




**COLORADO DIVISION OF RECLAMATION, MINING AND SAFETY  
COAL PROGRAM INSPECTION REPORT**



**PERMIT INFORMATION**

<b>Permit Number:</b> C-1980-007 <b>Mine Name:</b> West Elk Mine <b>Operator:</b> Mountain Coal Company, LLC <b>Operator Address:</b> Ms Kathleen G Welt P.O. Box 591 Somerset, CO 81434	<b>County:</b> Delta, Gunnison <b>Operation Type:</b> Underground <b>Permit Status:</b> Active <b>Ownership:</b> Federal
	<b>Operator Representative Present:</b>  Kathy Welt
<b>Operator Representative Signature: (Field Issuance Only)</b>  NA – Issued from Denver Office	

**INSPECTION INFORMATION**

<b>Inspection Start Date:</b> January 17, 2013 <b>Inspection Start Time:</b> 08:00 <b>Inspection End Date:</b> January 17, 2013 <b>Inspection End Time:</b> 13:30	<b>Inspection Type:</b> Coal Complete Inspection <b>Inspection Reason:</b> Normal I&E Program <b>Weather:</b> Clear
<b>Joint Inspection Agency:</b>  None	<b>Joint Inspection Contacts:</b>  None
<b>Post Inspection Agency:</b>  None	<b>Post Inspection Contacts:</b>  None
<b>Inspector(s):</b>  James R. Stark  Harry Ranney	<b>Inspector's Signature:</b>    <b>Signature Date:</b>  29 January 2013

**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

N - Backfill &amp; Grading

N - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste

N - Explosives

N - Fish &amp; Wildlife

R - Hydrologic Balance

R - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan

N - Other

R - Processing Waste

R - Roads

N - Reclamation Success

N - Revegetation

N - Subsidence

R - Slides and Other Damage

N - Support Facilities On-site

N - Signs and Markers

N - Support Facilities Not On-site

N - Special Categories Of Mining

N - Topsoil

**COMMENTS**

This was a complete inspection of the West Elk Mine conducted by Jim Stark of the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety. Kathy Welt of Mountain Coal accompanied me on the inspection. The mine was actively producing coal and loading trains. The weather was cool and clear and the ground was covered with snow. Much of the site was inaccessible at the time of the inspection due to snow. Only the main facilities and Sylvester Gulch Facilities areas were accessible without a snow cat. The remaining areas will remain inaccessible until late spring or early summer when the snow melts.

On the same day as the inspection Harry Ranney of the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety performed an aerial inspection of the West Elk Mine. The purpose of the aerial inspection was to get aerial photographs of the HR-1 slide area and the RPEE. The observations from the aerial inspection are included in this inspection report.

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

- All of the required records were available in Kathy Welt's office in the main mine office building. The records are in three-ring binders in a file drawer. Please see the Availability of Records checklist at the end of this inspection for more detailed information.

**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:

- Pond SG-1 was covered with snow but appeared to only contain a small amount of water at the time of the inspection. The pond embankment was covered with snow but appeared to be stable and no erosional problems were noted.

- Both cells of the RPE pond contained a small amount of water and were not discharging at the time of the inspection. The pond embankment was stable and no erosional problems were noted.

- Freshwater pond FW-1 contained water approximately eight feet below the full level. Freshwater pond FW-2 was basically full at the time of the inspection. Both pond embankments were covered with snow but appeared to be stable. No erosional problems were noted in either pond embankment.

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**HYDROLOGIC BALANCE** (cont.) - As with every winter at the West Elk Mine, the ditches are all covered with snow at this point. The Division understands that, although the ditches are covered with snow, water can still flow in the ditch and the snow acts as an insulator. However, West Elk needs to continue to monitor the ditches to ensure that they do not become frozen and/or blocked and no water is flowing out of the ditches and onto the roads.

**GENERAL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE:**

- West Elk has completed the longwall move and they are mining in longwall panel E4. They are currently at approximately cross-cut 62, at station 118+40. They had to shorten longwall panel E4 approximately 2,400 feet to avoid the liquid hydrocarbon that was encountered at the start of longwall panel E3. They have not encountered this hydrocarbon in panel E4. They are in the sand channel that was encountered in the start of panel E3. This sand channel requires West Elk to wash the coal.
- They are currently doing development work on the longwall panel E5 headgate. They are just past cross-cut 40 at approximately station 74+40.
- Development work in the longwall panel E6 headgate has not progressed since the last inspection and remains at cross-cut 6.
- Mining is progressing as permitted and shown on Map 51 - E-Seam Projected Operations.

