

**PROJECT 17J Old
Monarch Recl. Area**

**PROJECT 17J Old
Monarch Recl. Area**



Department of Environmental Quality



To protect, conserve and enhance the quality of Wyoming's environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

Matt Mead, Governor

Todd Parfitt, Director

June 29, 2015

Mr. Jeffrey Fleischman, Director
Casper Field Office, Western Region
Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement
150 East B St., Rm.1018
Casper, WY 82601-1018

Re: Categorical Exclusion for AML Project 17J, Old Monarch Mine Subsidence
(AMLIS PAD No. WY000106)

Dear Mr. Fleischman:

Enclosed is the Categorical Exclusion for AML Project 17J, Old Monarch Mine Subsidence in Sheridan County, Wyoming. The coal mine in this project was abandoned prior to SMCRA. This mine site is the location of multiple AML actions, which are required almost annually due to ongoing subsidence problems. The hazard present within the project area a subsidence open to mine workings. The legal location is Section 19, T57N, R84W. AML proposes to over-excavate, plug, and backfill the subsidence. Ground disturbance will be minimal, however, any disturbance will be contoured to blend with existing terrain and revegetated with native species. The planned disturbance is less than one-half acre.

The enclosed documentation provides State Historic Preservation Office concurrence. Eligibility, public notice, and threatened and endangered species absence have been previously addressed for this site.

Thank you for your timely attention to this request for Authorization to Proceed.

Sincerely,

for Alan Edwards
AML Administrator

cc: Alan Edwards, Grant File
Jeff Swanson, AML Project Manager
Marcia Murdock, AML NEPA Coordinator
Chron



EXHIBIT 1

**ABANDONED MINE LANDS
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION CERTIFICATION AND DETERMINATION**

State: Wyoming

PA # WY000106

Project Name: Old Monarch Mine Subsidence

Project Description: The Old Monarch Mine is located on private land in Section 19, T. 57 N., R. 84 W, in Sheridan County. This abandoned coal mine has been the site of several previous AML subsidence abatement actions due to continued failures of the underground workings. Subsidence abatement has taken place at this mine site every 2-3 years for the last decade. One new subsidence sinkhole opened abruptly as a vertical-sided open sinkhole this spring, posing a hazard to ranch personnel and livestock. AML proposes to over-excavate this feature, install a grouted rock bulkhead plug in the bottom, and to backfill with local soils. There are not cultural issues according to the recent cultural review of the sinkhole location. No threatened or endangered species issues or other sensitive wildlife species issues have been previously identified for this location.

Yes responses require submission of an environmental assessment.

I. GENERAL EXCEPTIONS

Does the project type specifically require an EA in 516 DM 6, Chapter 13, as specified in Item I of the attached instructions? No Yes

II. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR EXCEPTION

Will the project have any of the following:

A significant adverse effect on public health or safety? No Yes
An adverse effect on any of the following unique geographic characteristics? No Yes
If yes, check the ones that apply.

- Parks (State, Local, or National)
- Recreation or Refuge Lands
- Wilderness Areas
- Ecologically Significant or Critical Areas
- Prime Farmlands
- Wild or Scenic Rivers
- Wetlands
- Floodplains
- Sole or Principal Drinking Water
- Aquifers

Highly controversial environmental effects? No Yes

Highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks? No Yes

A precedent for future action or a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects? No Yes

Directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? No Yes

Adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? No Yes

Adverse effects on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species?

No Yes

Require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Wetlands Protection) or The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?

No Yes

Threaten to violate a Federal, State, Tribal or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?

No Yes

III.

RESOURCE IMPACT EXCEPTIONS

Are there any unresolved issues, or adverse effects requiring specialized mitigation, for any of the following resources? If yes, check the ones that apply.

No Yes

Topography

Land Use (includes prime farmland)

Soils

Vegetation (includes wetlands)

Noise

Other (includes socioeconomics)

Historic and Cultural

Recreation

Air Quality

Noise

Hydrology

Fish and Wildlife

**ARTS. PARKS.
HISTORY.**

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office
Barrett Building, 3rd Floor
2301 Central Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: (307) 777-7697
Fax: (307) 777-6421
<http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us>

June 18, 2015

Marcia Murdock
AML NEPA Compliance Coordinator
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
510 Meadowview Drive
Lander, WY 82520-0000

RECEIVED
JUN 22 2015
DEQ-AML Lander

Re: AML 17J: The Monarch Sinkhole (SHPO File # 0615JPL034)

Dear Ms Murdock:

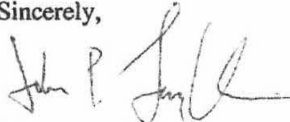
Thank you for consulting with the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the above referenced undertaking. Following 36 CFR Part 800, we find that the proposed undertaking is in an area previously surveyed and has no historic properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. We agree that no further identification efforts are warranted.

There is a possibility that buried prehistoric or historic materials may be discovered during the undertaking and we recommend the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality incorporate the following stipulation in the project permit:

If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area should halt immediately, the federal agency and SHPO staff be contacted, and the materials be evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR 22716, Sept. 1983).

This letter should be retained in your files as documentation of a SHPO concurrence with your finding of no historic properties affected. Please refer to SHPO project #0615JPL034 on any future correspondence regarding this undertaking. If you have any questions, please contact John Laughlin at 307-777-3424.

