

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>
To: "Tennyson, Tony" <tony.tennyson@tristategt.org>

Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 11:57 AM

Tony,

Please find attached the report for the coal partial inspection conducted on 8/20/2024. Thank you for taking the time to accompany me this month. 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
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4920K



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
Operator Representative Signature: (Field Issuance Only) 	

INSPECTION INFORMATION

Inspection Start Date: August 20, 2024 Inspection Start Time: 07:30 Inspection End Date: August 20, 2024 Inspection End Time: 11:45		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	Inspector's Signature: <i>Hunter Ridley</i>		Signature Date: August 28, 2024

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

N - Fish & Wildlife

R - Hydrologic Balance

R - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan

N - Other

N - Processing Waste

R - Roads

R - Reclamation Success

R - 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). Tony Tennyson of Colowyo accompanied the inspection. Weather during the inspection was clear with temperatures around 80° F.

An application for Minor Revision 256 (MR-256) was received by the Division on August 5, 2024, and a proposed decision to approve the MR was issued by the Division on August 6, 2024. MR-256 updated the site's Certificate of Liability.

An application for Minor Revision 257 (MR-257) was received by the Division on August 12, 2024. MR-257 documented ground disturbance activities that occurred within Colowyo's permit boundary from an adjacent solar construction project (Photo 1). The ground disturbance is not associated with Colowyo and is minimal. A proposed decision to approve the MR was issued by the Division on August 22, 2024. The solar construction project will continue through this area of Colowyo's permit boundary and will be reclaimed following the conclusion of disturbance.

An application for Minor Revision 258 (MR-258) was received by the Division on August 15, 2024. MR-258 proposed additional ground disturbance related to the brushing of a light use road west of Taylor Creek (Photo 7). This additional 5.3 acres of disturbance is in addition to the disturbance approved under MR-255 also related to the brushing of this light use road. A proposed decision to approve the MR was issued by the Division on August 16, 2024.

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:**Number of Partial Inspection this Fiscal Year: 2Number of Complete Inspections this Fiscal Year: 0

South Taylor

Active backfill operations were observed in the South Taylor Pit during the inspection. Material is excavated from a temporary spoil located just north of the pit and used to fill the pit (Photo 14). A highwall remains to the west for possible future mining.

West Pit

A majority of the West Pit is in final reclamation and is nearly entirely backfilled. A new area was undergoing reclamation in the southern portion of the West Pit at the time of inspection. This area was receiving final grading work and was being topsoiled (Photo 10). The slope noted in Photo 10 is nearly at final grade. However, small linear crack features were noted on this slope. Spoil is currently being removed from the top of this slope for backfill. Therefore, the site is going to delay the topsoiling and seeding of this particular slope until more weight can be removed from above. This allows linear features to be monitored more closely and will ensure that any topsoiling and seeding which occurs on this slope will have the best chance of success and stability.

EXCESS SPOIL and DEVELOPMENT WASTE – Rule 4.09

Placement; Drainage Control; Surface Stabilization:

The active hauling and regrading of spoil along the southern extent of the West Pit was inspected (Photo 13). Mr. Tennyson stated that a revision for the post mining topography may be needed in this area as material is being moved around to complete the southern extent of Taylor Ditch and as backfill is still occurring in the South Taylor Pit.

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.

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 West Pit Pond and the East Taylor Pond (Photo 12) were inspected this month. Both ponds were accessed via a small offroad trail along Taylor Creek. Both ponds were holding water at the time of inspection. Aquatic vegetation was visible in both ponds but was not causing any issues with discharge structures. The flume at the East Taylor Pond will undergo replacement, potentially with a new type of

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flow measurement system. Several sumps along Taylor Creek were observed to be functioning well, capturing runoff from recent heavier rainfall events.

