



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

November 7, 2023

Mike Weldon
George T. Weldon Construction, LLC
P.O. Box 1170
Vernal, UT 84078

RE: North River Gravel Pit Extension, Permit No. M-1999-007, Unresolved Problem(s) Noted in a Past Inspection Report

Dear Mr. Weldon:

According to records kept by the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, some problem(s) noted in a past mine site inspection report have not been corrected. If the problem(s) have already been corrected, documentation of the corrective actions taken to correct the problem(s) must be submitted to our office.

Please see the enclosed inspection report for the above noted mine site, issued as a result of a past inspection of this site. Problems noted in this report that remain unresolved according to our records, have been highlighted.

To avoid potential future enforcement actions for non-compliance with State Statutes, Rules and Regulations, and/or conditions specified in your permit for this site, you must submit compliance documentation with the corrective actions by **Friday, December 01, 2023**.

If you require additional information, or have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Amy Yeldell
Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures: DRMS Inspection Report from July 24, 2023


EC: Travis Marshall, Senior EPS, DRMS





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.

MINE NAME: North River Gravel Pit Extension	MINE/PROSPECTING ID#: M-1999-007	MINERAL: Gravel	COUNTY: Rio Blanco
INSPECTION TYPE: Surety Release Inspection	WEATHER: Clear	INSP. DATE: July 24, 2023	INSP. TIME: 12:30
OPERATOR: George T. Weldon Construction, LLC	OPERATOR REPRESENTATIVE: None	TYPE OF OPERATION: 110c - Construction Limited Impact	
REASON FOR INSPECTION: Surety Release Requested	BOND CALCULATION TYPE: None	BOND AMOUNT: \$11,750.00	
DATE OF COMPLAINT: NA	POST INSP. CONTACTS: None	JOINT INSP. AGENCY: None	
INSPECTOR(S): Amy Yeldell	INSPECTOR'S SIGNATURE: 	SIGNATURE DATE: August 10, 2023	

The following inspection topic(s) were identified as having a **Problem (PB)**, which includes correction actions and a deadline whereby the Operator must demonstrate compliance with the conditions of the Permit and the requirements of the Act and Rules. Failure to address the corrective actions by the deadline may cause the Division to escalate the Problem to a **Possible Violation (PV)** and schedule the issue for formal hearing before the Mined Land Reclamation Board (Board).

GENERAL INSPECTION TOPICS

The following list identifies the environmental and permit parameters inspected and gives a categorical evaluation of each

(AR) RECORDS----- <u>Y</u>	(FN) FINANCIAL WARRANTY----- <u>N</u>	(RD) ROADS----- <u>Y</u>
(HB) HYDROLOGIC BALANCE----- <u>Y</u>	(BG) BACKFILL & GRADING----- <u>Y</u>	(EX) EXPLOSIVES----- <u>NA</u>
(PW) PROCESSING WASTE/TAILING---- <u>NA</u>	(SF) PROCESSING FACILITIES----- <u>NA</u>	(TS) TOPSOIL----- <u>NA</u>
(MP) GENL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE- <u>Y</u>	(FW) FISH & WILDLIFE----- <u>N</u>	(RV) REVEGETATION---- <u>PB</u>
(SM) SIGNS AND MARKERS----- <u>Y</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>Y</u>	(ST) STIPULATIONS----- <u>Y</u>
(AT) ACID OR TOXIC MATERIALS----- <u>NA</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**

INSPECTION TOPIC: Revegetation

PROBLEM/POSSIBLE VIOLATION: Problem: There are state-listed noxious weeds present on site. This is a problem for failure to employ weed control methods for state listed noxious weed species within the permitted area, and to reduce the spread of weeds to nearby areas as required by Section 3.1.10 (6) of the rule.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: Implement approved weed control plan and provide proof to the Division that this has been done. If a weed control plan is not already in place, the operator shall develop a weed control and management plan in accordance with Section 3.1.10 (6) of the Rule. This plan should be developed in consultation with the county extension agency, or weed control district office and should include specific control measures to be applied, a schedule for when control measures will be applied and a post-treatment monitoring plan. This weed control plan shall be submitted to the Division as a Technical Revision to the approved plan with the appropriate Technical Revision fee of \$216.00 by the corrective action date.

