

PREFACE

PREFACE

The Wishbone Hill Mine is a surface coal development project located in south central Alaska, approximately 45 miles northeast of Anchorage. The majority of the proposed mine encompasses two state coal leases that are 100 percent owned by Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc. (UCM).

Exploration and development work on the surface coal mining project has been in progress since 1983. To date, approximately 330 exploration and development holes have been completed on the project area. Through this work, a surface mineable reserve of high quality bituminous coal has been defined.

Coal will be mined from two surface mining areas using conventional truck-shovel mining techniques. This mining technique will allow for optimal equipment utilization and coal resource recovery from a fairly geologically complex reserve while insuring environmental protection. The basic sequence of mining will be as follows: timber salvage and clearing, topsoil removal and stockpiling, overburden removal, coal removal, backfilling with overburden, topsoil replacement, and revegetation.

All surface drainage from disturbed areas will be controlled and routed to specially designed sediment basins. The sedimentation basins and control ponds have been designed, with adequate capacity, to prevent discharge to existing surface waters. Since the mine area lies within the Matanuska Valley Moose Range, disturbed areas will be reclaimed with emphasis on enhancing moose habitat, consistent with the policies of the Matanuska Valley Moose Range Management Plan.

The following document contains two (2) surface coal mining permit application forms for the proposed mine and ancillary facilities near the reserve area. Although all of the mining components are encompassed in one logical permit area, two application forms are being submitted to facilitate agency review of the coastal zone management requirements. Permit Application No. 1 includes those portions of the project lying in Township 19 North, Range 2 East, while Permit Application No. 2 addresses the initial segment of the project access road that lies in Section 1, Township 18 North, Range 2 East.

With respect to organization, Part A of the permit document contains the two permit application forms and identifies the respective permit areas. The remainder of the document (Parts B, C, D, and E) contains the informational requirements for both permit areas and does not differentiate between permit boundaries. The index on each application form directs the reviewer to the appropriate section of the application document that addresses specific regulatory requirements.