

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>

Fri, Jan 31, 2025 at 8:35 AM

Tony,

Please find attached the report for the coal partial inspection conducted on 1/27 with a combined aerial on 1/28. 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_1_27_25_C1981019.pdf**
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COLORADO

Division of Reclamation,
Mining and Safety

Department of Natural Resources

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: January 27, 2025 Inspection Start Time: 12:30 Inspection End Date: January 27, 2025 Inspection End Time: 13:30		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	Inspector's Signature: <i>Hunter Ridley</i>		Signature Date: January 31, 2025

Inspection Topic Summary

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

N - Air Resource Protection	R - Roads
N - Availability of Records	N - Reclamation Success
R - Backfill & Grading	N - Revegetation
R - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste	N - Subsidence
N - Explosives	N - Slides and Other Damage
R - Fish & Wildlife	N - Support Facilities On-site
R - Hydrologic Balance	R - Signs and Markers
R - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan	N - Support Facilities Not On-site
N - Other	N - Special Categories Of Mining
N - Processing Waste	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) and focused on the Collom Pit, Taylor Creek, and Temporary Facilities areas. The Division also completed an aerial inspection on January 28, 2025, of the Colowyo site. Photographs from this inspection are included as supplement to this inspection. Tom Fry of Colowyo accompanied the inspection. Weather during the inspection was clear with temperatures around 20° F. Weather conditions and site regrading 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 issued a proposed decision to approve SL-23 on January 22, 2025. The public comment period for the proposed approval of SL-23 ends on February 21, 2025. The Division awaits concurrence from OSM and BLM.

An application or Technical Revision 165 (TR-165) was received by the Division on December 12, 2024. TR-165 proposes an incidental permit boundary revision to reduce the permit boundary to remove the Streeter Ditch and Pond. As of the date of this report, the Division has completed technical review of the application. The decision due date was extended to March 7, 2025, to allow for the final issuance of SL-23 before approval of TR-165.

SIGNS and MARKERS – Rule 4.02:

Mine identification signage was located at the site entrance and throughout the Collom Pit and Taylor Creek areas of the site. Buffer zone signs were in place along Taylor Creek. All information required for compliance was observed on these signs.

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:**Collom**

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Backfill operations were observed in the eastern cut area in Collom Pit (Photo 10 and 16).

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

The West Taylor Valley Fill area was inspected from below at the West Taylor Pond (Photo 11). No erosional issues were noted. The pond was partially frozen, but appeared to be discharging. The face of the valley fill is well covered with vegetation which is visible through the snow. No seeps were noted along the face of the fill.

Construction and regrade of the Collom Temporary Spoil Pile continues. A shovel was noted to have been active on the spoil pile. 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 (Photo 15).

FISH and WILDLIFE – Rule 4.18:

Waterfowl were noted to be using some of the ponds on site that had not frozen over. No elk were observed this inspection, but many animal tracks were observed traversing throughout the site.

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:

Collom Pit

The following Ponds in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month: Section 36 Pond (Photo 4), Middle Pond (Photo 5) and Section 25 Pond (Photo 7). All ponds were snow covered, stable, and free of issues. Section 26 Pond and Sidehill Pond were inaccessible from the usual access road due to ongoing cable laying operations and regrading work being completed on the western side of the Collom spoil pile. However, the Division's aerial inspection allowed for observance of these ponds, which appeared to be snow-covered and stable (Photo 15). No outstanding problems were noted at any of the ponds. All ponds were holding water but frozen.

The small slump areas on the east and southwest sides of Section 26 Pond were not able to be observed on the ground during this inspection but showed no signs of recent slump in the aerial photographs. Colowyo should continue to monitor this area closely for exaggerated signs of movement or degradation, especially during the upcoming snowmelt season.

The following ditches in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month via aerial photography: D-1, D-2, D-3, and D-4 (Photo 15). All channels appeared to be stable with no signs of erosion or undercutting.

Ditch C-14 (Photo 6) was inspected on foot during this inspection. C-14 part of a series of ditches built along the Collom Haul Road and into the northern Collom pit area. This disturbance was approved by the Division under TR-160 in November of 2023. These channels manage stormwater runoff from the Collom Haul Road.

Temporary Facilities

The temporary facilities area to the west of the rail loop area was observed. The pond was snow covered but appeared to be dry, as it usually is. Vegetation was still visible through the snow and overall, the pond

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was stable (Photo 1). This area is used as a temporary office and equipment storage space for the highwall miner operating company.

West Pit / South Taylor Pit

Ponds along Taylor Creek were accessible via a 4x4 offroad vehicle. West Taylor Pond (Photo 11) and its discharge point were 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 (Photo 10). The West Pit Pond (Photo 12) and East Taylor Pond (Photo 9) were also inspected. Embankments were stable for all ponds and inlets and outlets remained free of obstruction. East Taylor Pond was the only pond not partially or entirely frozen over on site. Overall, no issues were noted for any of the ponds along Taylor Creek.

Ditches and stock ponds in the West Pit which were not accessed by the Division at the last inspection were able to be viewed from above via aerial photography (Photo 14). These features appeared stable and free of issues.

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 plowed, navigable and in good condition. In pit roads were also easily navigable, though several of these were being regraded at the time of inspection in Collom Pit (Photo 13). This limited the Division's access to the western side of Collom Pit.

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 markers were observed throughout the areas focused on during this inspection.

GENERAL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

No active mining was observed during this inspection, but backfill operations were noted to be active in Collom Pit (Photos 2 and 3). No train was observed at the Gossard Loadout area during the inspection.

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: Wilson Storage Pond in the Temporary Facilities area adjacent to the rail loop area.



Photo 2: Spoil is being loaded from the central Collom Pit mining area and hauled to the eastern mined area.

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Photo 3: Active backfill occurring in the eastern mining area of Collom Pit.



Photo 4: View of Section 36 Pond.

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Photo 5: View north of Middle Pond.



Photo 6: View southwest of ditch C-14.

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Photo 7: View of Section 25 Pond.



Photo 8: View north of discharge area and flume for East Taylor Pond.

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Photo 9: View south of East Taylor Pond.



Photo 10: View north of the discharge point for West Taylor Pond.

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Photo 11: View south of the West Taylor Pond & West Taylor Valley Fill.



Photo 12: View east of the West Pit Pond.

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Photo 13: View of the access road to the western side of Collom Pit which was undergoing regrading at the time of inspection.



Photo 14: View of West Pit stock pond TD2, Taylor Ditch, and South Taylor Pit.

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Photo 15: Aerial view of the edge of the Collom spoil pile, Sidehill Pond, and Section 26 Pond. Ditches D1-D4 are also visible.



Photo 16: Backfill operations in the eastern area of Collom Pit.

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