STATE OF COLORADO

Ridley - DNR, Hunter <hunter.ridley@state.co.us>

Inspection Report, Colowyo, C-1981-019

1 message

Ridley - DNR, Hunter <hunter.ridley@state.co.us> Thu, Apr 18, 2024 at 11:09 AM
To: "Tennyson, Tony" <tony.tennyson@tristategt.org>

Good morning Tony,

It was a pleasure meeting you at our inspection of Colowyo last week. Please find attached the report for the coal partial inspection conducted on 4/9/2024. Feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns as you review the report.

Kind regards,

Hunter Ridley (she/her/hers)
Environmental Protection Specialist I

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

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InspReport_4_9_24_C1981019.pdf
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COLORADO
Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety
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PERMIT INFORMATION

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

INSPECTION INFORMATION

Inspection Start Date: April 9, 2024 **Inspection Start Time:** 07:30 **Inspection End Date:** April 9, 2024 **Inspection End Time:** 14:30	**Inspection Type:** Coal Partial 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): Hunter Ridley Zach Trujillo	**Inspector's Signature:** Hunter Ridley	**Signature Date:** April 18, 2024

1313 Sherman St. Room 215
Denver, CO 80203
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Inspection Topic Summary
NOTE: **Y**=Inspected **N**=Not Inspected **R**=Comments Noted **V**=Violation Issued **NA**=Not Applicable

N - Air Resource Protection
N - Availability of Records
R - Backfill & Grading
R - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste
R - Explosives
Y - Fish & Wildlife
R - Hydrologic Balance
R - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan
N - Other
N - Processing Waste
R - Roads
R - Reclamation Success
N - Revegetation
N - Subsidence
N - Slides and Other Damage
N - Support Facilities On-site
R - Signs and Markers
N - Support Facilities Not On-site
N - Special Categories Of Mining
R - Topsoil

COMMENTS

This was a partial inspection of the Colowyo Coal Mine; DRMS Permit No. C-1981-019, operated by Colowyo Coal Company (Colowyo). The inspection was conducted by Hunter Ridley and Zach Trujillo with the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (Division). Tony Tennyson, representing Colowyo was present at the mine office and Tom Fry of Colowyo accompanied the inspection. Weather during the inspection was clear with temperatures around 40° F. Muddy conditions prohibited access to more remote areas of the site.

SIGNS ANDMARKERS – Rule 4.02:
Mine identification signs were located at the mine entrance, throughout the site, and along State Highway 13. All in formation for compliance was observed.

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):

Certified Haul Roads A and B were navigable and in good conditions. Most other haul roads on site are considered in-pit and do not require certification. Roads were plowed and mostly navigable under muddy conditions.

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:

West Pit
The West Pit was observed to be almost entirely backfilled, with a majority of the pit in final reclamation. There is a small portion of highwall remaining to the south (Photo 2) which will be reclaimed using the nearby internal haul road in final reclamation. An old drag line will need to be removed from the West Pit in final reclamation.

South Taylor
Active backfill operations were noted in the South Taylor Pit during the inspection. Spoil is excavated from a temporary spoil located just north of the pit (Photo 6). At the time of inspection, material was

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being dumped in the south and western areas of the pit. Material is graded and reworked as needed. An ~400 ft highwall remains to the west for possible future use (Photo 12). An old crusher is present in this area.

HYDROLOGICBALANCE - Rule 4.05; 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:

Due to limited accessibility, several more remote ponds and ditches at the site were not able to be inspected. These features were visually inspected from vantage points at a distance where possible.

West Pit

The East Taylor Pond (Photo 13) in the West Pit area was inspected this month. The East Taylor Pond was able to be accessed via a small offroad trail along Taylor Creek. The West Pit Pond was also accessed via this road during the inspection. This pond is usually dry but was holding some water at the time of inspection. The East Taylor Pond currently discharges to Taylor Creek. However, water quality at this pond is low. Colowyo representatives stated that they intend to eventually discharge this water to an underground aquafer via a borehole located outside the permit boundary. While this borehole will not need to be permitted with the Division, any pipeline disturbance associated with the well may need to be permitted through a revision.