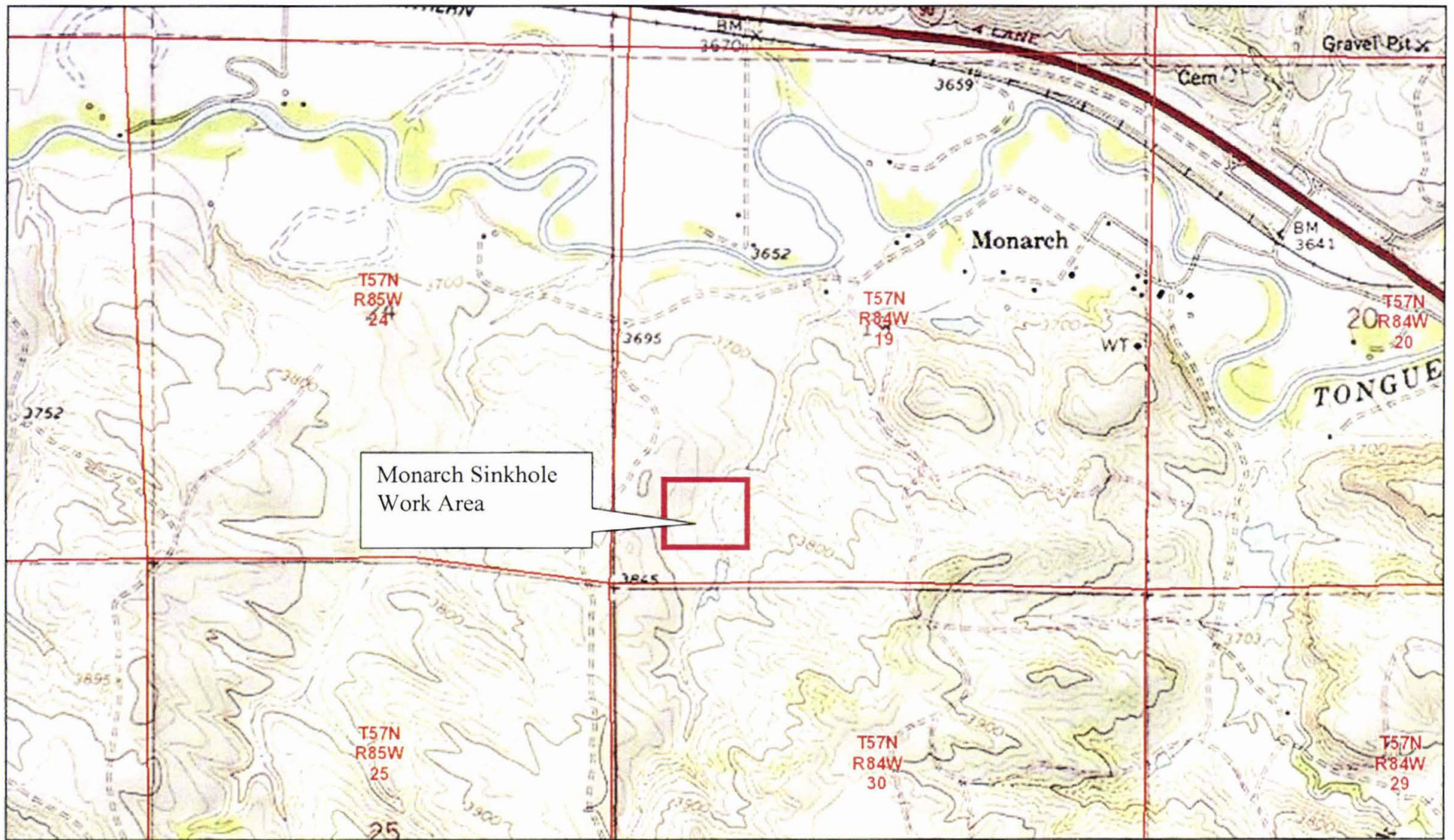
Sincerely,



John P. Laughlin
Archaeologist



Matthew H. Mead, Governor
Milward Simpson, Director



General location of Monarch sinkhole abatement.



Monarch Sinkhole (2015)

V.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION

Signature: Bill Locke

Date: 6/29/15

Name and Title: Alan Edwards, AML Administrator

VI.

OSM DETERMINATION

- This project conforms with the exclusion criteria in 516 DM 6, Chapter 13, and is excluded from further NEPA compliance.
- This project does not conform with the exclusion criteria in 516 DM 6, Chapter 13, and requires an environmental assessment.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and Title: _____

Exhibit 2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

The attached checklist is used to determine if an abandoned mine land project funded through Title IV of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) is eligible for a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A yes answer to any question means that the project is not eligible and requires preparation of an environmental assessment. Additional guidance in complying with NEPA is found in the OSM NEPA Handbook.

A brief description of the project using AML Inventory keywords is required for the title block.

I. GENERAL EXCEPTIONS

Abandoned Mine Land projects that include any of the following problems, situations, or activities require an EA.

1. Subsidence projects involving the placement of any material into underground mine voids through drilled holes to address more than one structure.
2. Mine fires and refuse fires.
3. Hazardous or explosive gases. For instance, projects involving the venting of methane or carbon dioxide.
4. Dangerous impoundments, both surface and underground, as defined in the inventory guidelines (AML 1).
5. Dangerous slides where the abatement work can result in damage to inhabited property.
6. Undisturbed, non-commercial borrow or disposal sites.
7. Hazardous wastes as defined by EPA.
8. The use of explosives.
9. Projects over 100 acres in size.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR EXCEPTIONS

These exceptions are presented in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2. The Department's procedures were published in the Federal Register on April 29, 1980 (45 FR 27541) and revised on May 21, 1984 (49 FR 21437).

III. RESOURCE IMPACT EXCEPTIONS

The resource values correspond to those listed in OSM's NEPA Handbook. If any agencies, persons, or groups have unresolved issues with the proposed project, an EA must be prepared.

If project activities result in impacts that must be mitigated through the use of techniques beyond common construction practices, an EA must be prepared to analyze the potential environmental effects, and alternatives. Specialized mitigation is an indicator of the potential for significant adverse effects. Please refer to the NEPA Handbook for more discussion on resource values and definitions.

The following examples are provided to help the reviewer determine when mitigating measures require preparation of an EA. These examples are for guidance only and are not inclusive.

Common Mitigation Practices Not Normally Requiring an Environmental Assessment:	Specialized Mitigation Practices Normally Requiring an Environmental Assessment:
Watering roads to suppress dust.	Developing detailed dust control plans in response to air quality zone requirements, or public health considerations.
Installation of silt fence and hay bales to control sediment.	A specialized sediment control plan required to protect sensitive off-site resources.
Routine traffic control such as flagmen, safety barricades.	The use of road closures and detours resulting in a substantial alteration of traffic patterns.
Replanting of trees, shrubs and grass to replace lost vegetation types.	Developing a specialized revegetation plan in response to concerns over adverse impacts on plant communities.
Placement of brush piles and rock piles to replace wildlife habitat.	Developing a specialized plan in response to concerns over adverse impacts on wildlife communities.
The routine placement of barriers that allow continued use of mines by non-endangered bats or other species.	Specialized mine closure procedures in response to site specific concerns about bat habitat.

IV. ATTACH CONSULTATION LETTERS AND A LOCATION MAP

Attach the SHPO consultation letter, the endangered species consultation letter, and any other consultation letters required by the state reclamation plan. The location map should be from a 7.5 minute quadrangle map, with the map name, project name, and project location legibly marked.

V. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION

Please complete block as indicated. The official signing this block is certifying the accuracy and completeness of the statements on the form. The person's name and title should be typed on the second line.

VI. OSM DETERMINATION

The OSM official making the determination is to review this document, check the appropriate block, and sign as indicated. The person's name and title should be typed on the second line.

EXHIBIT 3

**Categorical Exclusion
Authorization to Proceed**

State Agency
Address

Dear [State AML Director]

OSM has reviewed the categorical exclusion certification regarding [name of project] and determined that the project conforms with exclusion criteria in 516 DM 6, Appendix 8, and is excluded from further NEPA compliance. Accordingly, pursuant to section 5-11-20D.3 of the Federal Assistance Manual, you are authorized to proceed with this project and expend Federal funds in accordance with AML grant terms and conditions.

Sincerely

Regional Coordinating Center Representative

Field Office Director



Department of Environmental Quality



To protect, conserve and enhance the quality of Wyoming's environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

Matt Mead, Governor

Todd Parfitt, Director

7015 0640 0000 2715 8541

June 11, 2015

Ms. Mary Hopkins, State Historic Preservation Officer
Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources
Barrett Building, 3rd Floor
2301 Central Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Wyoming DEQ
Received

JUN 15 2015

Abandoned Mine
Land Division

Re: Literature Review for AML 17J: The Monarch Sinkhole

Dear Ms. Hopkins:

Attached is a copy of the Literature Review for AML 17J: The Monarch Sinkhole. Several prior actions have been taken on subsidence sinkholes associated with the Monarch mines outside Sheridan, Wyoming. Failure of the underground workings continues to be an issue, and new subsidence holes open periodically. This Literature Review confirms that the new hole is within the previous APE, and where there will be no effect on cultural resources.

