

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>

Tue, Dec 3, 2024 at 7:39 AM

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

Cc: Jocelyn Carter - DNR <jocelyn.carter@state.co.us>

Tony,

Please find attached the report for the coal complete inspection conducted on 11/20. 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,
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6368K



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: November 20, 2024 Inspection Start Time: 07:30 Inspection End Date: November 20, 2024 Inspection End Time: 14:30		Inspection Type: Coal Complete 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 Jocelyn Carter	Inspector's Signature:   Signature Date: December 3, 2024		

Inspection Topic Summary

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

N - Air Resource Protection

R - Availability of Records

R - Backfill & Grading

R - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste

N - Explosives

R - Fish & Wildlife

R - Hydrologic Balance

R - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan

N - Other

N - Processing Waste

R - Roads

Y - Reclamation Success

Y - Revegetation

N - Subsidence

N - Slides and Other Damage

R - 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 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 and Jocelyn Carter 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 54° F. Weather conditions prohibited access to some areas of the site. These are described below.

An application for a Phase I, II and III release of 5.5 acres in the East Pit (SL-23) was received by the Division on September 16, 2024. SL-23 proposes to release Streeter Ditch and Streeter Pond. The Division conducted the required inspection for SL-23 on October 30, 2024. The Division is currently in the process of analyzing data collected during the inspection and writing its Findings Document. The public comment period for SL-23 ends on November 29, 2024.

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 information 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. In pit roads were observed to be routinely sprayed by a water truck to reduce dust.

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**

West Pit reclamation was observed from atop the spoil pile south of West Pit (Photo 21). West Pit is near completion in terms of backfill operations. The newly topsoiled area at the southern end of West pit was seeded during the fall season. Other areas of the West Pit, to the north, have been both backfilled and

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reclaimed. Vegetation in this area is established, but some areas do not yet appear at full coverage. Taylor Ditch and other drainage channels in West Pit appeared to be stable.

South Taylor

No active backfill operations were observed in the South Taylor Pit during the inspection but backfill operations have progressed since the Division's last inspection. In times of active operation, spoil is excavated from a temporary pile located north of the pit. A highwall of product remains to the west for possible future use.

Collom

Backfill operations were observed in the eastern cut area in Collom Pit (Photo 10).

East Pit

Upper and Lower Section 3 Ponds in the East Pit have been completed (Photos 17 and 16, respectively). The approved access road around these ponds remains in place. As-built design materials were reviewed by the Division under the submission of Technical Revision 164 (TR-164) and were approved on November 1, 2024. These sediment ponds function in series, with the Lower Section 3 Pond being a non-discharging structure.

SUPPORT FACILITIES - Rule 4.04:

Facilities areas in both Collom and adjacent to East Pit appeared organized and in use. A water truck was observed filling up its tank and haul trucks were moving through these areas throughout the inspection.

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:

West Pit / South Taylor Pit

West Taylor Pond (Photo 5) was inspected this month as part of the observance of the West Taylor Valley Fill. West Taylor Pond was holding water but was partially frozen over. Water was heard trickling down the discharge pipe. Embankments were stable. Inlets and outlets remained free of obstruction. The West Pit stock ponds were observed from above and looked to be stable. East Taylor Pond (Photos 1 – 3) was inspected and found to be holding water, which is mostly contributed to by the spoil spring flowing into the pond. Embankments on both ponds were stable and no overall issues were noted.

Collom Pit

The following Ponds in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month: Section 36 Pond (Photo 13), Middle Pond (Photos 13 and 15), Section 25 Pond (Photo 14), and Section 26 Pond (Photo 11). Sidehill Pond and Section 26 Pond were inaccessible from the usual access road due to ongoing cable laying operations in Collom Pit (Photo 22) which blocked the path to the road. Section 26 Pond was able to be partially inspected from above. No outstanding problems were noted at any of the ponds. All ponds were holding water.

The small slump areas on the east and southwest sides of Section 26 Pond continue to be monitored for signs of movement, but overall remain stable. This southwest slump is likely due to a natural seep. Colowyo should continue to monitor this area closely for exaggerated signs of movement or degradation.

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The following ditches in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month: D-1 (Photo 12), D-2 (Photo 12), and D-3 (Photo 14). These ditches were observed from vantage points near Collom Pit Ponds and were walked where accessible. All channels appeared to be stable and functioning properly with no signs of major erosion or undercutting.

Construction of the drainage channel and sumps along Collom Haul Road and into the northern pit area was observed to be complete. This disturbance was approved by the Division under TR-160 in November of 2023. These channels help manage stormwater runoff from the Collom Haul Road.

Train Loadout Area

The following ponds in the Loadout Area were inspected this month: Gossard Pond (Photo 8) and Stoker Siding Pond. The Rail Loop Pond was inaccessible due to restricted access from a train being loaded at the site (Photo 9). No problems or erosional concerns were noted. All inspected ponds were noted to be holding water.

The temporary facilities area to the west of the rail loop area was observed from the road and appeared to be dry, vegetated, and stable. This area is used as a temporary office and equipment storage space for the highwall miner operating company.

East Pit

The following ditches in the East Pit were observed during the inspection: Reach 1, 2, and 3 of Prospect Ditch and Final East Pit Ditch. The following stock ponds were also observed: PD1 (Photo 19), PD2 (Photo 18), EP1, EP2 (Photo 20), and EP3.

