



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH

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14 August 2023

Kevin Barnes, Permit Lead
Mining Act Reclamation Program
Mining and Minerals Division (MMD)
1220 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

RE: Modification 23-1, Star Lake Mine, Partial Release of Financial Assurance, McKinley County, New Mexico, Permit No. MK007ME; NMDGF Project No. NMERT-2781.

Dear Mr. Barnes,

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) has reviewed the above referenced project. Mesa Verde Humates, LLC (Mesa Verde) is requesting the partial release of financial assurance associated with approximately 10.24 acres of reclamation work performed at the Star Lake mine. Staff from the Department, MMD, and the Operator conducted a site inspection on 20 June 2023.

Department staff observed that the mine site had been backfilled, recontoured to conform with the surrounding habitat, deep-ripped, and seeded. Seeding was completed 7-9 June 2023. The Department does not have any issues with the partial release of financial assurance for the completed reclamation work.

The noxious weed halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*) is widespread in the area surrounding the reclamation site and has already begun to invade this site. The Department recommends that Mesa Verde continue to implement a weed monitoring program that includes a commitment to aggressive control of halogeton within the mine permit area.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed partial release of financial assurance. If you have any questions, please contact Ron Kellermueller, Mining and Energy Habitat Specialist, at (505) 270-6612 or ronald.kellermueller@dof.nm.gov.

Sincerely,

Matt Wunder, Ph.D.
Chief, Ecological and Environmental Planning Division
cc: USFWS NMES Field Office