Our finding is that there will be no effect to National Register of Historic Places-eligible cultural properties as a result of this undertaking. This transmittal by AML is on behalf of the Office of Surface Mining (OSM). Please provide a letter of concurrence with these findings at your earliest convenience.

Should you require further information, please contact me at (307) 335-6946 or by email at marcia.murdock@wyo.gov.

Sincerely,

Marcia B. Murdock
AML NEPA Compliance Coordinator

cc Alan Edwards, Grant File (w/o attachments)
Chron File





Department of Environmental Quality



To protect, conserve and enhance the quality of Wyoming's environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

Matt Mead, Governor

Todd Parfitt, Director

June 27, 2013

Mr. Jeffrey Fleischman, Director
Casper Field Office, Western Region
Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement
150 East B St., Rm.1018
Casper, WY 82601-1018

Re: Categorical Exclusion for AML Project 17J, Old Monarch-Kooi Subsidence Abatement
(AMLIS PAD Nos. WY000106 & WY000668)

Dear Mr. Fleischman:

Enclosed is the Categorical Exclusion for AML Project 17J, Old Monarch-Kooi Subsidence Abatement. The coal mine in this project was abandoned prior to SMCRA. The legal location is T57N, R85W, Section 23 and T57N, R84W, Section 19. The hazards present within the project area include hazardous mine subsidence features open to underground mine workings. AML proposes to perform abatement using excavation, bulkheading, backfill and possibly including a grouted rock plug, to mitigate the mine subsidence.

The Categorical Exclusion and accompanying documentation provides an eligibility statement, a copy State Historic Preservation Office correspondence on cultural resources, and a recent threatened and endangered species survey.

Thank you for your timely attention to this request for Authorization to Proceed.

Sincerely,

for 
Alan Edwards

AML Administrator

cc: Alan Edwards, Grant File
Jack Smith, AML Project Manager
Marcia Murdock, AML NEPA Coordinator
Chron



EXHIBIT 1

**ABANDONED MINE LANDS
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION CERTIFICATION AND DETERMINATION**

State: Wyoming

PA # WY000106 & WY000668

Project Name: 17J, Old Monarch-Kooi Subsidence Abatement

Project Description: Ongoing subsidence over the Monarch Mines and Kooi Mine require periodic abatement. Two subsidence areas at these sites require abatement, and this will be undertaken using a small contractor. The features are in pastureland a short distance from residences. In addition to being driving hazards, those subsidence features that develop straight-sided sinkholes are an entrapment hazard to livestock and wildlife. The subsidence features in this project are such features, opening to underground coal workings.

The small subsidence features (<0.5 ac) will be over-excavated, and constructed bulkheads will be placed in the excavations, prior to final backfilling and regrading to blend with the surrounding terrain. A seed mixture acceptable to the landowner will be used to revegetate the disturbance. The disturbances will be relatively small, and the action of very short duration.

Yes responses require submission of an environmental assessment.

I. GENERAL EXCEPTIONS

Does the project type specifically require an EA in 516 DM 6, Chapter 13, as specified in Item I of the attached instructions?

No Yes

II. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR EXCEPTION

Will the project have any of the following:

A significant adverse effect on public health or safety?

No Yes

An adverse effect on any of the following unique geographic characteristics?

No Yes

If yes, check the ones that apply.

Parks (State, Local, or National)

Wild or Scenic Rivers

Recreation or Refuge Lands

Wetlands

Wilderness Areas

Floodplains

Ecologically Significant or Critical Areas

Sole or Principal Drinking Water

Prime Farmlands

Aquifers

Highly controversial environmental effects?

No Yes

Highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks?

No Yes

A precedent for future action or a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?

No Yes

Directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?

No Yes

Adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?

No Yes

Adverse effects on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species?

No Yes

Require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Wetlands Protection) or The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?

No Yes

Threaten to violate a Federal, State, Tribal or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?

No Yes

III. RESOURCE IMPACT EXCEPTIONS
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Are there any unresolved issues, or adverse effects requiring specialized mitigation, for any of the following resources? If yes, check the ones that apply.

No Yes

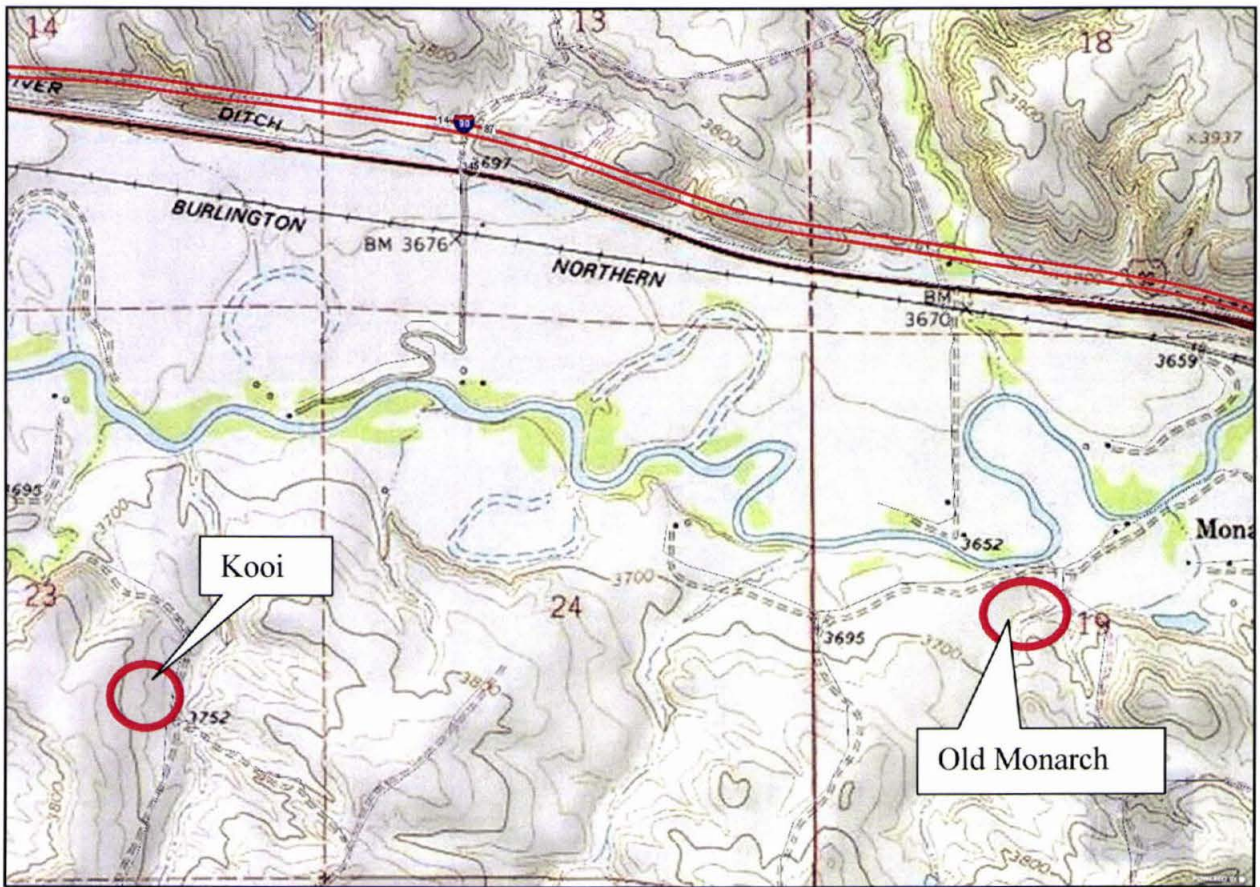
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Topography | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic and Cultural |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use (includes prime farmland) | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetation (includes wetlands) | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (includes socioeconomics) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Wildlife |



Old Monarch subsidence, open to workings.

