



STATE OF
COLORADO

Simmons - DNR, Leigh <leigh.simmons@state.co.us>

C1980007, West Elk Mine, August Inspection Report

Simmons - DNR, Leigh <leigh.simmons@state.co.us>

Fri, Aug 25, 2023 at 10:26 PM

To: "Poulos, Nicki" <npoulos@archrsc.com>

Cc: "Ogrodny, Edward" <eogrodny@archrsc.com>

Attached

Leigh Simmons
Environmental Protection Specialist



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

P 303.866.3567 x 8121 | C 720.220.1180 | F 303.832.8106

1313 Sherman Street, Room 215, Denver, CO 80203

leigh.simmons@state.co.us | <https://drms.colorado.gov>




INSP-REPORTC_C1980007_LDS_08252023100935.pdf
3149K



PERMIT INFORMATION

Permit Number: C-1980-007 Mine Name: West Elk Mine Operator: Mountain Coal Company, LLC Operator Address: Ms Nicki Poulos 5174 Highway 133 Somerset, CO 81434	County: Delta, Gunnison Operation Type: Underground Permit Status: Active Ownership: Private
	Operator Representative Present: Ed Ogrodny
Operator Representative Signature: (Field Issuance Only) 	

INSPECTION INFORMATION

Inspection Start Date: August 16, 2023 Inspection Start Time: 10:00 Inspection End Date: Inspection End Time:	Inspection Type: Coal Complete Inspection Inspection Reason: Normal I&E Program Weather: Clear
Joint Inspection Agency: None	Joint Inspection Contacts:
Post Inspection Agency: None	Post Inspection Contacts:
Inspector(s): Leigh Simmons	Inspector's Signature:  Signature Date: August 25, 2023

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

N - Backfill & Grading

N - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste

N - Explosives

N - Fish & Wildlife

N - Hydrologic Balance

R - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan

N - Other

R - Processing Waste

N - Roads

N - Reclamation Success

N - Revegetation

N - Subsidence

N - Slides and Other Damage

R - Support Facilities On-site

N - Signs and Markers

N - Support Facilities Not On-site

N - Special Categories Of Mining

N - Topsoil

COMMENTS

This was a complete inspection by Leigh Simmons of the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (Division). Ed Ogrodny of Mountain Coal Company (MCC) accompanied the inspection. The weather was clear, hot and dry. The mine was active.

AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS – Rule 5.02.4(1):

Records were available in the mine office, details are given at the end of this report.

GENERAL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

A longwall move from the SS4 panel to the LWE15 panel was in progress.

Development of the LWE12 tailgate and start line was complete - the panel had been shortened from what had originally been planned - and development of the headgate was in progress.

PROCESSING WASTE/COAL MINE WASTE PILES – Rule 4.10 and 4.11**Drainage Control; Surface Stabilization; Placement:**

Coal fines from the wash plant were continuing to accumulate at Stack Tube 5 on the Clean Coal Stockpile pad. Some fines were being blended into the mix to load the trains from this location, but the rate at which fines were being produced continued to exceed the rate at which they could be blended in to the coal being loaded onto trains. Excess fines were being transported by truck to the west end of the run-of-mine coal stockpile pad, west of Stack Tube 3. A total of 140,000 tons of fines were estimated to be in the various stockpiles around the site.

A plan had been submitted to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to put fines on the refuse pile. If approved, transportation of fines to the RPEE would likely begin around the middle of September.

The temporary refuse pile on the RPE was estimated at around 100,000 tons. Three haul trucks were transporting material to the RPEE at the time of the inspection. The haul trucks each took three bucket loads from the wheel loader per trip. An excavator was working the material on top of the temporary pile in an effort to dry it out more quickly.

A water truck was being used to control dust on the RPEE haul road.

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 1

Three compactors, a dozer, an excavator and a grader were working on top of the RPEE to spread, dry and compact material. The surface of the pile was much smoother and more regular than it had been on recent inspections. An engineer from Lambert and Associates typically comes to the site twice a week to conduct compaction tests. The surface of the pile was graded to drain to the north west. The north west corner of the pile was quite a bit lower than the design, and the out-slope of the pile could continue to be built up, but it will be necessary for MCC to extend the underdrain of the pile fairly soon.

A further 10,000 tons of refuse and 20,000 tons of fines were temporarily stockpiled on top of the Lower Refuse Pile (LRP).

SUPPORT FACILITIES - Rule 4.04:

Reclamation of the three Mine Ventilation Boreholes (MVBs) on the SS3 and SS4 panels was in progress. RACS LLC of Delta, CO had been contracted to plug and abandon the holes, and D&S Underground of Hotchkiss, CO had been contracted to reclaim the pads and roads.

