle and Whitetop, were observed throughout the site during the inspection. These areas were documented by the mine representative for future spraying.

#### ROADS – Rule 4.03

Construction 4.03.1(3)/4.03.2(3), Drainage 4.03.1(4)/4.03.2(4), Surfacing and Maintenance 4.03.1(5) and (6)/4.03.2(5) and (6), Reclamation 4.03.1(7)/4.03.2(7):

Road maintenance was occurring along the in-pit haul road leading to the South Taylor Pit for widening. Over the winter, winter plowing operations caused excess dirt to accumulate internally along the berm causing the road to narrow over time. The excess dirt was being loaded and hauled to the South Taylor Pit where it was being used as

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backfill along the eastern end of the pit.

**SLIDES and DAMAGE - Rule 4.12:**

A breached “collection ditch” was observed adjacent to the East Taylor Ditch. These collection ditches are not designed ditches as required by the Rules and Regulations and discussed in the Hydrology Section of this report but a best-management-practice to help break up surface flow along the face of long reclaimed slopes. It appears that surface water flows, potentially related to the precipitation event noted earlier, cut through the collection ditch which allowed water flow to travel down the face of the slope until captured by the lower collection ditch. As a result, riling occurred below the breached collection ditch. In order to prevent additional concentrated flows down the face of the slope resulting in additional riling, maintenance to the collection ditch may be beneficial.



Collection ditch breach.

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**ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS/COMPLIANCE**

No enforcement actions were initiated as a result of this inspection, nor are any pending.

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**AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS****PERMIT RECORDS**

DRMS Permit	Exp. 11/5/27
Permit Application w/Revisions	Ok
Findings Document	RN-08
Insurance Certificate	8/1/23
Bond Document	Ok
Phased Bond Release	SL-21
Documents/Findings	
Air Emission Permits	95MF1040/16MF1324F
County Special Use Permits	SUP08-10 & C-05-05
UG Mining Landowner Notification	N/A
Subsidence Monitoring Reports	N/A
Subsidence Monitoring Data	N/A
Rill & Gully Survey	2021
Vegetation Monitoring Data	2022 ARR
Specific Variance Approvals	Ok
Annual Reclamation Reports	2022
Midterm Review Documents	MT-08
DRMS/OSM Inspection Reports/Enforcement Actions (3 Years)	Thru May '23
Transfers/Succession of Operator	Ok
Temporary Cessation Notification	N/A
Reclamation Cost Estimate	RN-08
<b>CERTIFICATIONS</b>	
Pond Certifications	Ok
Annual Certifications for Impoundments	Ok
Fill Certifications for Excess Spoil or Underground Development Waste	Ok
• Quarterly Inspections	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Qrt '23
• Compaction Testing	N/A
• Final Certification	N/A
Coal Processing Waste Banks	N/A
Haul Road Certifications	Ok
Access Road Certifications	Ok

**HYDROLOGIC RECORDS**

NPDES Permit	CO 0045161
NPDES Records	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Qrt '23
Stormwater Management Plan	Ok
SPCC Plan	Ok
MSHA Pond Inspections	N/A
State Engineer's Pond Inspection	N/A
Quarterly Pond Inspections	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Qrt '23
Annual Hydrology Reports	2022
• Ground Water Monitoring	Ok
• Surface Water Monitoring	Ok
• Spring & Seep Monitoring	No
• Mine Water Discharge Monitoring	N/A
• Mine Inflow Study	N/A
• Water Consumption Records	Ok
Well Permits	Ok

**BLASTING RECORDS**

Blasting Publication	2023
Blasting Records (3 years)	Thru May '23
ATFE Explosives Permit	Ok
Blasting Variances	N/A
Pre-Blast Surveys	Ok

**ADDITIONAL RECORDS (specify)**


**COMMENTS:**Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 8Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 4