IV.

ATTACH CONSULTATION LETTERS AND A LOCATION MAP



General area map of Old Monarch and Kooi subsidence abatement, Sheridan County, Wyoming.

ARTS. PARKS. HISTORY.

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office
Barrett Building, 3rd Floor
2301 Central Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: (307) 777-7697
Fax: (307) 777-6421
<http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us>

June 6, 2013

Marcia Murdock
AML NEPA Compliance Coordinator
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
510 Meadowview Drive
Lander, WY 82520-0000

RECEIVED
JUN 07 2013
DEQ-AML Lander

Re: AML Project 63-P3-R: Kooi and Old Monarch Sink Holes (SHPO File # 0613JPL003)

Dear Ms Murdock:

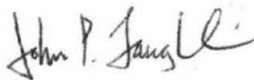
Thank you for consulting with the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the above referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the associated report and find the documentation meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716-42). We concur with your finding that no historic properties, as defined in 36 CFR § 800.16(1)(1), will be affected by the undertaking as planned.

We recommend the Department of Environmental Quality allow the undertaking to proceed in accordance with state and federal laws subject to the following stipulation:

If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately, the federal agency must be contacted, and the materials evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR 22716, Sept. 1983).

This letter should be retained in your files as documentation of a SHPO concurrence on your finding of no historic properties affected. Please refer to SHPO project #0613JPL003 on any future correspondence regarding this undertaking. If you have any questions, please contact John Laughlin at 307-777-3424.

Sincerely,



John P. Laughlin
Archaeologist/Senior Cultural Resources Specialist



Matthew H. Mead, Governor
Milward Simpson, Director

V. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION

Signature: Bill Locky

Date: 6/27/13

For Name and Title: Alan Edwards, AML Administrator

VI. OSM DETERMINATION

- This project conforms with the exclusion criteria in 516 DM 6, Chapter 13, and is excluded from further NEPA compliance.
- This project does not conform with the exclusion criteria in 516 DM 6, Chapter 13, and requires an environmental assessment.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and Title: _____



Office of the Attorney General

Governor
Dave Freudenthal

Attorney General
Bruce A. Salzburg

Water and Natural Resources Division
123 State Capitol
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002
307-777-6946 Telephone
307-777-3542 Fax

Chief Deputy Attorney General
Elizabeth C. Gagen

Division Deputy
Jay A. Jerde

January 28, 2009

Mr. John Corra
Director, Department of Environmental Quality
122 West 25th Street
Herschler Building, 4W
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Re: Eligibility Determination for AML Project 17J – Northern Sheridan County Coal Sites.

Dear Mr. Corra:

A review by the Abandoned Mine Land Division (AML) of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, of available records reveals that the coal mines involved with this reclamation project were abandoned prior to the reclamation requirements of the Wyoming Environmental Quality Act. This project will abate hazards resulting from active subsidence in coal mine workings. The project areas are located as set forth in the Cross Reference Table which is attached.

No person has continuing responsibility to reclaim these mines or correct mine-related safety hazards. Thus, problems associated with this Project qualify for reclamation under Wyoming's Abandoned Mine Land Program.

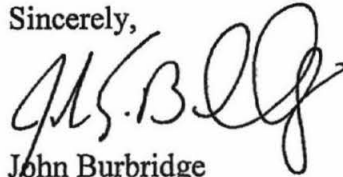
Pursuant to 30 C.F.R. §874.12, the following items concerning eligibility are identified with respect to the above-referenced Project:

- a. The proposed reclamation on this Project is the result of abandonment of coal mines.
- b. All mining activities ceased prior to August 28, 1974.
- c. These sites were left in unreclaimed conditions.
- d. No continuing reclamation responsibility exists at any of the mining sites.
- e. The reclamation is within the Wyoming State Reclamation Plan, which has been approved by the Governor.

- f. Reclamation is necessary at the mining sites for the protection of public health and safety.
- g. Funding is available under Wyoming's AML Program.

Accordingly, it is my opinion that the referenced Project is eligible for funding under the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund as set forth in the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Act of 1990 and 30 C.F.R. § 874.12.

Sincerely,



John Burbridge
Senior Assistant Attorney General

cc Rick Chancellor, AML Administrator, Grant File
Marcia Murdock, Project Manager/AML NEPA Coordinator

List of Sites Included in Northern Sheridan County Portion of Project 17J

SITE NAME	DATABASE #	AMLIS #	LEGAL DESCRIPTION
Acme No. 1 Mine	033278	WY033278SGA	T57N, R84, W Section 10; T57N, R84W, Section 11
Acme No. 1 North Mine	031906	WY000005SGA	T57N, R84W Section 3; T57N, R84W, Section 2
Acme No. 2 Mine	033362	WY033362SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 15; T57N, R84W, Section 16
Acme No. 3 Mine	032183	WY000098SGA	T57N, R85W, Section 13
Carney Mine	033280	WY072859SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 17; T57N, R84W, Section 16; T57N, R84W, Section 20
Custer Mine	032214	WY032214SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 28; T57N, R84W, Section 33
Dietz 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 Mines	033190	WY033190SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 27; T57N; R84W; Section 26; T57N, R84W, Section 34 ; T57N, R84W, Section 35
Dietz No. 3 Mine	032209	WY032209SGA	T56N, R84W, Section 3
Dietz 5 & 8 Mine	033191	WY033191SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 22 ; T57N, R84W, Section 27
Hotchkiss Mine	033281	WY033281SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 21; T57N, R84W, Section 22
Kleenburn Mine	033363	WY033363SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 21; T57N. R84W, Section 20
Model Mine	033283	WY033283SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 21
Kooi Mine	032042	WY000668SGA	T57N, R85W, Section 23; T57N, R85W, Section 26; T57N, R85W, Section 24
Monarch 45 Mine	031764	WY031764SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 20; T57N, R85W, Section 25; T57N, R84W, Section 19; T57N, R84W, Section 30
Monarch No. 2 Mine	031705	WY031705SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 20; T57N, R84W, Section 29
Old Monarch Mine	032045	WY000106SGA	T57N, R85W, Section 24; T57N, R85W, Section 25; T57N, R84W, Section 19
Plachek Mine	033284	WY033284SGA	T57N, R84W, Section 22
Smith Dietz Mine	032211	WY032211SGA	T56N, R84W, Section 10
Smith Mine	032212	WY032212SGA	T56N, R84W, Section 3
Star Mine	032213	WY032213SGA	T56N, R84W, Section 3

Exhibit 2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

The attached checklist is used to determine if an abandoned mine land project funded through Title IV of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) is eligible for a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A yes answer to any question means that the project is not eligible and requires preparation of an environmental assessment. Additional guidance in complying with NEPA is found in the OSM NEPA Handbook.