The following ditches in the West Pit area were inspected this month: Buckskin Ditch (Photo 3), East Taylor Ditch (Photo 4 and 7) and Taylor Ditch (Photos 4 and 10). The Taylor Ditch was inspected from above atop a berm along an internal haul road. A surge pond (ETD1) along the East Taylor Ditch was observed to be holding water (Photo 7). No water quality samples are collected at surge ponds across the site. The East Taylor Ditch currently discharges to Taylor Creek. No signs of erosion or cutting were visible along any of the observed West Pit ditches.

Collom Pit

The following Ponds in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month: Section 36 Pond (Photo 16), Sidehill Pond (Photo 20), Middle Pond, and Section 25 Pond (Photo 17), Section 26 Pond (Photo 19). No outstanding problems were noted at any of the ponds, however the slump area at Section 26 Pond will need to continue to be monitored closely for any signs of degradation. Section 25 Pond has had maintenance issue previously, but currently has no signs of erosion or notable items of concern. All ponds were observed to be holding water.

The following ditches in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month: D1, D2, D3 (Photo 17), and D4 (Photo 20). These ditches were observed from along the road and from vantage points near ponds in the area. The southern end of D4 had a small erosion feature within the channel; there is no concern at present, but this area should be monitored for any signs of increasing erosion. All other channels appeared to be stable and functioning properly.

Train Loadout Area

The following Ponds in the Loadout Area were inspection this month: Gossard Pond, Rail Loop Pond, Stoker Siding Pond. No problems or erosional concerns were noted. All ponds were noted to be holding water, though this was minimal at the Gossard and Rail Loop ponds.

South Taylor Pit

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The West Taylor Pond (Photo 11) was inspected in the South Taylor Area. The West Taylor Pond was inspected from above from atop the Taylor valley fill area. The pond was holding water at the time of inspection and appeared stable. Section 28 Pond, just south of the South Taylor Pit, was inaccessible to due muddy road conditions but is usually accessed via a light use road off Hwy 13.

East Pit

The following ditches in the East Pit were observed during the inspection: Streeter Ditch (Photo 1), Section 15 Ditch (Photo 8), and the Final East Pit Ditch (Photo 9). All ditches were only partially observed from vantage points and will be inspected on foot later in the year when conditions allow. Mid-sized erosional cuts were noted on the southern end of the Streeter Ditch. This issue may be resolved with the construction of the Upper Section 3 Pond and Lower Section 3 Pond set to be built this summer, however repairs may still be necessary. This has been added as a maintenance item. The crest of EP2 was visible from the Final East Pit Ditch observation vantage point. Other surge ponds along this ditch will need to be walked during the spring/summer inspections. Section 15 and Section 16 ponds were inaccessible during this inspection.

Highway 13 Areas

The Streeter Pond (Photo 21) and Prospect Pond (Photo 23), accessible via Hwy 13, were inspected. Both ponds held water at the time of inspection and all embankment appeared to be stable and vegetated (e.g. Photo 22). Some vegetation has not yet regrown where last year's pond cleanout work occurred. No issues were reported.

TOPSOIL – Rule 4.06

Topsoil piles across the site contained appropriate markers. The topsoil pile behind Section 26 Pond will need to be shaped and seeded when conditions allow (Photo 19).

EXPLOSIVES – Rule 4.08 Distance Prohibitions 4.08.4; Warnings 4.08.4; Control of Adverse Effects 4.08.4:

As of the time of the inspection, only four blasts have occurred at the Colowyo Mine in 2024. All blasting is currently occurring in the Collom Pit. Drill holes were being prepped in the active truck and load section of the northern portion of Collom Pit (Photo 18). No blasts were observed during the inspection.

EXCESS SPOIL and DEVELOPMENT WASTE – Rule 4.09 Placement; Drainage Control; Surface Stabilization:

The Taylor Valley Fill area was inspected (Photo 11). The slope face was snow covered at the time of inspection; however, no major signs of erosion or concerns were observed. Water which flows through the fill's undrain eventually flows to the West Taylor Pond.