Prospect Ditch was mostly dry, but PD1 and PD2 were holding a small amount of water, mostly frozen over. No issues or signs of erosion were noted. Final East Pit Ditch was inspected on foot and from vantage points. The ditch was mostly dry, and no signs of erosion or obstruction were observed. Gabion boxes are in place along Final East Pit Ditch and remain in place. EP1, EP2 and EP3 were all holding a small amount of water. Reach 2 and Reach 1 of Final East Pit Ditch were observed from EP1 and EP3 and appeared to be stable.

Section 15 and Section 16 Ponds and Ditches were not accessible due to muddy conditions.

Highway 13 Areas and Reclaimed Section 16 Pit

The Streeter Pond and Prospect Pond, accessible via Hwy 13, were inspected. Streeter (Photo 6) and Prospect (Photo 7) Ponds held water at the time of inspection. All embankments were stable and vegetated. No issues were noted.

Streeter Ditch was observed from above, atop the Streeter Fill and below at the Pond itself. The areas surrounding the Streeter Ditch and Pond have been Phase III bond released.

Streeter Ditch was observed at the Division's last inspection as part of SL-23 bond release requirements. During analysis of elevational data collected on the previous inspection in October, the device used to collect elevation point appeared to have had a technical error, as elevation points collected did not match recent USGS LiDAR imagery or topographic maps for the area. Initial elevations were off in some locations by ~160 feet. This discrepancy did not match the observed elevation profile of the Ditch. The Division suspects that satellite access is limited in the steeper areas of the valley in which Streeter Ditch is located and was producing the error in elevation. Therefore, the Division re-tested for elevational points

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during this inspection. Analysis of this data will be discussed in the Division's Findings Document for SL-23.

TOPSOIL – Rule 4.06:

Topsoil piles across the site contained appropriate markers. Topsoil Pile 26A, behind Section 26 Pond, has been seeded in preparation for the winter season (Photo 12). The ERTEC 'S-Fence' is still located around the base of topsoil pile 26A. The sump which collects runoff from topsoil pile 26A was observed to be holding a small amount of water.

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. Blast records were checked at the mine office as part of the records review. Additional information can be found at the end of this report.

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

The West Taylor Valley Fill area (Photo 5) was inspected from below at the West Taylor Pond (Photo 4). No erosional issues were noted. The pond was partially frozen, but still appeared to be discharging slightly. The face of the valley fill is well covered with vegetation, made up of sagebrush and native grasses.

Construction of the Collom Temporary Spoil Pile continues as mining in Collom Pit progresses. A shovel was being used to fill haul trucks (Photo 22). The spoil stockpile area in Collom Pit is encompassed by a berm to ensure spoil is contained within the approved disturbance boundary of the pile.

FISH and WILDLIFE – Rule 4.18:

No negative impact to wildlife was observed. Waterfowl were seen using several ponds across the site, and a several small heard of male and female Elk were observed in both Collom Pit and in the East Pit.

GENERAL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

Highwall mining operations were observed to be active in Collom Pit. Truck teams were observed to be hauling both mined material and spoil material. A dragline was observed in the south end of Collom Pit but was not moving spoil material at the time of inspection. A train of ~50 cars was working its way through the rail loop area just south of CR 51 (Photo 9).

Maintenance Items:

- Monitor the slump area at Section 26 Pond
- 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 south of East Taylor Pond.



Photo 2: View north of the discharge flume at East Taylor Pond.

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Photo 3: View of the seep area at the East Taylor Pond.



Photo 4: View south of West Taylor Pond.

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Photo 5: View south of the West Taylor Valley Fill.



Photo 6: View east of Streeter Pond from atop the Streeter Fill.

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Photo 7: View of Prospect Pond.



Photo 8: View of Gossard Pond, recently cleaned.

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Photo 9: View southwest of the Rail Loop area, a train of ~50 cars was loading up at the time of inspection.



Photo 10: Backfill operations continue in the eastern side of Collom Pit mining.

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Photo 11: View west of Section 26 Pond from atop the ridge to the east of the pond.



Photo 12: View north of the western end of Topsoil Pile 26A, the intersection of ditches D1 and D2 are visible.

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Photo 13: View north towards Middle Pond from Section 36 Pond, Section 36 Pond pipe is visible.



Photo 14: Section 25 Pond in Collom Pit, Ditch D3 is visible in the background.

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Photo 15: Middle Pond in Collom Pit.



Photo 16: View east of the Lower Section 3 Pond.

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Photo 17: View northwest of the Upper Section 3 Pond.



Photo 18: View of PD2.

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Photo 19: View of PD1.



Photo 20: View west of EP2.

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Photo 21: View north of the West Pit reclamation.



Photo 22: A shovel was observed to be filling haul trucks with spoil material in Collom Pit.

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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	3/1/25
Bond Document	Ok
Phased Bond Release Documents/Findings	SL-22
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 October 2024
Transfers/Succession of Operator	Ok
Temporary Cessation Notification	N/A
Reclamation Cost Estimate	RN-08
CERTIFICATIONS	
Pond Certifications	Thru 2nd Q 2024
Annual Certifications for Impoundments	Ok
Fill Certifications for Excess Spoil or Underground Development Waste	Ok
• Quarterly Inspections	Thru 3rd 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 September 2024
Stormwater Management Plan	Ok
SPCC Plan	Ok
MSHA Pond Inspections	N/A
State Engineer's Pond Inspection	N/A
Quarterly Pond Inspections	Thru July 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 2nd Q 2024
ATFE Explosives Permit	Ok
Blasting Variances	N/A
Pre-Blast Surveys	Ok

ADDITIONAL RECORDS (specify)

COMMENTS:

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