CORRECTIVE ACTION DUE DATE: 10/09/23

OBSERVATIONS

This inspection was conducted by the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety. The North River Gravel Pit Extension is a 112c permitted site located approximately 3 miles northeast of Rangely Colorado in Rio Blanco County. No representative for George T Weldon Construction, LLC was present for the inspection but they were notified ahead of time. Amy Yeldell of the Division conducted the inspection.

On July 27, 2023 the Division received a release request for the entire permit area. This inspection was to evaluate reclamation success of the affected lands. The gate and main access road through the site is to remain. All other interstitial "mining" roads and affected areas are to be reclaimed to rangeland. This site has historically been used for mining and very little topsoil was salvaged. Reclamation efforts included flattening of stockpiles and grading all slopes to a 3H: 1V or less and revegetation of all affected lands. The Division initially estimated the affected lands requiring revegetation to be approximately 17 acres. Specific observations by area are referenced based on the attached map from the Division's 2021 inspection.

Vegetation throughout the site is very "hit or miss". It is either diverse, well established vegetation with little to no weeds or almost entirely noxious species or bare. From afar, areas that appear green or "vegetated", are actually primarily Russian Thistle, Kochia and Halogeton. Shrubby areas that were not recently reclaimed appear to be combating noxious weed pressures well. However the other slopes that were recently regraded and seeded have little to no reclamation success.

Area 6 has been properly graded. Signs of seeding, in the form of drill rows was observed. Almost no desirable species were to be found aside from a few stray plants. The reclaimed area was nearly only Halogeton, Russian Thistle and Kochia were observed (See Photo One).

The access road to area 2 and 3 remains flat for future use but overall is well vegetated. Species are diverse and

generally weed free with some Kochia (See Photo Two). Little to no erosion was observed. Cover/density is comparable to undisturbed adjacent areas. It is noted on the northeast side of Area A adjacent to the access road several tires and other trash from historical use was observed.

Area A did not require any sort of grading for final reclamation and has had volunteer shrubs (rabbit brush and saltbush) due to it being deserted. Only the southwestern portion of Areas A appear to have additional seeding. Cover is comprised of mostly desirable forbs (annual flowers) and shrubs. The recently reclaimed southwestern area has a lower density of desirable cover (See Photo Three). The rocky more open areas have significantly higher densities of cheatgrass and Russian Thistle.

The slopes of Area 2 have generally all been regraded to a 3H: 1V or less. A few areas have random misc. piles but are difficult to access due to their proximity to the river (cliff) (See Photo Four). Some shrubs (rabbit brush) and flowers (curly cup gumweed) have established. However the majority of cover is Russian Thistle.

Sloping in Area 3 has also been completed and blends nicely with the surrounding topography (See Photo Five). Again overall cover is comprised of approximately 80% weeds with the only desirables being a hand full of shrubs. The access road from Area 3 to B has very little desirable species and cover is almost entirely Halogeton.

Area B is a south facing slope that was significantly dryer than the surrounding areas. It was almost entirely Halogeton with a few sparse and significantly smaller saltbushes. No grasses were observed within the recently reclaimed areas despite seeding efforts being observed in the form of drill rows (See Photo Six).

The Division next inspected the back side of Area C into Area 4. Overall reclamation success in this area is also poor (See Photo Seven). Green areas are almost entirely Russian Thistle and not actually desirable species. Sparse areas (no reclamation) did have some perennial grasses and low shrubs and forms. These areas also appear to have soil overtop the gravel.

The western slope of area 4 has a stress crack (See Photo Eight and Nine). This slope will need to be repaired (graded) and reseeded. Given that sufficient material is on site a more gradual slope that is sufficiently compacted may resist settling better. The interstitial grade adjacent to the crack appears to be steeper than a 3H: 1V though the overall grade is a 3H: 1V. The crack is perpendicular to the slope and runs nearly the entire length of the slope. Smaller less apparent cracks were observed below the main one. This area will need to be repaired and reseeded.