A brief description of the project using AML Inventory keywords is required for the title block.

I. GENERAL EXCEPTIONS

Abandoned Mine Land projects that include any of the following problems, situations, or activities require an EA.

1. Subsidence projects involving the placement of any material into underground mine voids through drilled holes to address more than one structure.
2. Mine fires and refuse fires.
3. Hazardous or explosive gases. For instance, projects involving the venting of methane or carbon dioxide.
4. Dangerous impoundments, both surface and underground, as defined in the inventory guidelines (AML 1).
5. Dangerous slides where the abatement work can result in damage to inhabited property.
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DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR EXCEPTIONS

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The following examples are provided to help the reviewer determine when mitigating measures require preparation of an EA. These examples are for guidance only and are not inclusive.

Common Mitigation Practices Not Normally Requiring an Environmental Assessment:	Specialized Mitigation Practices Normally Requiring an Environmental Assessment:
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Installation of silt fence and hay bales to control sediment.	A specialized sediment control plan required to protect sensitive off-site resources.
Routine traffic control such as flagmen, safety barricades.	The use of road closures and detours resulting in a substantial alteration of traffic patterns.
Replanting of trees, shrubs and grass to replace lost vegetation types.	Developing a specialized revegetation plan in response to concerns over adverse impacts on plant communities.
Placement of brush piles and rock piles to replace wildlife habitat.	Developing a specialized plan in response to concerns over adverse impacts on wildlife communities.
The routine placement of barriers that allow continued use of mines by non-endangered bats or other species.	Specialized mine closure procedures in response to site specific concerns about bat habitat.

IV. ATTACH CONSULTATION LETTERS AND A LOCATION MAP

Attach the SHPO consultation letter, the endangered species consultation letter, and any other consultation letters required by the state reclamation plan. The location map should be from a 7.5 minute quadrangle map, with the map name, project name, and project location legibly marked.

V. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION

Please complete block as indicated. The official signing this block is certifying the accuracy and completeness of the statements on the form. The person's name and title should be typed on the second line.

VI. OSM DETERMINATION

The OSM official making the determination is to review this document, check the appropriate block, and sign as indicated. The person's name and title should be typed on the second line.

EXHIBIT 3

**Categorical Exclusion
Authorization to Proceed**

State Agency
Address

Dear [State AML Director]

OSM has reviewed the categorical exclusion certification regarding [name of project] and determined that the project conforms with exclusion criteria in 516 DM 6, Appendix 8, and is excluded from further NEPA compliance. Accordingly, pursuant to section 5-11-20D.3 of the Federal Assistance Manual, you are authorized to proceed with this project and expend Federal funds in accordance with AML grant terms and conditions.

Sincerely

Regional Coordinating Center Representative

Field Office Director

REPORT

**Environmental Resource Evaluation
Threatened and Endangered Species Survey**

AML PROJECT 17J: KOOI & OLD MONARCH SITES

T57N-R85W, 6th P.M.
Section 23

T57N-R84W, 6th P.M.
Section 19

Prepared for:

**Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
Abandoned Mine Lands Division
510 Meadowview Drive
Lander, WY 82520**

Prepared by:

**ARCADIS U.S., Inc.
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June 25, 2013

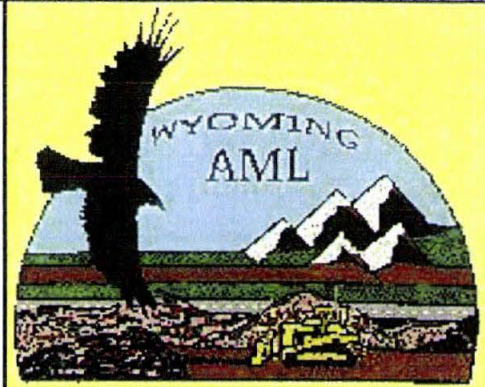


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Methods	1
Weather Conditions During Survey	1
Site Characteristics.....	1
Major Vegetation	2
Noxious Weeds	2
Wetland Habitat	2
Wildlife Observed.....	2
Migratory Birds of High Federal Interest	2
Threatened and Endangered Species.....	3
Sensitive Species.....	4
Black-tailed Prairie Dog (<i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i>).....	4
Bat Habitat	5
Big Game Habitat	5
Summary and Recommendations.....	5
Literature Cited	7
Qualifications	8

FIGURES

Figure 1. AML Project 17J: Kooi and Old Monarch - Environmental Resource Evaluation Map.....	10
Figure 2. View of Kooi Mine subsidence area.....	11
Figure 3. View of sinkhole feature within the Old Monarch APE.....	11
Figure 4. View of sagebrush grassland community south of Kooi APE.	12

AML PROJECT 17J: OLD MONARCH & KOOI SITES ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

ARCADIS U.S., Inc. (ARCADIS) was requested by the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Division of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) to conduct an environmental resource survey for AML Project 17J in Sheridan County, Wyoming. AML is proposing reclamation efforts to mitigate subsidences which have developed following reclamation work at the Old Monarch and Kooi mines. Proposed reclamation work involves backfilling, contouring and reseeding the subsidence area. All areas and access routes identified for the reclamation project were surveyed for federally listed threatened and endangered (T&E) species and other sensitive species identified by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The following report provides a summary of the survey results.

METHODS

Prior to the field visit, ARCADIS obtained the Area of Potential Effect (APE) information for mine features associated with the Kooi sinkhole and the Old Monarch sinkhole. The WDEQ AML division and the USFWS were also consulted in an effort to obtain any pertinent GIS data and any sensitive species habitats to incorporate with project maps. ARCADIS conducted a biological and habitat survey for the entire project area on June 11, 2013 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. MDT. Surveys were conducted by foot and ATV with the aide of binoculars. The areas were systematically searched by walking or driving ridgelines and drainage bottoms, examining habitats from different angles to ensure complete coverage. A global positioning system (GPS) receiver, using North American Datum (1983) and Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates in Zone 13 North, 7.5-minute topographic maps, and a digital camera were used to record relevant wildlife features observed during this survey.

WEATHER CONDITIONS DURING SURVEY

Weather conditions during the site visit were primarily dry and warm with a slight breeze, and partly cloudy skies. Winds were 10-15 mph and the temperature was approximately 75 degrees Fahrenheit during the survey.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The Kooi surface subsidence is located within the NWSE Section 23, T57N-R85W (Figure 1). The proposed reclamation area consists of an approximate 0.5-acre portion where the previous reclaimed area has subsided slightly below the finished grade (Figure 2). The surrounding setting consists of rolling topography within a sagebrush grassland ecosystem.