**PROCESSING WASTE/COAL MINE WASTE PILES** – Rule 4.10 and 4.11 Drainage Control; Surface Stabilization; Placement:

- The road to the RPEE was closed due to weather. It is anticipated that the RPEE and the haul road to the RPEE will remain closed until late spring, when conditions improve. During the summer and early fall West Elk removed the temporary coal that was stockpiled at the RPE and hauled it to the RPEE. They also excavated additional refuse and hauled that to the RPEE. This provided additional room for a refuse stockpile at the RPE. This stockpiled refuse will then be transported to the RPEE next summer.
- The RPEE was also a part of the aerial inspection. The photographs confirm the on-the-ground observations that the RPEE was inactive at the time of the inspection. The RPEE was covered with snow but appeared to be stable in the photographs. No slides, settling or erosional problems were noted at the RPEE.
- The RPE was well graded and stable at the time of the inspection. There was no water pooling on the surface of the pile. There were no erosional problems noted on the outcrops of the pile. West Elk will use the RPE to stockpile refuse during the winter months. It will then be transported to the RPEE once conditions allow. It was stated several months ago that West Elk would also excavate additional refuse material from the RPE and run it through the wash plant to remove more saleable coal from material that was considered refuse prior to the construction of the wash plant. This will provide additional storage capacity in the RPE.

**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):

- The main mine access/haul road is a paved road. The road was stable and well maintained.
- The access/haul road to the Sylvester Gulch facilities area was covered with snow. The road was stable and well maintained and no erosional problems were noted on the road.

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**SLIDES and DAMAGE - Rule 4.12:**

- The HR-1 slide area was covered with snow but appeared to be stable at the time of the inspection. There did not appear to be any movement in the slide remediation area.
- The HR-1 slide area was also a part of the aerial inspection, As with the on-the-ground portion of the inspection, the HR-1 slide area, although covered with snow, appeared to be stable at the time the photographs were taken. There did not appear to be any movement at the slide area and there were no erosional problems noted.

**DOCUMENTS RECEIVED:** None

This concludes the 17 January 2013 complete inspection report for the West Elk Mine.

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**ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS/COMPLIANCE**

There are no outstanding enforcement actions at the West Elk Mine and none were taken as a result of the 17 January 2013 complete inspection.

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## **PHOTOGRAPHS**



RPEE and ditches – taken from old Highway 133

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Aerial photograph of RPEE, RPEE buttress and RPEE haul road

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HR-1 slide area – taken from old Highway 133

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Aerial photograph of HR-1 slide area

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Aerial photograph of main facilities area

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**AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS****PERMIT RECORDS**

DRMS Permit	Exp 31 July 2016
Permit Application w/Revisions	X
Findings Document	X
Insurance Certificate	Exp 31 July 2013
Bond Document	X
Phased Bond Release	SL-04
Documents/Findings	
Air Emission Permits	X
County Special Use Permits	X
UG Mining Landowner Notification	X
Subsidence Monitoring Reports	Spring 2012
Subsidence Monitoring Data	X
Rill & Gully Survey	NA
Vegetation Monitoring Data	In SL-04
Specific Variance Approvals	NA
Annual Reclamation Reports	2012 Rpt
Midterm Review Documents	MT-06
DRMS/OSM Inspection	X
Reports/Enforcement Actions (3 Years)	
Transfers/Succession of Operator	X
Temporary Cessation Notification	NA
Reclamation Cost Estimate	X
<b>CERTIFICATIONS</b>	
Pond Certifications	X
Annual Certifications for Impoundments	X
Fill Certifications for Excess Spoil or Underground Development Waste	4Q12
• Quarterly Inspections	4Q12
• Compaction Testing	4Q12
• Final Certification	NA
Coal Processing Waste Banks	X
Haul Road Certifications	X
Access Road Certifications	X

**HYDROLOGIC RECORDS**

NPDES Permit	Exp 31 May 2009
NPDES Records	X
Stormwater Management Plan	X
SPCC Plan	X
MSHA Pond Inspections	NA
	X
State Engineer's Pond Inspection	
Quarterly Pond Inspections	4Q12
Annual Hydrology Reports	2012 Rpt
• Ground Water Monitoring	X
• Surface Water Monitoring	X
• Spring & Seep Monitoring	X
• Mine Water Discharge Monitoring	X
• Mine Inflow Study	X
• Water Consumption Records	X
Well Permits	X

**BLASTING RECORDS**

Blasting Publication	X
Blasting Records (3 years)	X
ATFE Explosives Permit	X
Blasting Variances	NA
Pre-Blast Surveys	NA

**ADDITIONAL RECORDS  
(specify)**


**COMMENTS:**


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