



STATE OF  
COLORADO

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

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## Inspection Report, Colowyo, C-1981-019

1 message

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**Ridley - DNR, Hunter** <hunter.ridley@state.co.us>  
To: "Tennyson, Tony" <tony.tennyson@tristategt.org>

Thu, Jun 13, 2024 at 11:04 AM

Tony,

Please find attached the report for the coal complete inspection conducted on 6/4 & 5/ 2024. Feel free to reach out with any questions 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\_June\_CC\_C1981019.pdf**  
7727K



**PERMIT INFORMATION**

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

**INSPECTION INFORMATION**

<b>Inspection Start Date:</b> June 4, 2024 <b>Inspection Start Time:</b> 11:00 <b>Inspection End Date:</b> June 5, 2024 <b>Inspection End Time:</b> 13:30		<b>Inspection Type:</b> Coal Complete Inspection <b>Inspection Reason:</b> Normal I&E Program <b>Weather:</b> Clear	
<b>Joint Inspection Agency:</b>  None		<b>Joint Inspection Contacts:</b>  	
<b>Post Inspection Agency:</b>  None		<b>Post Inspection Contacts:</b>  	
<b>Inspector(s):</b>  Hunter Ridley	<b>Inspector's Signature:</b>  <i>Hunter Ridley</i>		<b>Signature Date:</b>  June 13, 2024

**Inspection Topic Summary**

NOTE: Y=Inspected N=Not Inspected R=Comments Noted V=Violation Issued NA=Not Applicable

N - Air Resource Protection  
 Y - Availability of Records  
 Y - Backfill & Grading  
 Y - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste  
 Y - Explosives  
 Y - Fish & Wildlife  
 Y - Hydrologic Balance  
 Y - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan  
 N - Other  
 N - Processing Waste

Y - Roads  
 Y - Reclamation Success  
 N - Revegetation  
 N - Subsidence  
 N - Slides and Other Damage  
 N - Support Facilities On-site  
 Y - Signs and Markers  
 N - Support Facilities Not On-site  
 N - Special Categories Of Mining  
 Y - Topsoil

**COMMENTS**

This was a complete 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 with the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (Division). Tony Tennyson, representing Colowyo was present at the mine office on June 5<sup>th</sup> and Tom Fry of Colowyo accompanied the inspection on June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Weather during the inspection was clear with temperatures around 84° F. Conditions did not prohibit access to remote areas of the site.

**AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS – Rule 5.02.4(1):**

Records were checked at the mine office. See details at the end of report.

**SIGNS AND MARKERS – 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 condition. Other haul roads on site are considered in-pit and do not require certification. In pit roads were easily navigable and were being routinely sprayed by a water truck to reduce dust. Some in pit roads within the Collom Pit have minor rills from recent runoff.

**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

Additional backfill work in the West Pit has been minimal, though the pit is near completion in terms of backfill operations. Final reclamation of this area will be some of the last reclamation done on site at Colowyo. Other areas of the West Pit have been both backfilled and reclaimed. The Division inspected these areas and found vegetation to be mature and stable (Photos 7 and 8).

South Taylor

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There were no active backfill operations noted in the South Taylor Pit during the inspection. In times of active operation, spoil is excavated from a temporary pile located north of the pit. A highwall remains to the west for possible future use.

#### Collom

Backfilling has continued in the eastern portion of the Collom Pit to support highwall mining operations (Photo 4). Backfill is used create benches and allow access to upper seams located along the highwall.

#### East Pit

Topsoil stripping work had begun to the north of the Phase III release East Pit area for construction of the Upper and Lower Section 3 Ponds (Photo 5). These ponds were approved in TR-155 and are located within Streeter Ditch directly below the primary crushing facility at Colowyo. The sediment ponds will be used in series with the Lower Section 3 Pond being a non-discharging structure.

**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:**

Improvements in weather conditions allowed the Division to access several remote ponds and ditches at the site which were not able to be inspected at the Division's last on the ground inspection. This includes the Section 28 Pond, Section 15 Pond, Section 16 Pond, West Taylor Pond, and the full length of Streeter Ditch and Final East Pit Ditch, including stock ponds PD, PD2, NTEP1, EP1, EP2, and EP3.

#### West Pit

The following Ponds in the West Pit area were inspected this month: East Taylor Pond and West Pit Pond. Both ponds were holding water and were stable. East Taylor Pond was discharging at the time of inspection (Photo 9). The ETD1 stock pond was also inspected, which was holding a small amount of water (Photo 8). No issues were observed.