The Old Monarch sinkhole is located within SENW Section 19, T57N-R84W (Figure 1). Proposed reclamation work consists of mitigating a sinkhole feature which has developed within the previous reclamation area associated with the Old Monarch mine. The diameter of the sinkhole at surface was estimated at 3 to 4 feet extending vertically approximately 12 feet (Figure 3). The surrounding setting consists of flat pastureland located adjacently south of the Tongue River.

MAJOR VEGETATION

The vegetation within the Kooi APE consisted of a variety of seeded species including: smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*), annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), yellow sweetclover (*Melilotus officinalis* (L.) and annual mustard species (*Descurainia spp.*).

Native rangeland vegetative species noted outside of the Kooi APE included: big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) silver sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*), needleandthread (*Hesperostipa comate*), threadleaf sedge (*Carex filifolia*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), western yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) and hairy goldaster (*Chrysopsis villosa*).

The Old Monarch sinkhole is located within a small fenced area which was previously reclaimed and contains the following vegetative species: crested wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, cheatgrass and annual bluegrass.

NOXIOUS WEEDS

Weed species of concern were identified using the current *Wyoming Noxious Weed List for Sheridan County* (WWPC 2013). Noxious weed species listed for Sheridan County included: curly dock (*Rumex crispus* L), pucturevine (*Tribulus terrestris* L.), wild licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota* (Nutt.) Pursh), showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), buffalobur (*Solanum rostratum*), common cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*), black henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*), and common mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*). None of the listed weed species were observed within the project APEs during the June 11, 2013 field visit.

WETLAND HABITAT

According to National Wetlands Institute (NWI) data, no wetlands occur within the APE's of the mine sites. ARCADIS searched the APE's for the presence of wetland features during the June 11, 2013 field visit. No wetlands were found within APE boundaries and mitigation efforts are not anticipated to impact wetland features.

WILDLIFE OBSERVED

Wildlife and avian species observed within line of site and the surrounding vicinity of the Kooi and Old Monarch APEs consisted of: black-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*), pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*), Canadian geese (*Branta canadensis*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), Eastern kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*), cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), tree swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*), western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*).

MIGRATORY BIRDS OF HIGH FEDERAL INTEREST

The USFWS recommends maintaining disturbance free zones around nesting raptors to avoid the possibility of "take" under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Prior to field surveys, existing raptor nest data was obtained from in-house sources as well as the Bureau of Land Management – Buffalo Field Office (BLM BFO), who houses regional raptor nest information. ARCADIS data revealed two

previously documented nests (UNRA57N85W2301 & RETA57N85W2302) occur approximately 0.4-miles southwest of the Kooi APE (Table 1, Figure 1).

Nest UNRA57N85W2301 is located in an elm tree in the SESW Section 23, T57N-R85W. This nest was inactive and in poor condition during the June 11, 2013 survey. Nest RETA57N85W2302 is located in a cottonwood tree in the SESW Section 23, T57N-R85W. This nest was active on June 11, 2013, with a pair of red-tailed hawks defending. No chicks could be seen within the nest due to the aspect and height of the cottonwood tree. Neither of these nests is within line-of-site of the Kooi APE as they are screened by a tall ridge.

Data sources indicated an absence of historic nests within 0.5-mile of the Old Monarch APE. ARCADIS biologist documented an inactive nest approximately 420 feet north of the Old Monarch APE within the Tongue River corridor. This nest showed no diagnostic sign of use during the current breeding season and was considered in fair condition. This nest is within line-of-sight of the Old Monarch APE.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Those species federally listed as threatened, endangered, or candidate species that could potentially occur in Sheridan County, Wyoming and the likelihood of their occurrence on the project area are described below.

Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)

Prior to conducting our field surveys, Greater Sage-grouse lek data obtained from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department WGFD was overlaid onto project work maps to display the relationship between existing leks and the abandoned mine sites. According to agency data, there is one Sage-grouse lek (Omni Station Lek) located approximately 2.2-miles south of the Kooi APE. Neither mine site is located within a currently designated Sage-grouse Core Area or Connectivity Area.

Sage-grouse are dependent on mature stands of sagebrush for nesting, brood-rearing, and winter habitat. Productive Greater Sage-grouse seasonal habitats are characterized by 80% of an area containing between 10-30% sagebrush canopy cover intermixed with 15% grass/forb cover (Connelly et. al. 2000). Landscapes adjacent to each APE were assessed visually for Sage-grouse habitat adequacy. Sagebrush grassland areas south and west of the Kooi APE were considered fair habitats for Sage-grouse breeding and nesting as shrub densities were estimated at 5 – 10% with heights ranging from 10 – 16 inches (Figure 4).

Landscapes surrounding the Old Monarch APE are primarily pastureland with very little shrub component. Based on lack of shrub cover, the area surrounding the Old Monarch APE was considered poor Sage-grouse habitat.

During the field visit, we conducted ground searches within the APE for presence of diagnostic sign (i.e feathers, droppings, cecal castes). Although the field inspection occurred well after the breeding season, grouse pellets are persistent and remain intact for several months and can provide an indication of recent use. No recent, or old, Sage-grouse sign was observed within adjacent landscapes of the Old Monarch and Kooi sites.

Ute Ladies'-Tresses Orchid (*Spiranthes diluvialis*)

Ute ladies'-tresses (ULT) orchids occur at elevations between 4,200 and 7,000 feet within areas that maintain moist soils throughout summer and into early autumn (USFWS 2005). Typically, the orchid has been found in alluvial substrates along riparian areas, gravel bars or old oxbows. The USFWS

Recommendations and Guidelines for Ute ladies'-tresses Orchid Recovery and Fulfilling Section 7 Consultation Responsibilities (USFWS 2005) were used to identify features that would either qualify or disqualify the area as suitable potential orchid habitat.

The June 2013 field visit confirmed that no suitable habitat for ULT is present within mine feature APE's or adjacent landscapes. Disturbance associated with reclamation activities is not anticipated to impact the ULT orchid.

Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*)

The Canada lynx is currently listed as a threatened species and the proposed designated critical habitat within Wyoming occurs within portions of Park, Teton, Sublette and Lincoln counties (USFWS 2008). Lynx habitat can generally be described as moist boreal forests that have cold, snowy winters and a snowshoe hare (*Lepus americanus*) prey base (Quinn and Parker 1987; Agee 2000; Aubry et al. 2000; Buskirk et al. 2000b; Ruggiero et al. 2000). Lynx are highly specialized predators of snowshoe hare (McCord and Cardoza 1982; Quinn and Parker 1987; Aubry et al. 2000). In the Western U.S., the majority of lynx occurrences were associated with Rocky Mountain Conifer Forests within the 4,920 to 6,560 feet elevation zone (McKelvey et.al. 2000). Primary vegetation includes lodgepole pine, subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce (Aubry et. al. 2000). Snowshoe hares live primarily in dense shrub thickets at these elevations.

ARCADIS biologists did not observe lynx tracks or scat during investigation of the project areas. Montane ecosystems and dense shrub thickets do not occur within the project area. Based on the lack of suitable habitat for Canada lynx and snowshoe hares, no disturbance or impacts to this species are expected from the reclamation activities.