The location for the Box Canyon Well (approved with MR-474) had been surveyed and marked, but construction of the drill pad had not yet begun.

DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

N/A

OTHER (SPECIFY)

N/A

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS/COMPLIANCE

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

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

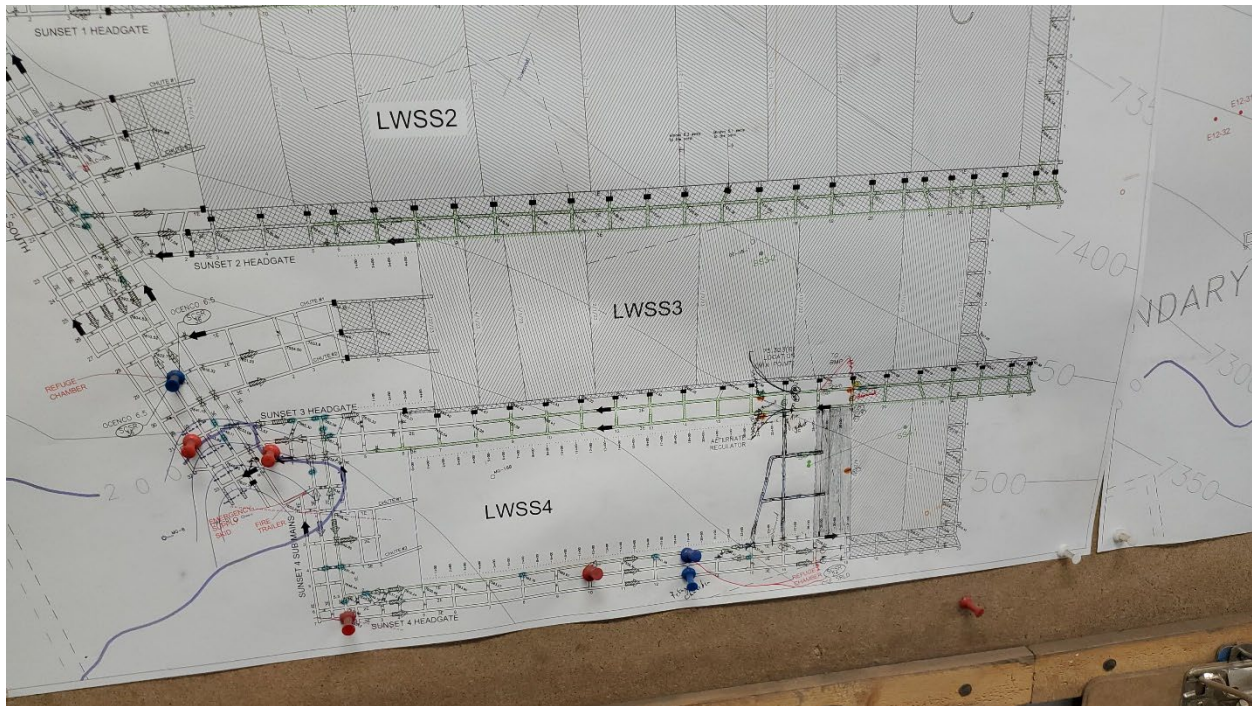


Figure 1: Mine map showing that mining of the SS4 panel was ended early

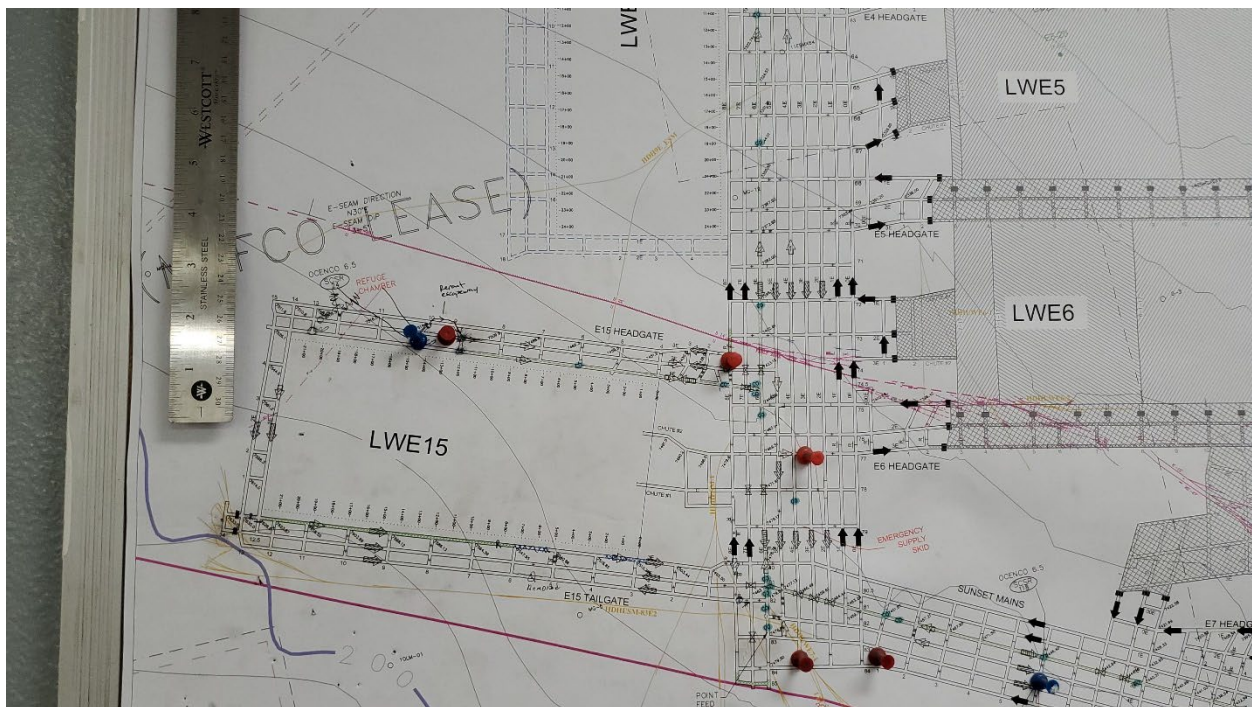


Figure 2: Development of the LWE15 panel was complete, but longwall mining had not yet begun

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 1

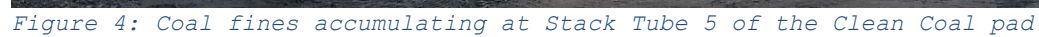
Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 1



Figure 5: Haul trucks being loaded on RPE



Figure 6: Temporary refuse pile on RPE

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 1



Figure 7: Refuse being transported to RPEE



Figure 8: Compaction of refuse in progress on RPEE

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 1



Figure 9: Temporary stockpile of fines and refuse on LRP



Figure 10: Surveyed location for Box Canyon Well

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 1

AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS**PERMIT RECORDS**

DRMS Permit Expires 7/31/26
Permit Application w/Revisions LF
Findings Document RN-8, 6/1/2022

Insurance Certificate Expires 7/31/24
Bond Document \$5M & \$10M
Phased Bond Release Thru SL-15
Documents/Findings
Air Emission Permits 09GU1382
 10GU1130
 13GU1462

County Special Use Permits N/A

UG Mining Landowner Yes
Notification