The following ditches in the West Pit area were inspected this month: East Taylor Ditch and Taylor Ditch. The Taylor Ditch was inspected from within the West Pit reclaimed area. The East Taylor Ditch is a tributary to Taylor Ditch. 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, Sidehill Pond, Middle Pond, Section 25 Pond, Coal Stockpile Pond (Photo 11), and Section 26 Pond (Photo 12). No outstanding problems were noted at any of the ponds. Discharge points remain clear of blockages.

Mr. Fry stated that the slump area on the east side of Section 26 Pond has experienced slight movement in the past year but remains stable. The slump area on the southwest side has not moved in recent years and has not impacted the road below. This slump is likely due to a natural seep located on the southwest side of Section 26 Pond. Colowyo should continue to monitor this area closely for exaggerated signs of movement or degradation.

The following ditches in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month: D1, D2, D3, and D4 (Photos 15 - 17). These ditches were observed from vantage points near Collom Pit Ponds and were walked where

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accessible. All channels appeared to be stable and functioning properly with no signs of major erosion or slides.

A small area of ponded water was observed during the Division's aerial inspection in May of 2024. The Division observed this area in person during this inspection and confirmed that stormwater water was present in the southern portion of the Collom Pit (Photo 3). However, water levels had reduced since the aerial inspection and was activity infiltrating the ground surface.

Two ponds, Temporary Facilities Pond and Wilson storage Pond, are located just above Collom Haul Road and collect disturbance from a small facilities storage area. Currently this area is utilized by the highwall mining company as equipment storage. Both ponds were inspected and found to be dry and partially vegetated, having not received water for some time.

#### 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.

#### South Taylor Pit

The West Taylor Pond was inspected in the South Taylor Area. The West Taylor Pond was able to be inspected via a small offroad trail along Taylor Creek. The pond was holding water at the time of inspection and appeared stable.

#### East Pit

The following ditches in the East Pit were observed during the inspection: Streeter Ditch (Photo 6), Section 15 Ditch, and the Final East Pit Ditch. Streeter Ditch was walked nearly in its entirety, the steep, easternmost portion being observed from above (Photo 13). The ditch was mostly dry and showed no issues. South Side Ditch was also observed from Streeter Ditch and had no issues.

Final East Pit Ditch was walked in its entirety, including observations of the various stock ponds located along this ditch. Most stock ponds were holding mid to small amounts of water. Gabion boxes are in place and remain well constructed. The South Collection Ditch was viewed from the Final East Pit Ditch and had no issues. Section 15 pond and its associated ditch was observed with no issues to report.

#### Highway 13 Areas and Reclaimed Section 16 Pit

The Streeter Pond, Section 28 Pond, and Prospect Pond, accessible via Hwy 13, were inspected. Streeter and Prospect ponds held water at the time of inspection and all embankments appeared to be stable and vegetated. Section 28 Pond was dry (Photo 1). Streeter and Prospect Ponds are routinely cleaned, the most recent maintenance occurring last year. Section 16 Pond was inspected. 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 15). Mr. Fry stated that the most recent activity on this pile was around Fall of 2023. He also indicated that mature vegetation growth around the base of the topsoil pile allows for the specialty silt fence which is in place to be removed if the site wishes to do so. The sump which collects runoff from this northern Collom topsoil pile was inspected and found to be functioning properly and holding a small amount of water (Photo 10).

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

No blasts were observed during the inspection; however, a blast was scheduled to occur at 16:00 on the first inspection day. Drill holes were observed in the area to be blasted, which was located in the active area of the Collom Pit.

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

The West Taylor Valley Fill area was inspected (Photo 14). No signs of erosional issues were noted. The face is well covered with vegetation, a majority of this being made up of thick sagebrush habitat. Water which flows through the fill's undrain eventually flows to the West Taylor Pond.

Construction of the Collom Temporary Spoil Pile continues as mining in Collom Pit progresses in depth. Temporary fill stockpiling is occurring just north of the active Collom Pit area. The area is encompassed by a large berm to ensure spoil is contained within the approved disturbance boundary of the pile.

**RECLAMATIONSUCCESS - Rule 4.15, Rule 3:**

Reclamation parcels, which were inaccessible at the Division's last on-site inspection, were observed along the eastern edge of the South Taylor Pit. Vegetation appeared stable with no notable erosional issues. Reclamation in the West Pit is nearly complete; a majority of this area has been graded, topsoiled, seeded, and is supporting stable vegetation. There were no signs of erosion across this area.