Vegetation on the southern west facing slope of area 4 is lush but unfortunately all non-desirable species. The northern west facing slope appears to be sufficiently graded and is far more arid. Only sparse Russian Thistle with very few shrubs or other desirable species were observed. One note is that the drill rows of the northern slope are going with the grade which will facilitate erosion in the event of precipitation (See Photo Ten). All disking and seeding should be done perpendicular to the grade to trap moisture and prevent erosion.

In order to achieve final reclamation, vegetation needs to be comparable to adjacent undisturbed areas. However the only vegetation present cannot be noxious species. In general noxious weeds need to be better managed in order to promote reclamation success. Failure to treat noxious weeds is cited as an inspection problem. The Operator shall develop a Noxious Weed Management Plan for the site and submit it in the form of a Technical Revision by the corrective action due date. Please reach out to the county weed manager for assistance. Additional seeding is also recommended due to failure to establish desirable species with initial reclamation efforts.

A decision letter regarding the release request (SL-2) will be sent under separate cover.

Responses to this inspection report should be directed to: Amy Yeldell at the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, Room 215, 1001 E 62nd Ave, Denver, CO 80216. Direct contact can be made by phone at 303-866-3567 Ext 8183 or via email at amy.yeldell@state.co.us

Inspection Contact Address

None

George T. Weldon Construction, LLC

P.O. Box 1170

Vernal, UT 84078

CC:

