

MINE SITE INSPECTION NARRATIVE

COMPANY: Colowyo Coal Company L.P.

MINE: Colowyo Mine

PERMIT NO: C-1981-019

DATE OF INSPECTION: September 12, 2023

WEATHER: Mostly sunny and warm.

Company Officials (i.e. operator's representative): Tom Fry

Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS) Personnel: Zach Trujillo

OSMRE Official: Dan MacKinnon (badge #554)

Overview

This bond release inspection focused on six parcels under consideration for Phase II bond release detailed in the operator's SL-22 bond release application. All parcels have previously been granted Phase I release. For the purposes of Phase II bond release, those who attended to field review did not express any concerns with the reclamation on the approximately 148.4 acres that were inspected.

Inspection

All six parcels within the application (EP061, WP026, WP027, WP028, WP029, and WP032) were part of the field review. Five of the six parcels under consideration for bond release were graded, topsoiled, and seeded in 2018; the sixth, WP032, accomplished these items in 2015.

We walked throughout each parcel and observed the following:

EP061. Stable, no issues noted other than some thistle present. Vegetation included perennial grasses (e.g. wild rye), yarrow, and sage (Figure 1).

WP026, WP027, WP028, and WP032. Stable with the majority of vegetation present consisting of annual and perennial grasses; however, this inspection occurred later in the growing season when forbs may be harder to observe (Figure 2). There was a significant number of patchy populations of cheatgrass present at these sites. We discussed how the operator is treating the cheatgrass and they described a preemergent herbicide, sprayed in late August / early September, to kill seeds. We toured a few small sites where this has recently been found effective; OSMRE will follow up with the operator for more specifics on the formulation and long-term effectiveness of this herbicide.

WP029. Stable with the majority of vegetation present consisting of annual and perennial grasses (Figure 3). This parcel appeared to have much less cheatgrass than those described above.

Conclusion

For the purposes of Phase II bond release, we found no concerning issues during this field review. The parcels were stable and adequately vegetated without significant erosion. No enforcement actions were taken in response to this inspection.



Figure 1 - A sample of the reclamation of parcel EP061. The small features in the background are animal habitat structures made of natural stone.



Figure 2 - A sample of the vegetation within parcel WP032. Grasses were abundant and healthy.



Figure 3 - Sample reclamation from parcel WP029. Overall, this parcel was well-vegetated with a relatively small population of cheatgrass.