Patches of the weed species Hoary cress, also known as White top, were located throughout the site. Mr. Fry stated that weed control maintenance was aware of these populations and was scheduled to spray in the summer season.

**FISH and WILDLIFE – Rule 4.18:**

No negative impact to wildlife was observed. Several waterfowl were seen using Prospect and Streeter Pond along Highway 13, a young antelope was seen in the reclaimed portion of the West Pit, and approximately 100 head of elk were seen on the western hillside above Section 16 pond.

**GENERAL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE:**

Truck teams were noted to be actively excavating and hauling previously blasted material from the western side of the Collom Pit. Highwall mining operations were on pause in the eastern portion of the Collom Pit at the time of inspection but had progressed further since the Division's last on the ground inspection. The highwall miner continues to be prepper to enter in a western direction and move south. Previous entries have been backfilled as the mining progresses.

**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 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.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS



*Photo 1: View north of Section 28 pond.*



*Photo 2: View north of the Rail Loop Pond.*

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*Photo 3: View east on the ponding observed in the southern portion of Collom Pit.*



*Photo 4: Highwall mining operations have progressed in the east Collom Pit, but were not active at the time of inspection.*

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*Photo 5: Topsoil stripping has begun for Upper and Lower Section 3 Ponds.*



*Photo 6: View east of the top of Streeter Ditch.*

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*Photo 7: View southwest of West Pit reclamation and the Taylor Ditch.*



*Photo 8: View northwest of West Pit reclamation areas, ETDI is visible.*

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*Photo 9: View north of the discharge point for East Taylor Pond.*



*Photo 10: View north of the sump located at the toe of the northern Collom topsoil pile.*

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*Photo 11: View of the Coal Stockpile Pond in Collom Pit.*



*Photo 12: View east of Section 26 Pond.*

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*Photo 13: View east of the steep portion of Streete Ditch, South Collection Ditch is visible to the north.*



*Photo14: View north of the West Taylor Valley Fill.*

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*Photo 15: View north of the Collom topsoil pile and D-2.*



*Photo 16: View southwest of D-1.*

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*Photo 17: View south of D-4.*

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**AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS****PERMIT RECORDS**

DRMS Permit	Exp. 11/5/27
Permit Application w/Revisions	Ok
Findings Document	RN-08
Insurance Certificate	8/1/24
Bond Document	Ok
Phased Bond Release	SL-22
Documents/Findings	
Air Emission Permits	95MF1040/16MF1324F
County Special Use Permits	SUP08-10 & C-05-05
UG Mining Landowner Notification	N/A
Subsidence Monitoring Reports	N/A
Subsidence Monitoring Data	N/A
Rill & Gully Survey	2024
Vegetation Monitoring Data	2023 ARR
Specific Variance Approvals	Ok
Annual Reclamation Reports	2023
Midterm Review Documents	MT-08
DRMS/OSM Inspection Reports/Enforcement Actions (3 Years)	Thru April 2024
Transfers/Succession of Operator	Ok
Temporary Cessation Notification	N/A
Reclamation Cost Estimate	RN-08
<b>CERTIFICATIONS</b>	
Pond Certifications	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2024
Annual Certifications for Impoundments	Ok
Fill Certifications for Excess Spoil or Underground Development Waste	Ok
• Quarterly Inspections	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2024
• Compaction Testing	N/A
• Final Certification	N/A
Coal Processing Waste Banks	N/A
Haul Road Certifications	Ok
Access Road Certifications	Ok

**HYDROLOGIC RECORDS**

NPDES Permit	CO 0045161
NPDES Records	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2024
Stormwater Management Plan	Ok
SPCC Plan	Ok
MSHA Pond Inspections	N/A
	N/A
State Engineer's Pond Inspection	
Quarterly Pond Inspections	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2024
Annual Hydrology Reports	2024
• Ground Water Monitoring	Ok
• Surface Water Monitoring	Ok
• Spring & Seep Monitoring	Ok
• Mine Water Discharge Monitoring	Ok
• Mine Inflow Study	N/A
• Water Consumption Records	Ok
Well Permits	Ok

**BLASTING RECORDS**

Blasting Publication	2024
Blasting Records (3 years)	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2024
ATFE Explosives Permit	Ok
Blasting Variances	N/A
Pre-Blast Surveys	Ok

**ADDITIONAL RECORDS (specify)**


**COMMENTS:**


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