SENSITIVE SPECIES

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

Primary Bald Eagle nests and winter roosts are generally located in mature coniferous and / or cottonwood trees. Roost areas are typically associated along major rivers that remain unfrozen during the winter and have concentrations of prey, which would include fish, waterfowl, and ungulates (USFWS 2012). BLM BFO historic data does not identify historic roosts sites within 1.0-mile of the project area.

The Tongue River, which flows near both the Kooi and Old Monarch sites, qualifies as potential bald eagle roost habitat. The cottonwood trees along the river corridor have historically hosted wintering bald eagles; although, no historic communal roosts have been documented within 1.0-mile of the project area. Numerous prairie dog colonies in the general area also provide a prey source for eagles using the roost habitat along the river. ARCADIS recommends winter roost surveys on the Tongue River (within 1.0-mile of the project area) prior to reclamation if activities are planned between November 1 and March 1.

The current BLM raptor database indicates an absence of Bald Eagle nests within 1.0-mile of the project area. ARCADIS failed to discover any Bald Eagle nests within 1.0-mile during field investigations as well.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*)

The black-tailed prairie dog (BTPD) plays an important role in the prairie ecosystem and is important to several other species (USFWS 2011). Two BTPD colonies were delineated in association with the Kooi Mine (Table 2, Figure 1). The colony just north of the Kooi APE encompassed 12.9 acres; however, a majority of the burrows appeared inactive. A larger colony covering 299 acres is located 0.25-miles

southwest of the Kooi APE. Burrow densities here are relatively higher with moderate to heavy grazing intensity within the colony.

Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*)

Mountain Plover breeding habitat includes flat, short-grass prairies and shrub-steppe landscapes where bare ground accounts for a minimum of 30% of the ground cover (USFWS 2002). Plovers usually nest where vegetation has been removed by prairie dogs or domestic livestock grazing.

The large black-tailed prairie dog colony approximately 0.25-miles west of the Kooi mine was considered fair plover habitat. Higher densities of prairie dogs in this colony, relative to the colony north of the site, have kept grass heights short during the growing season. Although vegetative heights are shorter here, the uneven topography may inhibit plovers from breeding and nesting. The remaining areas surrounding Kooi and Old Monarch were considered unsuitable plover habitat. Negative habitat images include: tall grass and shrubs, sloped uneven terrain, and absence of short-grass prairie. Proposed sinkhole mitigation is not expected to physically impact the prairie dog colonies, or disturb potential Mountain Plover habitats.

BAT HABITAT

Mine shafts with open portals are known to be used by bats as hibernacula, assuming shafts are of sufficient depth to provide relatively stable temperatures, humidity and air flow. Bat species previously observed in Sheridan County (but not documented as breeding) include: western small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), long-ear myotis (*Myotis evotis*), little brown myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*), fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*), hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*), and big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) (Orabona 2009).

No shafts or adits are present in the project area. The open subsidence at Old Monarch is far too open and unstable to support hibernating bats. Mitigation efforts are not anticipated to negatively impact bats or their habitat.

BIG GAME HABITAT

Big game habitat data obtained from WGFD indicates the project area does not occur within crucial winter or yearlong big game habitat. Pronghorn and mule deer were observed within the project area during the June 2013 field visit, including young fawns of each species. In addition, the shrubland communities identified as adequate Sage-grouse habitat could also serve as winter browse for mule deer and antelope.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following should be considered during reclamation of the AML 17J – Old Monarch and Kooi Sites in Sheridan County, Wyoming:

1. The construction activities associated with abandoned minelands are not anticipated to directly impact threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Surface disturbances will be very surgical and localized and should not pose a physical threat to sensitive species or habitats.
2. If reclamation activities are planned between November 1 – March 1, winter roost clearance surveys for bald eagles should be conducted along the Tongue River prior to reclamation activities.

3. If reclamation activities are planned between February 1 – July 31, an occupancy raptor nest survey should be conducted within 0.5-mile of the Kooi and Old Monarch sites.
4. Minimize disturbances to shrubland communities, especially robust sagebrush stands south of the Kooi Mine, to protect valuable habitats for big game winter and parturition uses as well as Sage-grouse nesting habitat.

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QUALIFICATIONS

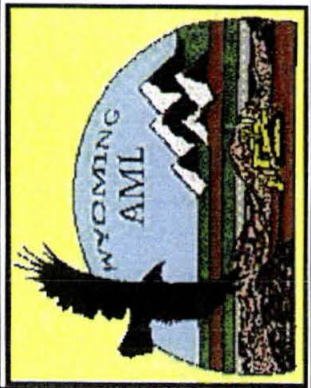
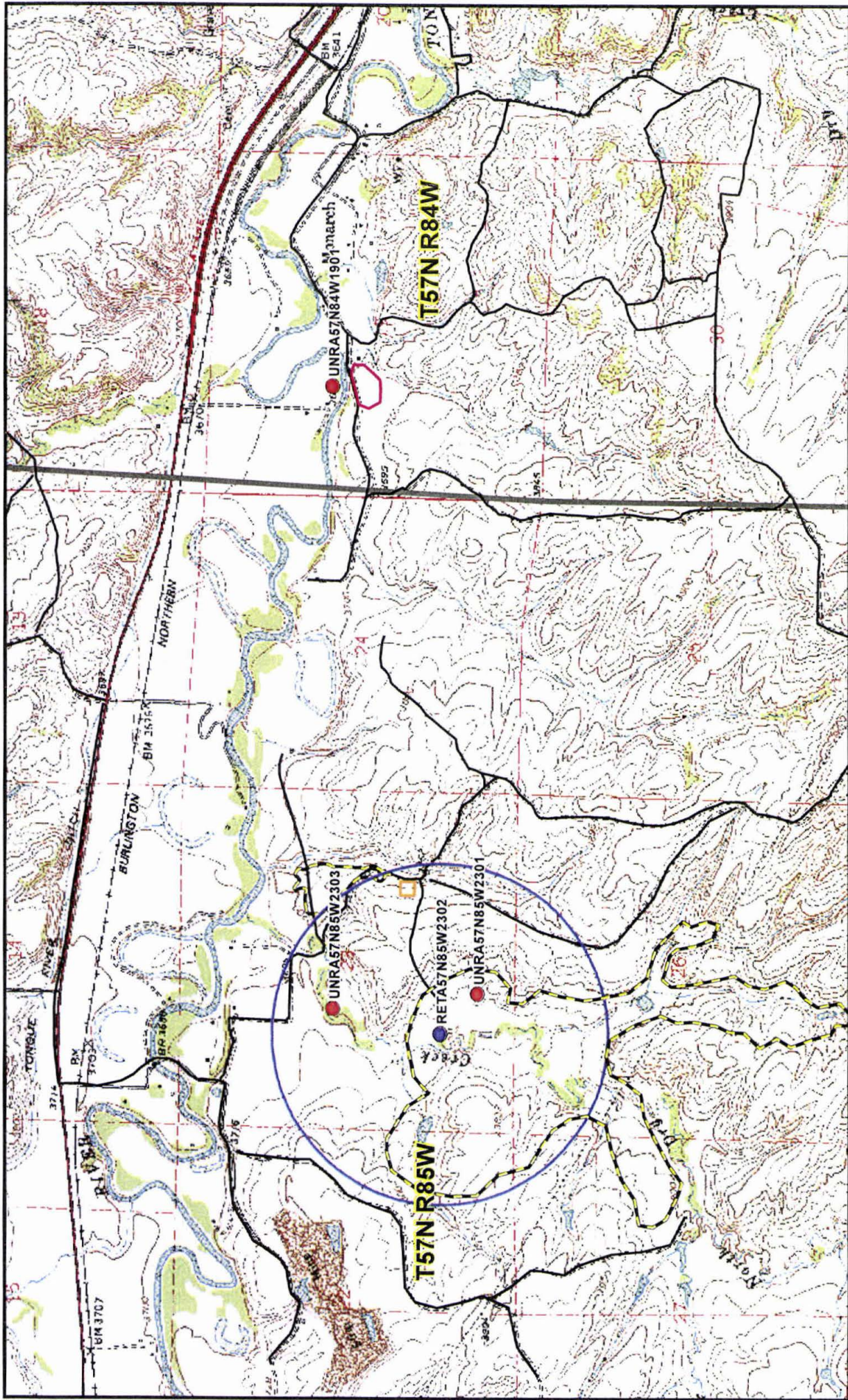
Dave Huber and Becca Little, ARCADIS U.S. Inc., conducted the field survey and prepared this report.

