



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>

Thu, Mar 27, 2025 at 8:17 AM

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

Tony,

Please find attached the report for the coal complete inspection conducted on 3/19 & 2/20. 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,  
Mining and Safety  
Department of Natural Resources

P 720.868.7757 | F 303.832.8106

Physical: 1313 Sherman Street, Room 215, Denver, CO 80203

Mailing: DRMS Room 215, 1001 E 62nd Ave, Denver, CO 80216

[hunter.ridley@state.co.us](mailto:hunter.ridley@state.co.us) | <https://drms.colorado.gov>



**InspReport\_CC\_3\_20\_2025\_C1981019.pdf**

2718K



### 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
<b>Operator Representative Signature: (Field Issuance Only)</b>  	

### INSPECTION INFORMATION

<b>Inspection Start Date:</b> March 19, 2025 <b>Inspection Start Time:</b> 12:00 <b>Inspection End Date:</b> March 20, 2025 <b>Inspection End Time:</b> 10:00		<b>Inspection Type:</b> Coal Complete Inspection <b>Inspection Reason:</b> Normal I&E Program <b>Weather:</b> Cloudy	
<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>  March 27, 2025

**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 &amp; Grading

R - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste

N - Explosives

R - Fish &amp; Wildlife

R - Hydrologic Balance

R - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan

N - Other

N - Processing Waste

Y - Roads

N - Reclamation Success

N - Revegetation

N - Subsidence

N - Slides and Other Damage

Y - 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 with the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (Division). Tony Tennyson of Colowyo accompanied the Division on the first day of inspection and Matt Huff accompanied the Division on the second day of the inspection. Weather during the inspection was mostly cloudy with temperatures around 35° F. Weather conditions prohibited access to several areas of the site. These are described below. The side-by-side vehicle used to access more remote areas of the site during snowy conditions was not available on the days of inspection.

An application or Technical Revision 166 (TR-166) was received by the Division on March 11, 2025. TR-166 proposes changes to Colowyo's topsoil replacement and seeding plans. The TR-166 application was called complete on March 12, 2025 and is currently under review by the Division. The current decision due date is set for May 11, 2025.

An application for a Phase I release of 145.9 acres in five different areas, including areas in the West Pit, north and east of Collom Pit, and northeast of the Gossard Loadout facility. Bond Release SL-24 (SL-24) was received by the Division on March 20, 2025. SL-24 proposed to release areas that have been backfilled and regraded. The bond release application is currently in review by the Division and has not yet been called complete.

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

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

In an effort to ensure that all reclamation tasks are appropriately bonded for, the Division has conducted a bond compliance review process for the Colowyo Coal Mine. This review was completed in March of 2025 by Hunter Ridley with the Division. The total required bond amount of \$117,425,977.00 was checked for accuracy by review of major reclamation tasks currently included in the permit's Reclamation Cost Estimate and subsequent comparison to the site's current conditions.

Several on-the-ground inspections of features related to these reclamation tasks were conducted throughout the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Tools such as ArcGIS, Google Earth imagery, and aerial imagery collected by the Division were also used to verify site conditions. The basemaps for these tools utilized updated 2024 satellite imagery, ensuring accuracy of the Division's site validations. The Division began collecting data and verifying field

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conditions during the August 2024 normal monitoring inspection and continued until March 2025. For reclamation features which were large in number, such as culverts and topsoil piles, a representative sample of feature data was collected and verified from across the site. The following table, Table 1, lists the various reclamation features verified as part of this review. Notes for each Task are included below.

*Table 1: Verification tasks completed for the Colowyo Coal Mine 2024-2025 Bond Compliance assessment.*

Task #	Description	Date Verified
1	Confirmed location of topsoil piles throughout the site and matched volumes to reclamation volumes	August 2024, March 2025
2	Verified location and existence of facilities included in Colowyo's demolition reclamation task: Collom, East, West, and South Taylor Pits	September 2024, February 2025
3	Checked for presence and accurate sizing of culverts along Collom haul road, compared to Colowyo's demolition reclamation task	October 2024
4	Measured length of Collom Haul Road and compared to grading task for reclamation	November 2024
5	Measured the area footprints for each pond on site and compared to revegetation and grading reclamation tasks	January / February 2025
6	Verified lengths of ditches across the site as compared to Permit File figures and maps and associated reclamation tasks	February 2025
7	Confirmed required topsoil is available onsite for reclamation using Figure 5-2 from the most recent Annual Reclamation Report	March 2025

All representative features observed on the ground or via desktop were found to either match to the currently bonded amount for length, area, sizing, etc. or were found to be constructed or maintained in such a way that ensured the bonded amount was overly sufficient for reclamation of that feature. Therefore, an update to these reclamation tasks would not be appropriate, as the Division is not under bonded for reclamation of these features. The site-wide Reclamation Cost Estimate (RCE) was last updated with Permit Renewal No. 8 (RN-8) in February 2023. Various Minor Revisions, Technical Revisions, and Bond Release requests have been approved since the renewal. The associated surety increases for these revisions is currently covered by the surety excess Colowyo Coal Company (Colowyo) holds with the Division. The excess amount currently held by the Division is \$1,695,707.00.

As per Rule 2.08.3, the Division is required to review each permit at the permit midterm. The next midterm at Colowyo, MT-9, will be completed by the Division no later than May 5, 2025. As part of this review, the current reclamation cost estimate will be updated and, if necessary, a surety increase will be initiated.

#### **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.

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**SUPPORT FACILITIES - Rule 4.04:**

Ponds in the Temporary Storage Facilities area, just west of the Gossard Loadout were inspected and found to be snow-covered, but mostly dry (Photo 5). This area serves as a temporary shop and equipment storage area for the highwall mining company currently working at Colowyo.