RECLAMATIONSUCCESS - Rule 4.15, Rule 3:

Reclamation parcels along the South Taylor Pit were unable to be inspected due to muddy conditions. Reclamation in the West Pit is nearly complete; a majority of this area has been graded, topsoiled, seeded, and is supporting stable vegetation (Photos 4 – 7). There were no signs of erosion across this area.

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GENERAL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE:
Highwall mining operations continue in the eastern portion of the Collom Pit. The highwall miner was entering in a western direction and moving south. Previous entries have been backfilled as the mining progresses. Tuck teams were noted to be actively excavating and hauling previously blasted material from the western side of the Collom Pit (Photo 18).

Maintenance Items:
- Monitor the slump area at Section 26 Pond
- Regrade and seed the topsoil pile in the northern section of Collom Pit when conditions allow
- Monitor Streeter Ditch cuts, repair if necessary
- Monitor the small erosional feature in D4, repairs will be necessary if conditions worsen

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS/COMPLIANCE

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

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1: View east of Streeter Gulch Ditch.

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Photo 2: View south into the partially reclaimed west pit.

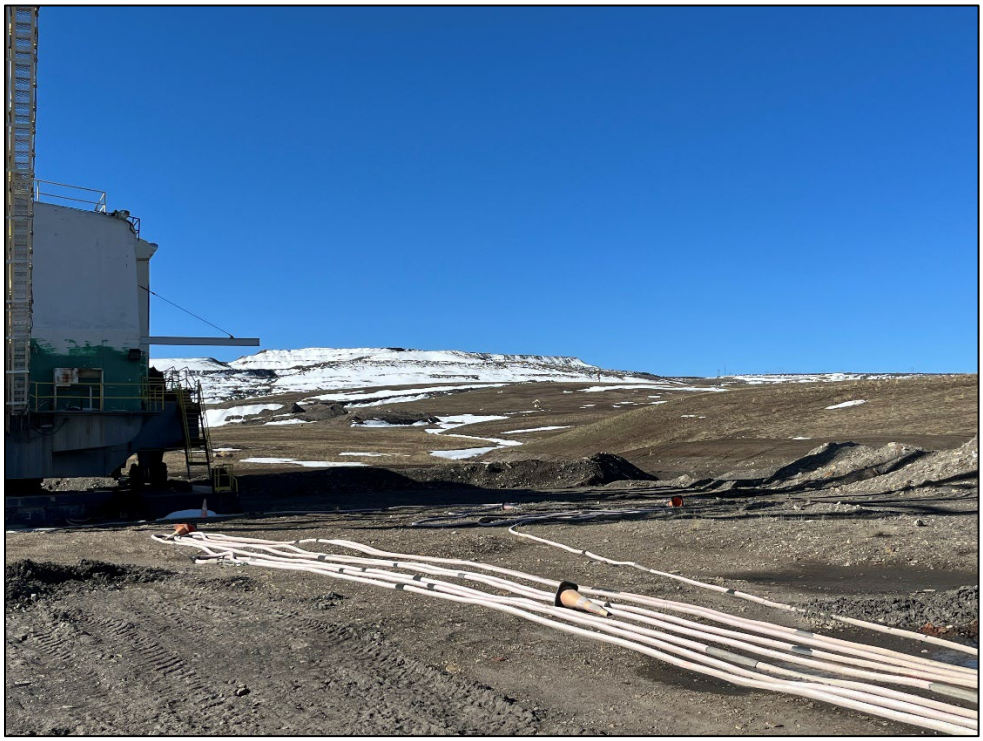

Photo 3: Buckskin ditch, to which Streeter Ditch will eventually connect in final reclamation.

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Photo 4: View west of the valley where the East Taylor Ditch sits, the Taylor Ditch is located behind the second ridge.

Photo 5: View north of Hinkes Peak, West Pit Pond is located behind this peak and is usually always dry.

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Photo 6: view south of the crest of the west pit, the second ridge in the background is the temporary spoil pile which is being used to fill the South Taylor Pit.

Photo 7: view west of a surge pond (ETD1) along the East Taylor ditch.