Subsidence Monitoring Reports Fall 2022
Subsidence Monitoring Data Q1 2023
Rill & Gully Survey N/A

Vegetation Monitoring Data SL-17
Specific Variance Approvals Stream buffer zone

Annual Reclamation Reports 2022
Midterm Review Documents MT-08
DRMS/OSM Inspection Through 7/23
Reports/Enforcement Actions (3 Years)

Transfers/Succession of Operator Yes
Temporary Cessation Notification N/A
Reclamation Cost Estimate RN-08

CERTIFICATIONS
Pond Certifications Yes
Annual Certifications for N/A
Impoundments

Fill Certifications for Excess
Spoil or Underground
Development Waste

- Quarterly Inspections Q2 2023
- Compaction Testing Q2 2023
- Final Certification N/A

Coal Processing Waste Banks Yes

Haul Road Certifications Yes

Access Road Certifications Yes

COMMENTS:

*1 Renewed CDPS permit has been issued, but is subject of ongoing litigation

HYDROLOGIC RECORDS

NPDES Permit Exp 9/30/24, *1
NPDES Records Through 6/23
Stormwater Management 2/23/2023
Plan

SPCC Plan 3/4/2022
MSHA Pond Inspections N/A
State Engineer's Pond 10/23/2018
Inspection
Quarterly Pond Inspections Q2 2023

Annual Hydrology Reports 7/23 for 2022
 water year
 Yes

- **Ground Water Monitoring** Yes
- **Surface Water Monitoring** Yes
- **Spring & Seep Monitoring** Yes
- **Mine Water Discharge Monitoring** Yes
- **Mine Inflow Study** Yes
- **Water Consumption** Yes

Records
Well Permits Yes

BLASTING RECORDS

Blasting Publication N/A
Blasting Records (3 years) N/A
ATFE Explosives Permit Expires 6/1/2024
Blasting Variances N/A
Pre-Blast Surveys N/A

ADDITIONAL RECORDS
(specify)

Monthly Air Quality Cert. Through 7/23

Rock Dust Maintenance Through 7/23

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 1