Stock ponds TD1 and TD2 in the West Pit reclamation area were inspected. These capture water which runs through Taylor Ditch. TD1 was holding water at the time of inspection (Photo 11). TD2, which is south of TD1, was dry at the time of inspection (Photo 12). Taylor Ditch was inspected from vantage points provided by TD1 and TD2 and was observed to be stable and mostly dry. TD2 is in need of maintenance but is not easily accessed by equipment and is surrounded by mature reclamation vegetation. Currently, the two stock ponds are approved to sediment in and remain in final reclamation. The Division and Mr. Tennyson discussed leaving TD2 as is and potentially creating another stock pond further south on Taylor Ditch to replace TD2. While mostly full of sediment, the last time sediment was removed from the TD2 was ~7 years ago. This suggests that while TD2 does collect runoff sediment from Taylor Ditch, it is not a crucial feature of sediment collection within the ditch. Additionally, the receiving East Taylor Pond is already designed to hold volumes assuming TD1 and TD2 are at capacity. Therefore, the Division has no concern with TD2 being left to begin to fill in naturally in the interest of not disturbing surrounding mature reclamation vegetation.

East Pit

Observations in the East Pit included watching the continued development of the Upper and Lower Section 3 Ponds, located just below the primary crushing facility at the site (Photos 8 and 9). These are permitted to be non-discharging structures and are located within Streeter Ditch. An access road has been cut to aid in continued construction and future cleanout of these ponds. Topsoil has been stripped from this area. Material continues to be excavated from the pond area and rock has been hauled in for use in final design.

Within the Final East Pit ditch, EP1, EP2, and EP3 were inspected. All three were observed to be holding water and stable. Within Prospect Ditch, PD1 and PD2 were inspected. Both were holding water at the time of inspection and appeared stable. The Final East Pit Ditch and Prospect Ditch were inspected from vantage points, no issues were observed.

Throughout the summer season the Division has inspected perimeter ditches surrounding disturbances in the South Taaylor area and below Section 16 Pond. The remainder of the perimeter ditch below Section 15 Pond and above Prospect Pond was observed during this inspection. The ditch was found to be dry and stable. The Work Area Pond near the facilities area was also inspected (Photo 17). No issues are reported.

Highway 13 Areas

The Streeter Pond and Prospect Pond, accessible via Hwy 13, were inspected. Section 28 pond was not inspected on this date due to restricted gate access. Streeter and Prospect ponds held water at the time of inspection and all embankments appeared to be stable and vegetated. Water is currently being pumped

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from Streeter Pond in support of reclamation operations being conducted by the State of Colorado Inactive Mines Program (IMP) to resolve the historic Axial Basin underground coal fire in this area (Photo 2). No issues were reported.

Train Loadout Area

The following Ponds in the Loadout Area were inspected this month: Gossard Pond, Rail Loop Pond, Stoker Siding Pond (Photo 4 and 5). 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 (Photo 6). Mr. Tennyson stated that these two ponds will undergo routine cleaning maintenance in the near future. The Stoker Siding Pond is usually always full, likely due to a nearby natural spring in this area. Ditches in this coal loadout area were observed to be fully functioning.

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:

Vegetated areas in the West Pit reclamation parcels remain mature and free of issues (Photos 11 and 12). Native shrub and grass species have grown tall, and groundcover is established consistently across most of these reclaimed areas. There are a few smaller areas in the north of the West Pit where vegetation is slightly shorter, and groundcover is more irregular. There were no signs of erosion rills across these reclamation areas. Reclamation grasses in the East Pit and around the Final East Pit Ditch were also observed to be mature and stable (Photo 15).

Thistle and other small populations of annual weeds were observed throughout the site. A weed crew was noted to be onsite on the day of inspection.

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 also in place. All signs contained the necessary information for compliance.

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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. Topsoil was being actively hauled from the southern end of West Pit for use in final reclamation (Photo 13). Mr. Tennyson restated the site's intention to seed the Collom topsoil pile for stabilization as required by Rule 4.06 in the Fall of 2024. Mr. Tennyson also stated that the site will be reviewing vegetation data from areas of past reclamation to assess the success of the current topsoil replacement rate method. A revision may be submitted to the Division if the site determines that a change to this method is warranted to aid in reclamation success.