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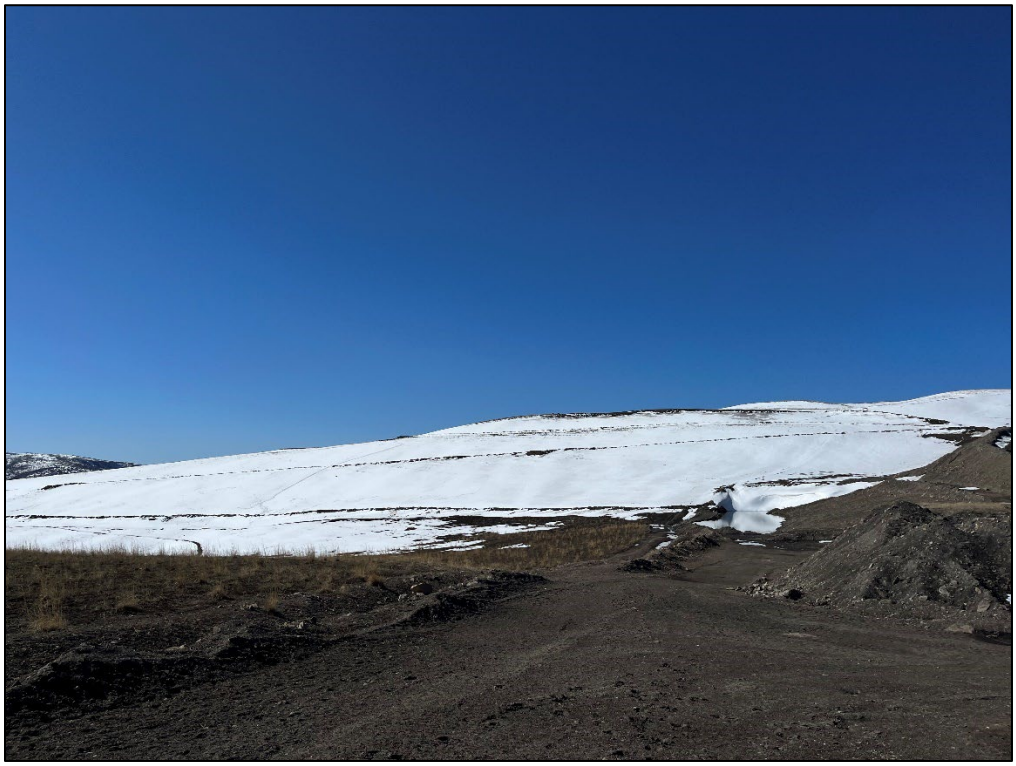

Photo 8: View southeast of Section 15 Ditch, linear feature below is an access road to Section 15 Pond.

