

STATE OF  
COLORADO

Ridley - DNR, Hunter &lt;hunter.ridley@state.co.us&gt;

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**Inspection Report, Colowyo, C1981019**

1 message

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

Tue, Jul 16, 2024 at 12:42 PM

Tony,

Please find attached the Division's report for the July partial inspection of the Colowyo Coal Mine. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

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\_July\_CP\_C1981019.pdf**  
5105K



**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> July 9, 2024 <b>Inspection Start Time:</b> 07:30 <b>Inspection End Date:</b> July 9, 2024 <b>Inspection End Time:</b> 13:00		<b>Inspection Type:</b> Coal Partial 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>  			

**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 &amp; Grading

R - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste

R - Explosives

N - Fish &amp; 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 with the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (Division). Tom Fry of Colowyo accompanied the inspection. Weather during the inspection was clear with temperatures around 85° F.

An application for Minor Revision 255 (MR-255) was received by the Division on June 25, 2024, called complete on July 2, 2024, and a proposed decision to approve the MR was issued by the Division on July 10, 2024. MR-255 proposed the re-brushing and use of an existing two-track light use road on the west side of Taylor Creek. This road will be used to access the 69 kV power line for maintenance as well as allow access for eventual final reclamation.

**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:**

**South Taylor**

Active backfill operations were not observed in the South Taylor Pit during the inspection but had progressed since the Division's last inspection. Spoil is excavated from a temporary spoil located just north of the pit. An ~400 ft highwall remains to the west for possible future use (Photo 1). A crusher is present in this area.

**West Pit**

A majority of the West Pit is in final reclamation and nearly entirely backfilled. The small portion of highwall remaining to the south 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.

**EXCESS SPOIL and DEVELOPMENT WASTE – Rule 4.09**

**Placement; Drainage Control; Surface Stabilization:**

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0

The Taylor Valley Fill area was inspected from below (Photo 13) at the West Taylor Pond. The slope face was noted to be stable at the time of inspection; no major signs of erosion or concerns were observed. The side ditches which divert water around the fill were observed to be stable and working to transport water into the West Taylor Pond.

#### **EXPLOSIVES – Rule 4.08**

##### **Distance Prohibitions 4.08.4; Warnings 4.08.4; Control of Adverse Effects 4.08.4:**

All blasting on site is currently concentrated in the active cut, truck & load area of Collom Pit (Photo 19). No blasts were observed during the inspection.

#### **HYDROLOGIC BALANCE - 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:**

##### **West Pit**

The East Taylor Pond (Photo 12) 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. At the time of inspection, aquatic growth was partially obstructing an outlet structure for the pond. Some of this growth was removed immediately (Photo 11). A full cleaning by site personnel was scheduled by Tom Fry for that same day. The West Pit Pond was also accessed via this road during the inspection. This pond was dry at the time of inspection (Photo 10). Several sumps along Taylor Creek were observed to be in the process of being pumped and cleaned out at the time of inspection.

##### **Collom Pit**

The following Ponds in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month: Section 36 Pond, Sidehill Pond, Middle Pond (Photo 16), Section 25 Pond (Photo 15), and Section 26 Pond (Photo 17). No outstanding problems were noted at any of the ponds. The slump area at Section 26 Pond continues to be monitored closely for any signs of degradation. No observations of movement had occurred since the last inspection. All ponds were observed to be holding water, though Middle Pond volume was low. Waterfowl were seen to be using many of these ponds for habitat.

The following ditches in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month: D1 (Photo 18), D2, D3 (Photo 15), and D4. These ditches were observed from along the road and from vantage points near ponds in the area. The small erosion feature within the channel at the southern end of D4 remains stable; there is no concern at present.