Travis Marshall, Senior EPS, Grand Junction DRMS

PHOTOGRAPHS

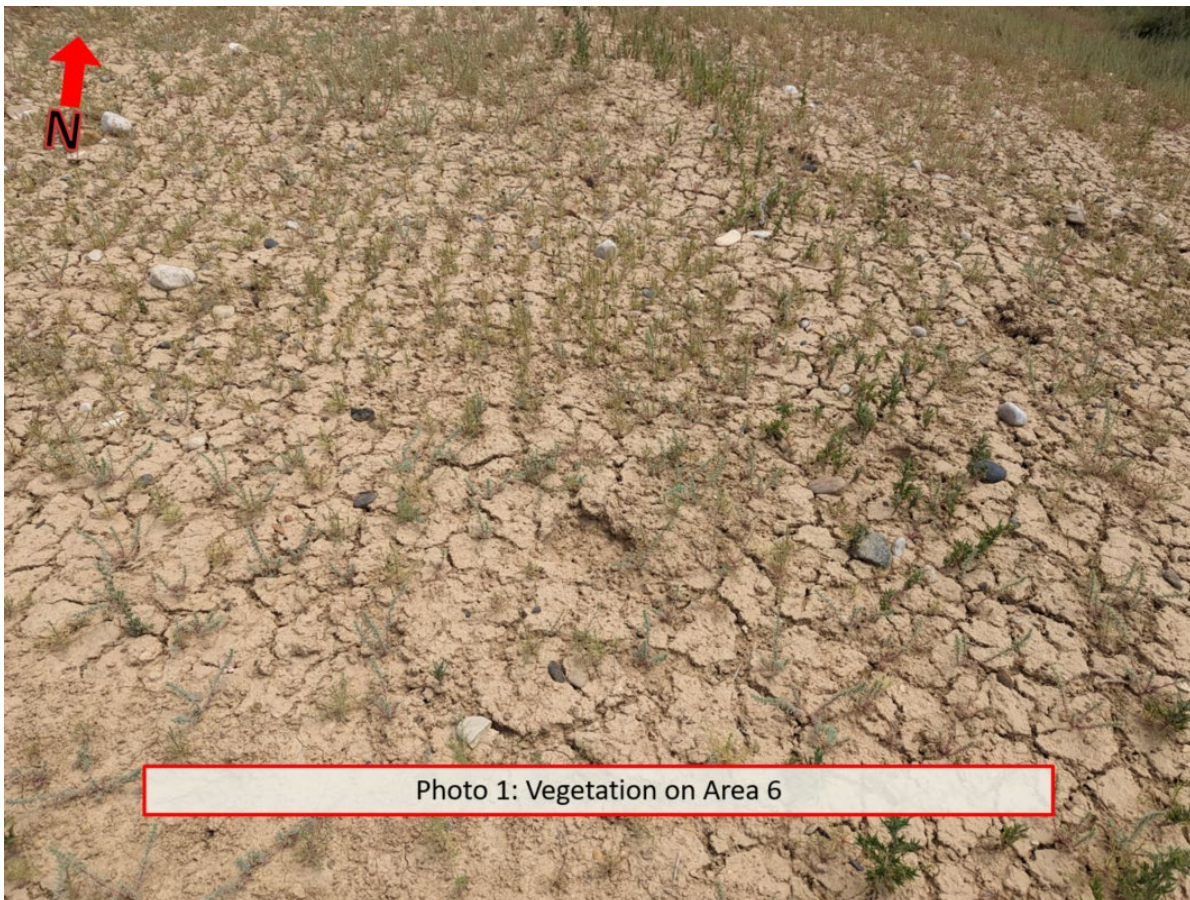


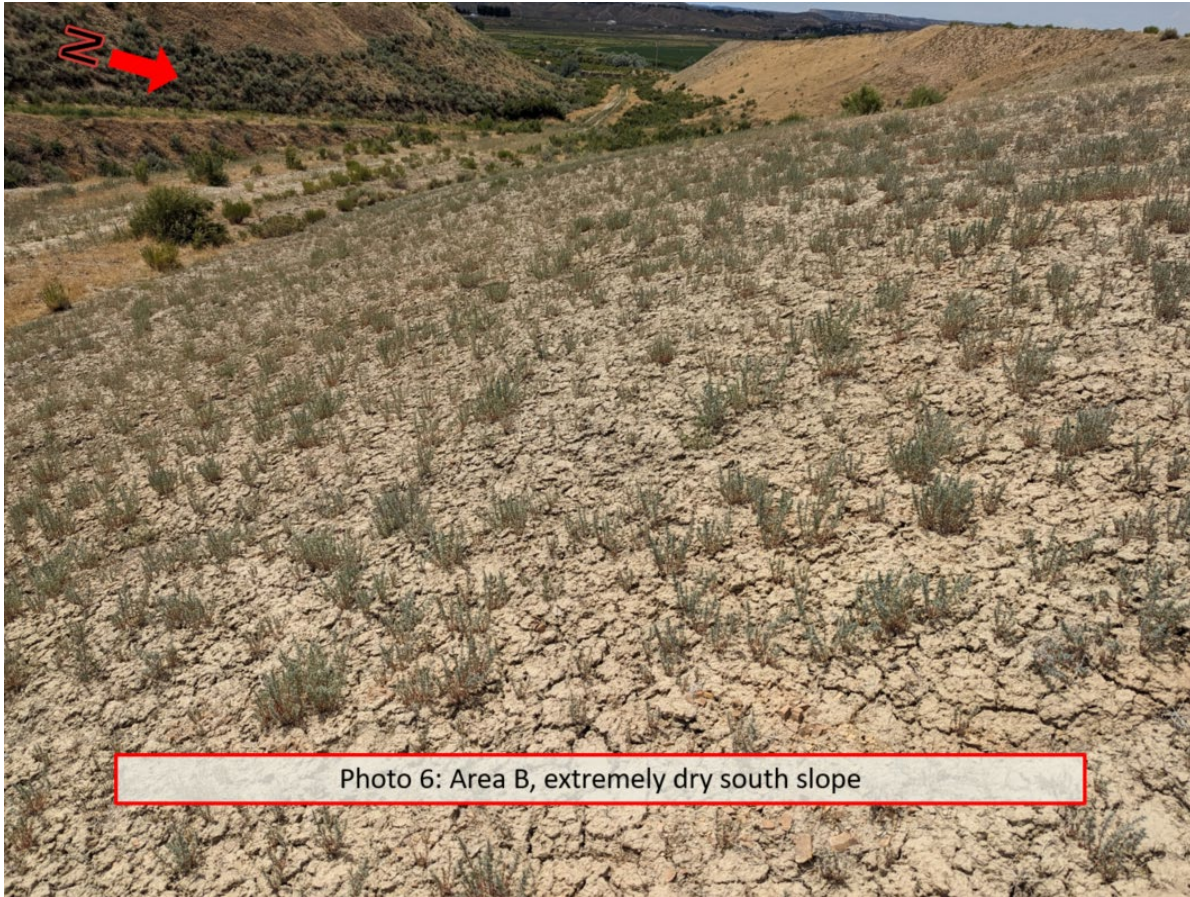


Photo 2: Access road to Area 2 and 3