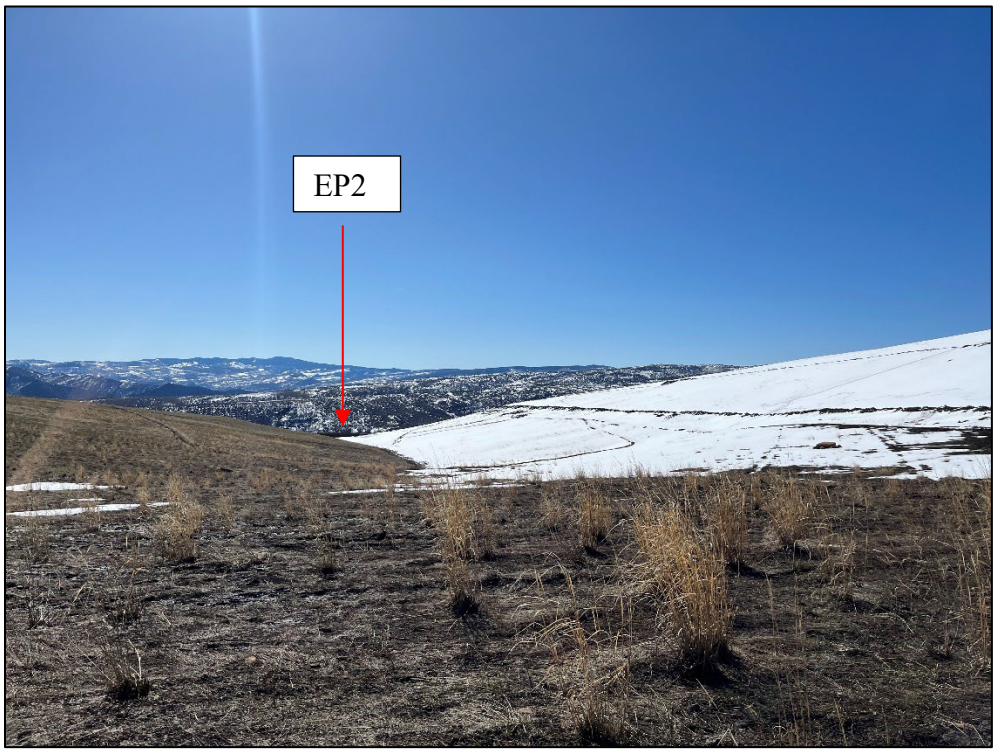

Photo 9: View south / southeast of the Final East Pit Ditch, EP1 and EP3 are located downgradient. The crest of EP2 is just slightly visible in the background.

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Photo 10: View north of the Tayor Ditch and West Pit, eventually drains to East Taylor Pond.

Photo 11: View north of the valley fill area in the South Taylor Pit, an underdrain pond is located below which eventually flows to the West Taylor Pond.

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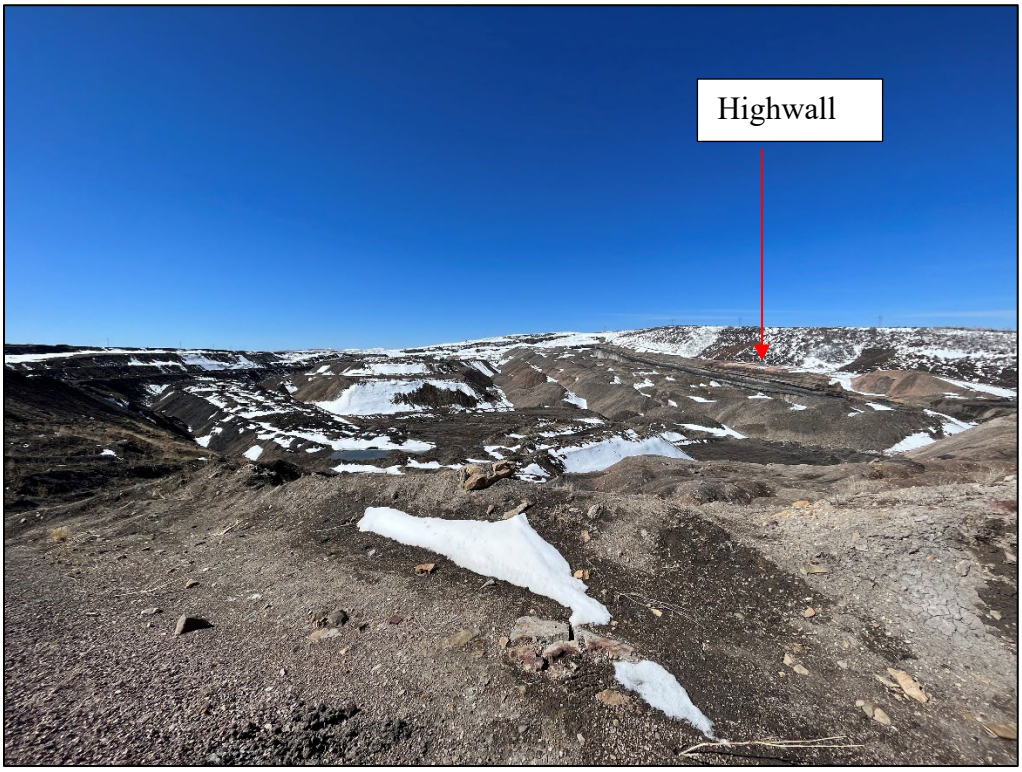

Photo 12: View southwest of the South Taylor Pit

Photo 13: View south of the East Taylor Pond.

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Photo 14: Likely Penstemon species noted, located at the East Taylor Pond.