##### **South Taylor Pit**

The West Taylor Pond was inspected in the South Taylor Area. The West Taylor Pond was inspected from below the Taylor valley fill area. The pond was holding water at the time of inspection and appeared stable. Several ditches along the perimeter of the disturbance areas near South Taylor were inspected this month via walking along the path of the ditch. This includes Section 28 and 29 ditches (Photos 2 and 3), West Section 16 Ditch (Photos 4 and 5), and the southern end of the South Collection Ditch (Photo 6). All ditches were mostly dry. Section 16 ditch is heavily vegetated over. Many game trails were noted in these ditch areas.

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0

**East Pit**

Section 16 Pond was observed during this inspection and no issues were noted. Observations in the East Pit focused on the continued development of the Upper and Lower Section 3 Ponds, located just below the primary crushing facility at the site. These will be non-discharging structures located in Streeter Ditch. An access road will also be constructed to aid in construction and future cleanout of the ponds. Topsoil has been stripped from this area and the footprint of the two pond is now visible (Photos 8 and 9).

**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 in good conditions. Other in-pit haul roads were navigable. No water trucks were noted to be running onsite during the inspection; however dust was not noted to be an issue that day.

**RECLAMATION SUCCESS - Rule 4.15, Rule 3: REVEGETATION – Rule 4.15**

Vegetative Cover; Timing:

Reclamation parcels along the South Taylor Pit were inspected. One reclamation parcel is pictured in Photo 7. This parcel contains a test plot for various shrubs which was planted several years ago. Vegetation has been established, but the entire parcel is not yet fully vegetated. There were no signs of erosion across these reclamation areas.

Thistle and other small populations of annual weeds were observed throughout the site and noted by site representative Tom Fry as needing treatment by the weed crew.

**SIGNS AND MARKERS – Rule 4.02:**

Mine identification signs were located at the mine entrance and throughout the site. Signs along State Highway 13 were not inspected as part of this partial inspection. All information for compliance was observed.

**TOPSOIL – Rule 4.06**

**Removal 4.06.2; Substitute Materials 4.06.4(4); Storage and Protection 4.06.3; Redistribution 4.06.4:**

Topsoil piles across the site contained appropriate markers. The topsoil pile behind Section 26 Pond has been shaped and graded (Photo 18). Site representative Tom Fry stated the site's intention to seed the pile for stabilization as required by Rule 4.06 in the Fall of 2024.

**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 not able to be observed during the inspection due to ongoing work to lay cables in the area, which blocked access to this area's entrance. Both draglines located in the Collom Pit were inactive at the time of inspection (Photo 20).

**Maintenance Items:**

- Monitor the slump area at Section 26 Pond

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0

- 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.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**



*Photo 1: View north of the South Taylor Pit, backfill work ongoing.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0





*Photo 2: View northwest of Section 29 Ditch which eventually connects with Section 28 Ditch.*



*Photo 3: Section 28 Ditch, view northeast.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0





*Photo 4: Section 16 Ditch, view north.*



*Photo 5: Section 16 Ditch, view East.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0





*Photo 6: View east from Section 16 ditch into the South Collection ditch.*



*Photo 7: View south of the reclamation parcel adjacent to the South Taylor pit.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0





*Photo 8: View west of the continued work on the Upper and Lower Section 3 sediment ponds.*



*Photo 9: View north of continued work on Upper and Lower Section 3 ponds.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0





*Photo 10: West Pit Pond, view east.*



*Photo 11: Congested inlet being partially cleaned at the East Taylor Pond.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0





*Photo 12: View south of East Taylor Pond.*



*Photo 13: View looking south and up at the Taylor Valley Fill area and side ditches.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0





*Photo 14: Section 26? Pond in the Collom Pit area.*



*Photo 15: Section 25 Pond in the Collom Pit, D-3 Ditch is visible in the background.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0





*Photo 16: Middle Pond in the Collom Pit area.*



*Photo 17: Section 26 Pond, slump area has not recently progressed.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0





*Photo 18: The large topsoil pile in the northern portion of Collom Pit has been graded for planned reseeded.*



*Photo 19: View west into the active cut and hauling area in Collom Pit.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0



*Photo 20: One of two draglines located in Collom Pit, this dragline was inactive at the time of inspection.*

Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 1

Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0