Dave Huber holds a B.S. in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management (2000) from the University of Wyoming. He is currently a biologist with ARCADIS U.S. Inc. based in Johnson County, Wyoming. Mr. Huber has 10 years of professional experience with federal and state agencies as well as the oil and gas and mining industry. His direct work experience includes annual wildlife surveys and habitat assessments for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species including bald eagle, Greater Sage-grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, prairie dogs, raptors and mountain plover throughout Wyoming. He has also performed vegetation, soil and wetland surveys in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Becca Little holds a B.S. in Anthropology, Osteology & Archaeology (2005) and a M.A. Secondary Education in Physical Sciences (2013). Ms. Little is currently an environmental field technician in the ARCADIS U.S. Inc. Buffalo, WY office. Her experience includes serving as a crew chief for a cultural resource firm on a variety of AML reclamation sites across Wyoming. She has also been performing field surveys and habitat assessments for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species in support of several oil and gas projects within Wyoming.

FIGURES

Figure 1. AML Project 17J: Kooi and Old Monarch Sites- Environmental Resource Evaluation Map.



- Legend**
- Kooi sinkhole
 - Monarch sinkhole
 - TLS Buffer
 - BTPD_Town
 - Access Road
- Raptor Nest**
- ACTI
 - INAC

AML Project 17J - Old Monarch & Kooi Sites	
Project name	Projection
Figure 1: Environmental Resource Map Old Monarch & Kooi Sites	
Map scale: 1:24,000	
Date	By
Revisions	Date
By	By
Date	By
Created by: DPH Date: 6.25.13 File:	
(307) 681-6801	
180 North Cedar Street - Buffalo, WY 82534	

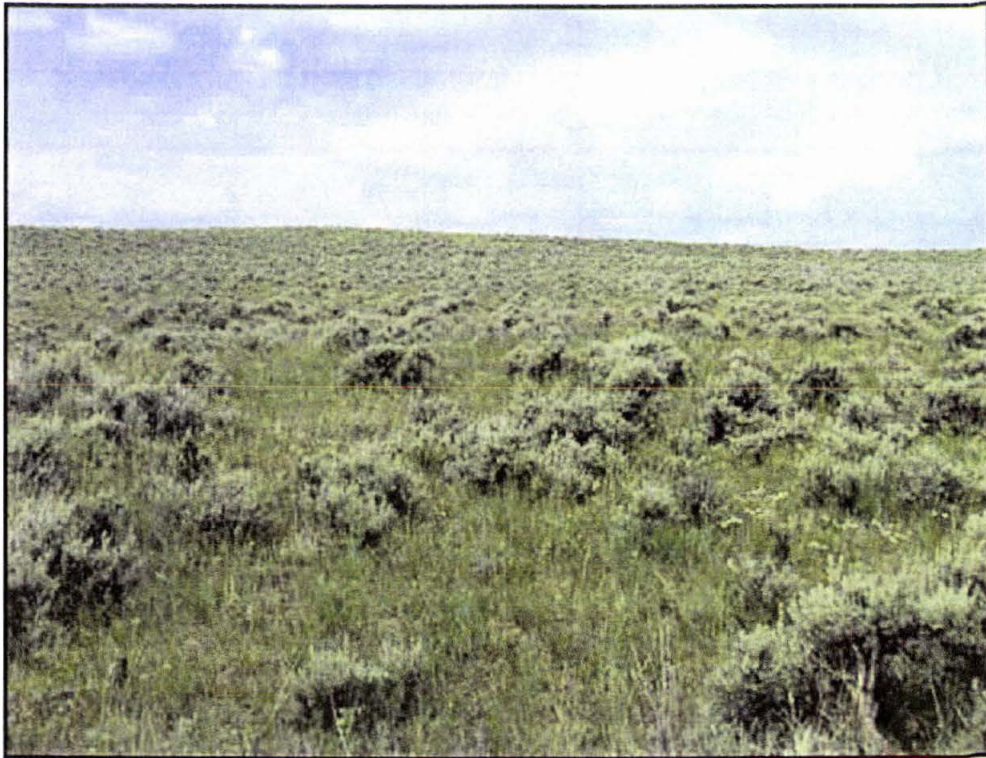
Figure 2. View of Kooi Mine subsidence area.



Figure 3. View of sinkhole feature within the Old Monarch APE.



Figure 4. View of sagebrush grassland community south of Kooi APE. .





Department of Environmental Quality



To protect, conserve and enhance the quality of Wyoming's environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

Dave Freudenthal, Governor

John Corra, Director

7007 1490 0002 1624 0908

August 12, 2010

Ms. Mary Hopkins, State Historic Preservation Officer
Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources
Barrett Building, 3rd Floor
2301 Central Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Re: Class III Cultural Report Regarding AML Project 17J, Old Monarch Reclamation Area

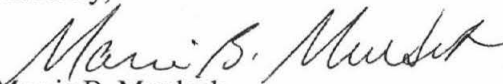
Dear Ms. Hopkins:

Attached is a copy of the Class III Cultural Report regarding evaluation of an abandoned mine site near northwest of Sheridan in Sheridan County, Wyoming. The area of potential effect for the Old Monarch Reclamation Area was surveyed, and no cultural materials were found. The report recommends cultural clearance for this project area.

It is our finding that there will be no effect on National Register of Historic Places-eligible properties that would result from this undertaking. This transmittal by AML is on behalf of the Office of Surface Mining (OSM). Please provide a letter of concurrence with these findings at your earliest convenience.

Should you require further information, please contact me at (307) 335-6946 or mmurdo@wyo.gov.

Sincerely,


Marcia B. Murdock
AML NEPA Compliance Coordinator

cc Alan Edwards, Grant File (w/o attachments)
Chron File