Photo 15: View northwest of the Jubb Creek area

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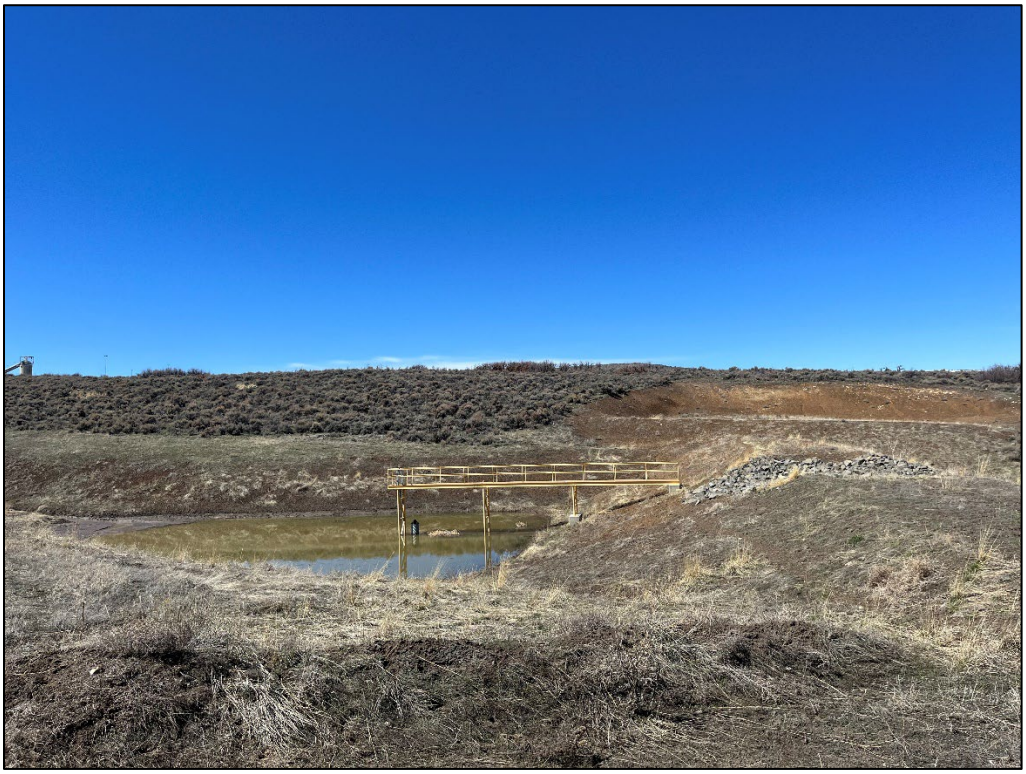

Photo 16: Section 36 Pond.

Photo 17: Section 25 Pond.

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Photo 18: View into the active truck and loader excavation area of Collom Pit.

