




## MINERALS PROGRAM INSPECTION REPORT

PHONE: (303) 866-3567

The Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety has conducted an inspection of the mining operation noted below. This report documents observations concerning compliance with the terms of the permit and applicable rules and regulations of the Mined Land Reclamation Board.

<b>MINE NAME:</b> Witherbee Pit	<b>MINE/PROSPECTING ID#:</b> M-2009-070	<b>MINERAL:</b> Gravel and borrow m construction	<b>COUNTY:</b> Yuma
<b>INSPECTION TYPE:</b> Monitoring	<b>WEATHER:</b> Clear	<b>INSP. DATE:</b> August 31, 2023	<b>INSP. TIME:</b> 08:00
<b>OPERATOR:</b> Yuma County	<b>OPERATOR REPRESENTATIVE:</b> N/A	<b>TYPE OF OPERATION:</b> 112c - Construction Regular Operation	
<b>REASON FOR INSPECTION:</b> Normal I&E Program	<b>BOND CALCULATION TYPE:</b> None	<b>BOND AMOUNT:</b> N/A	
<b>DATE OF COMPLAINT:</b> NA	<b>POST INSP. CONTACTS:</b> Tom Anderson	<b>JOINT INSP. AGENCY:</b> None	
<b>INSPECTOR(S):</b> Nikie Gagnon	<b>INSPECTOR'S SIGNATURE:</b> 	<b>SIGNATURE DATE:</b> October 12, 2023	

### GENERAL INSPECTION TOPICS

This list identifies the environmental and permit parameters inspected and gives a categorical evaluation of each. No problems or possible violations were noted during the inspection. The mine operation was found to be in full compliance with Mineral Rules and Regulations of the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board for the Extraction of Construction Materials and/or for Hard Rock, Metal and Designated Mining Operations. Any person engaged in any mining operation shall notify the office of any failure or imminent failure, as soon as reasonably practicable after such person has knowledge of such condition or of any impoundment, embankment, or slope that poses a reasonable potential for danger to any persons or property or to the environment; or any environmental protection facility designed to contain or control chemicals or waste which are acid or toxic-forming, as identified in the permit.

(AR) RECORDS----- <u>N</u>	(FN) FINANCIAL WARRANTY----- <u>N</u>	(RD) ROADS----- <u>N</u>
(HB) HYDROLOGIC BALANCE----- <u>N</u>	(BG) BACKFILL & GRADING----- <u>N</u>	(EX) EXPLOSIVES----- <u>N</u>
(PW) PROCESSING WASTE/TAILING---- <u>N</u>	(SF) PROCESSING FACILITIES----- <u>N</u>	(TS) TOPSOIL----- <u>N</u>
(MP) GENL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE- <u>N</u>	(FW) FISH & WILDLIFE----- <u>N</u>	(RV) REVEGETATION---- <u>N</u>
(SM) SIGNS AND MARKERS----- <u>N</u>	(SP) STORM WATER MGT PLAN---- <u>N</u>	(RS) RECL PLAN/COMP-- <u>Y</u>
(ES) OVERBURDEN/DEV. WASTE----- <u>N</u>	(SC) EROSION/SEDIMENTATION--- <u>N</u>	(ST) STIPULATIONS----- <u>N</u>
(AT) ACID OR TOXIC MATERIALS----- <u>N</u>	(OD) OFF-SITE DAMAGE----- <u>N</u>	

Y = Inspected / N = Not inspected / NA = Not applicable to this operation / PB = Problem cited / PV = Possible violation cited

## **OBSERVATIONS**

This inspection was conducted by Nikie Gagnon of the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (Division or DRMS). Tom Anderson, representing Yuma County (Operator) requested this inspection to evaluate the progress of revegetation at the site. Mr. Anderson was aware of the inspection but did not accompany the Division during the inspection.

The Witherbee Pit is located 22 miles north-northeast of Wray, Colorado and two miles north of County Road 54 on the west side of County Road QQ. The site is a 112c operation permitted to affect 80 acres. Affected lands will be reclaimed to support a rangeland post-mining land use. At the time of the inspection, it was clear and warm, and the site was dry. The site was not active at the time of inspection and no equipment was on-site. During mining, the disturbance area was approximately 7 acres in size and 25 feet deep. The site is currently in the final stages of reclamation.

This site was last inspected by Brock Bowles on May 18, 2022 at the request of the Operator. At that time, the vegetation around the clay pit was sparse, especially in the southeast corner of the pit and erosion rills were noted on the slopes. During this inspection, the Division observed denser vegetation, grasses are sprouting beneath the sunflowers and annual weeds (primarily kochia) filling in some of the bare spots observed a year ago. A dense band of sunflowers was observed on the eastern side of the pit. The topsoil is harder and more capable of withstanding erosion. Cottonwoods and grasses are growing in the pit floor. The previous inspection noted rills on the side slopes. These rills were observed during this inspection, the surrounding soil is still bare around the rills indicating water is flowing too quickly down the slope to allow vegetation to take hold. At this stage, it may do more harm than good to repair these areas and the Division recommends monitoring for another year to see how the vegetative cover fills in since this is only the third year after topsoil placement and seeding.

Outside of the mining disturbance area, within the permit boundary, dense grasses were observed. This grassy area represents the anticipated long-term vegetation coverage across the site.

According to the approved reclamation plan, the access road will remain after release.

Based on observations during this inspection, the permit area is not quite ready for release. The primary concerns are sparse grassy cover, annual weeds, dense sunflowers, and the bare erosion rills developing on the slopes of the pit. Next spring, if dense sunflowers return, the Division recommends contacting the local NRCS office to discuss treatment options. Overall, vegetation is more established this year and desirable species are spreading around the site which should eventually outcompete the annual weeds and sunflowers.

This concludes the Division's Inspection Report; a subset of photographs taken during the time of the inspection are included below. If you need additional information or have any questions, please contact me at Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, 1313 Sherman Street, Room 215, Denver, CO 80203, by telephone at (303)866-3567 x8126, or by email at [nikie.gagnon@state.co.us](mailto:nikie.gagnon@state.co.us).

**PHOTOGRAPHS**



Photo 1: Looking west from the access road.



Photo 2: Looking north across the site. Grass is growing in the pit floor and Cottonwood trees are growing in the northeast corner.



Photo 3: Looking northeast at vegetative cover at the base of the slope.



Photo 4: Slope of the eastern side of the pit. Grasses observed sprouting below weeds and sunflowers (red arrows).



Photo 5: View of access road going down into the pit that will remain.



Photo 6: Sunflowers and annual weeds cover much of the eastern slope at the end of the access road.



Photo 7: Erosion rills and bare spots observed on the side slopes. Vegetation observed here primarily annual weeds and sunflowers.



Photo 8: Undisturbed area of grassland species growing on the north and south sides of the access road.



Photo 9: Thick band of sunflowers growing around the slopes of the pit.

**Inspection Contact Address**

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Wray, CO 80758

CC: Amy Eschberger with DRMS