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

The West Taylor Valley Fill area was unable to be inspected this month, as the road to West Taylor Pond was inaccessible.

Regrade of the Collom Temporary Spoil Pile continues as backfill in various areas progresses. Haul trucks were noted at the time of inspection to be distributing spoil material into the eastern box cut of Collom Pit. A shovel was noted atop the spoil pile but was not active at the time of inspection. 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.

**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 during this inspection of the South Taylor Pit. However, backfill activities appeared to have progressed since the Division's last inspection (Photo 12). Spoil material is still mainly being deposited towards the southeast corner of the South Taylor pit.

Collom

Active backfill operations in the Collom Pit were observed during the inspection and were focused on the eastern box cut area. This area has ramped up quickly over the Division's past several inspections.

West Pit

West Pit was inspected from above via an overlook point on the western side of the South Taylor temporary spoil pile. West Pit has been almost entirely backfilled and is in its revegetation phase (Photo 11). A large portion of this West Pit area has been proposed for Phase I Bond Release under SL24.

**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:**East Pit Facilities Area

Stock ponds and ditches in the East Pit were inaccessible during this inspection. The side-by-side vehicle usually used to access these in snowy conditions was also not available for use during the inspection, limiting access. Access to Section 15 and 16 Ponds was attempted, but a deep puddle ultimately restricted access to the ditch and pond (Photo 10). The Division was able to access and inspect the Section 3 Ponds, which were holding a small pool of frozen water. All embankments appeared stable and free of any other issues (Photo 7).

Taylor Creek

As stated, the side-by-side vehicle was not available during this inspection. The Division attempted to inspect the three ponds along Taylor Creek (West Pit, East Taylor and West Taylor) but was ultimately only able to navigate a

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short portion of the access road. West Pit Pond was accessed on foot from the limitation point of the access road. The pond was holding a small amount of water and had stable embankments (Photo 13). No issues were noted.

#### Gossard Loadout

The Rail Loop, Stoker Siding and Gossard Ponds were inspected in the Gossard Loadout area (Photos 2-4). All ponds were holding water but were not frozen over. Embankments appeared stable and vegetated under snow cover. Discharge points were free of blockages. Stoker Siding Pond had a small but steady discharge flow.

#### Collom Pit

All ponds in the Collom Pit area (Sidehill, Section 26, Section 36, Middle, and Section 25) were unable to be inspected at the Division's inspection this month. Roads to the ponds were either too difficult to navigate due to snowy and wet conditions, or cable laying operations blocked the paths needed to access these ponds. Sidehill Pond and a small portion of Section 26 Pond were able to be viewed from afar this month, from atop a lookout point on the western side of the Colom Spoil Pile (Photo 6). From what the Division could see from this vantage point, the ponds appeared free of issues.

The following ditches in the Collom Pit area were inspected this month from afar: D-1 and D-4 (Photo 6). All channels appeared to be stable with no signs of erosion or undercutting.

#### Highway 13 Areas

The Prospect Pond, accessible via Hwy 13, was inspected. Section 28 pond was inaccessible at the time of inspection. Prospect Pond (Photo 1) held water at the time of inspection and was mostly frozen over. All embankments appeared stable and vegetated under snow cover. No issues were noted.

#### **TOPSOIL – Rule 4.06:**

Topsoil piles across the site contained appropriate markers (e.g. Photo 8). Markers have been maintained throughout the winter season thus far. Topsoil Pile 26A, north of the Collom temporary spoil pile, was observed from afar during this inspection (Photo 6) and was in stable condition.

#### **FISH and WILDLIFE – Rule 4.18:**

No negative impact to wildlife was observed. A large herd of elk were observed just south of Section 3 Ponds, in the reclaimed East Pit (Photo 9).

#### **GENERAL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE:**

No train was observed at the Gossard Loadout area during the inspection. No active mining was observed during this 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: View west of Prospect Pond.*



*Photo 2: View northwest of Rail Loop Pond near Gossard Loadout.*

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*Photo 3: View north of the discharge point for the Stoker Siding Pond.*



*Photo 4: View south of the Stoker Siding Pond.*

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*Photo 5: View southeast of the Wilson Storage Pond in the Temporary Facilities Area.*



*Photo 6: View north from atop the western side of the Collom Spoil Pile. Sidehill Pond and ditches D4 and D1 are partially visible.*

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*Photo 7: View southeast of Section 3 Ponds.*



*Photo 8: View north of a topsoil pile adjacent the Section 3 Ponds, the pile is appropriately marked.*

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*Photo 9: View south of a large heard of elk seen from the Section 3 Ponds.*



*Photo 10: View south towards Section 15 Pond, the site was inaccessible due to deep snowmelt and mud.*

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*Photo 11: View into the West Pit from atop a lookout point on the western side of the South Taylor temporary spoil pile.*



*Photo 12: View west into the recently active backfilled area of South Taylor Pit.*

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*Photo 13: View east of West Pit Pond.*

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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-23
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	2024 ARR
Specific Variance Approvals	Ok
Annual Reclamation Reports	2024
Midterm Review Documents	MT-08
DRMS/OSM Inspection Reports/Enforcement Actions (3 Years)	Thru February 2025
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 2025
Annual Certifications for Impoundments	Ok
Fill Certifications for Excess Spoil or Underground Development Waste	Ok
• Quarterly Inspections	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2025
• 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 January 2025
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	2025
Blasting Records (3 years)	Thru 1st Q 2025
ATFE Explosives Permit	Ok
Blasting Variances	N/A
Pre-Blast Surveys	Ok

**ADDITIONAL RECORDS (specify)**


**COMMENTS:**


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