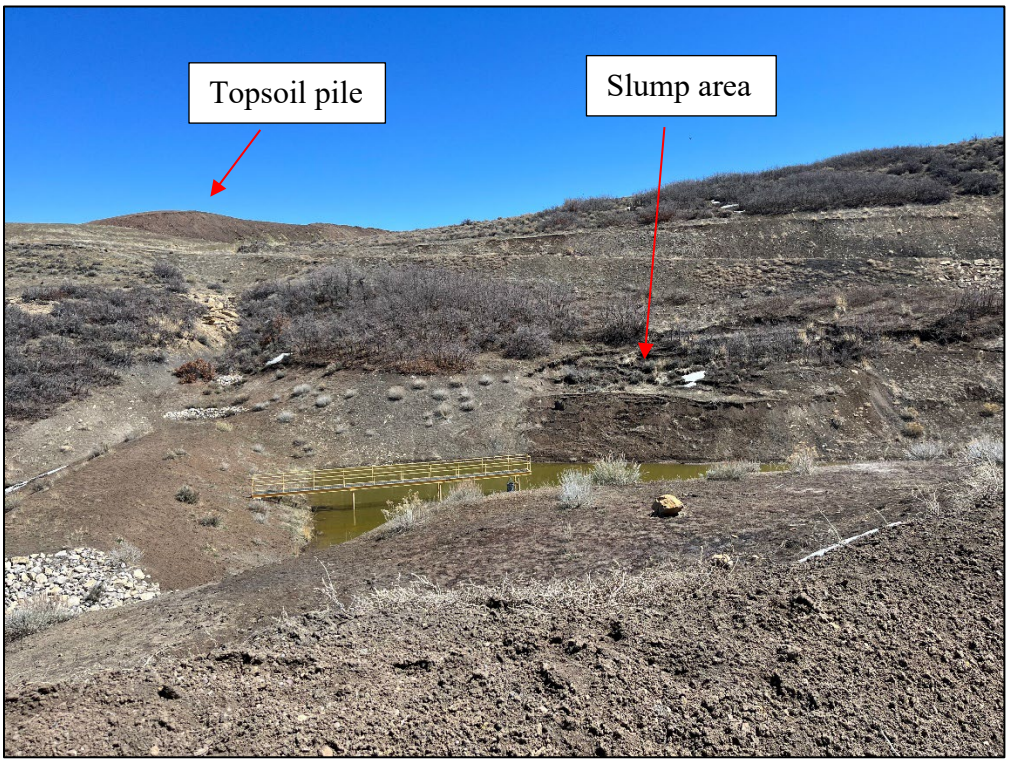

Photo 19: Section 26 Pond, slump to the east continues to be monitored.

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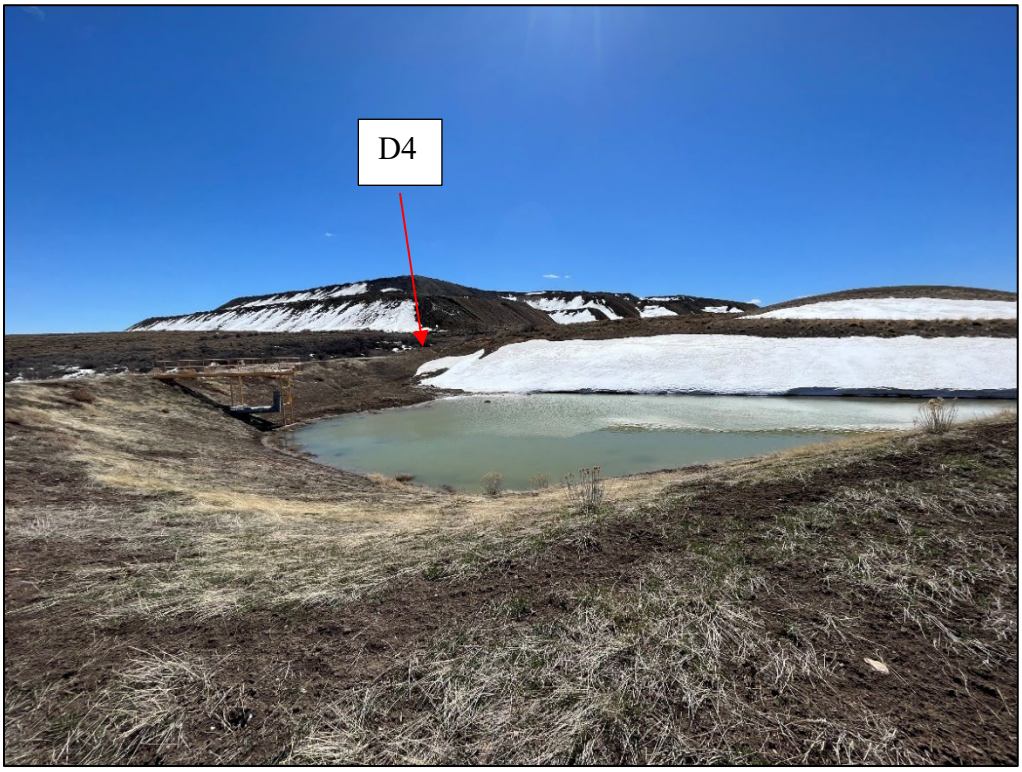

Photo 20: Sidehill Pond.

Photo 21: View west of Streeter Pond and Phase III released valley fill area, ditch to the north has not yet been Phase III released.

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Photo 22: Additional species of penstemon were noted at the Streeter Pond.

Photo 23: View west of Prospect Pond off Hwy 13.

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