GENERAL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

Highwall mining operations have occurred recently in Collom Pit but were not observed during this month's inspection. Truck teams were not actively excavating or hauling blasted material from the western side of Collom Pit.

Maintenance Items:

- Monitor the slump area at Section 26 Pond
- 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 the solar project disturbance within Colowyo's permit boundary, the disturbance is not mine related.

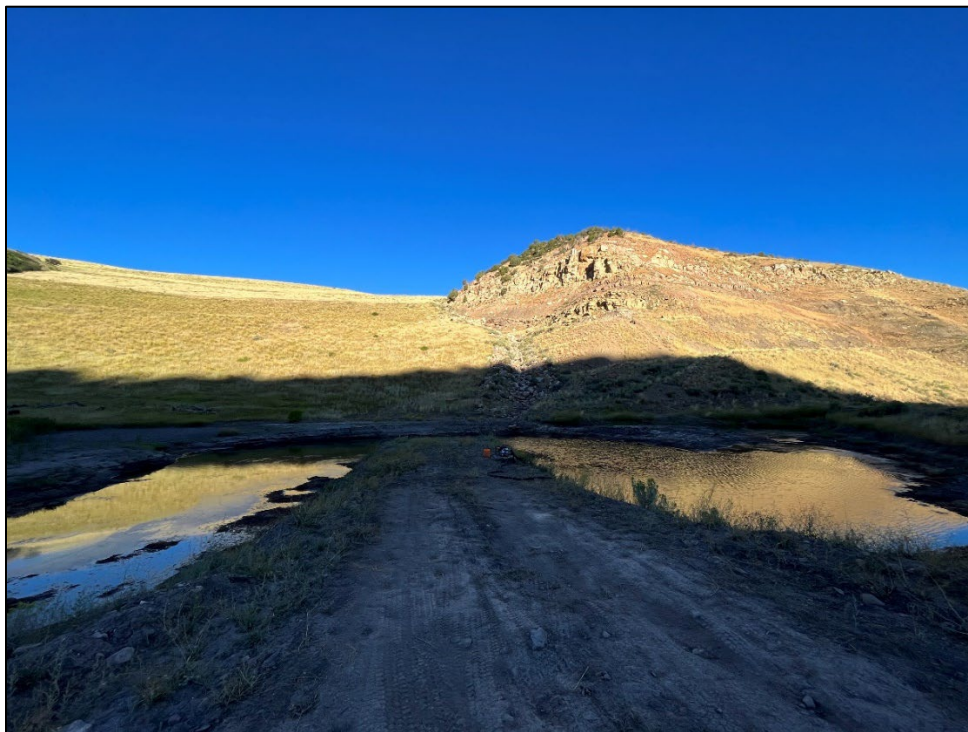


Photo 2: View west of the Streeter Pond, reclaimed valley fill, and the end of Streeter Ditch.

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Photo 3: View west of Prospect Pond.



Photo 4: View north of the discharge area above the Stoker Siding Pond.

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Photo 5: View south of the Stoker Siding Pond in the Rail Loop area.



Photo 6: Rail Loop Pond, view north.

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Photo 7: View northwest of the light-use road brushing area approved in MR255 and MR258.



Photo 8: View east of the Lower Section 3 Pond in progress.

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Photo 9: View west of the Upper Section 3 Pond in progress, active excavation in process.



Photo 10: View south of ongoing reclamation at the southern end of West Pit.

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Photo 11: View south of TD1 in West Pit.



Photo 12: View south of TD2 in West Pit, see maintenance items for more details.

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Photo 13: View east of the active hauling and grading area in the south of West Pit, active topsoil hauling is shown in the background.



Photo 14: View west of ongoing backfill activity in the South Taylor Pit.

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Photo 15: View south of EP2 in the East Pit area.



Photo 16: View southeast of the Prospect collection ditch.

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Photo 17: View northwest of the Work Area Pond in the facilities area.

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