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26 December 2024

Erik Munroe, Chief Mine Inspector
Coal Program
Mining and Minerals Division (MMD)
1220 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

RE: La Plata and McKinley Coal Mine Permit Renewals, San Juan and McKinley Counties, New Mexico, Permit Nos. 21-01 and 2016-02; NMDGF Project No. NMERT-4022.

Dear Mr. Munroe,

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) has reviewed the above referenced mine permit renewals. Westmoreland San Juan Mining, LLC and Chevron Mining, Inc. (permittees) have submitted mine permit renewal applications for the La Plata and McKinley Coal Mines. Both mines are currently in the reclamation phase, with MMD waiting to assess post-reclamation 10-year vegetation growth. Other than minor repair work, the permittees are not proposing any changes to the permit boundaries or operation and reclamation plans.

The Department does not anticipate any significant impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitat resulting from the proposed permit renewals. Because post-mining land use is designated as wildlife habitat, the Department requests to be notified and included in future mine site inspections that assess the status and condition of post-reclamation revegetation at any coal mines in New Mexico. As appropriate, the Department would also like to work with the Coal Program to provide recommendations to further enhance wildlife habitat at coal mine reclamation sites.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed mine permit renewals. If you have any questions, please contact Ron Kellermueller, Mining and Energy Habitat Specialist, at (505) 270-6612 or ronald.kellermueller@dgf.nm.gov.

Sincerely,

Virginia Seamster, Ph.D.
Assistant Chief, Ecological and Environmental Planning Section

cc: USFWS NMES Field Office