Photo 3: Area A looking towards new reclaimed areas





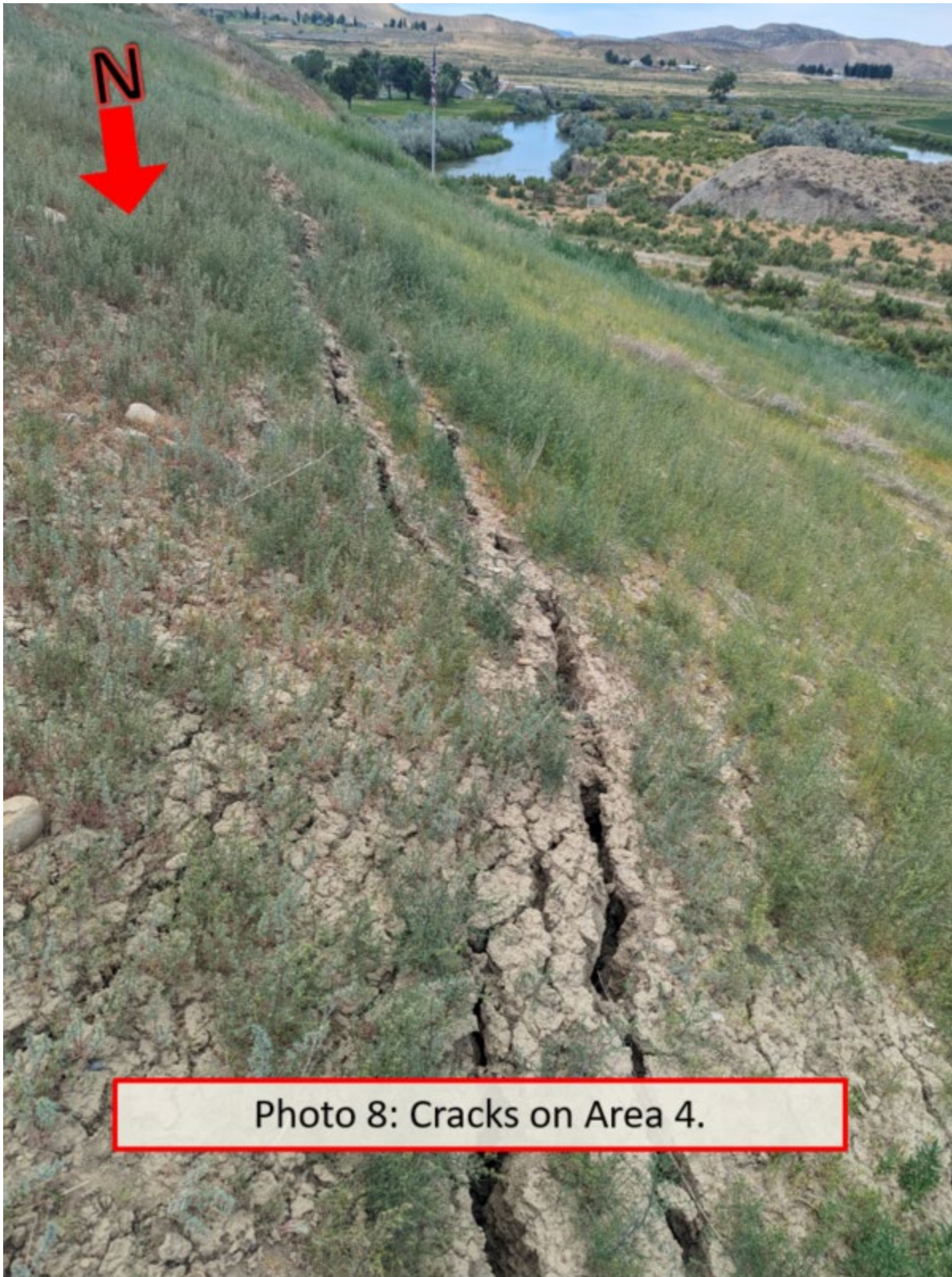




Photo 9: Cracks in Area 4.



Photo 10: Southwest slope of Area 4. Drill rows wrong direction.

