



Public Service Commission

State of North Dakota

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March 18, 2009

Mr. Jeff Towner, Field Supervisor
US Fish and Wildlife Service
3425 Miriam Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58501-7926

Dear Mr. Towner:

The Public Service Commission is planning reclamation activities in 2009 on a hazardous coal outcrop fire that is located approximately 8 miles southeast of Watford City in McKenzie County. To our knowledge there have been no instances of personal injury attributable to the coal outcrop fire. However, this coal outcrop fire did ignite a potentially dangerous grass fire in the spring of 2008 and could ignite additional grassfires if left unchecked.

Project Background

The proposed Prestangen Ranch Coal Fire Project is located within the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 28, T149N, R98W, in McKenzie County, North Dakota. The location is further described as 47.694326 degrees north latitude, 103.23644 degrees west longitude.

The coal outcrop fire was ignited as a result of the 1999 Halloween Gap wildfire. The U.S. Forest Service and local firefighting crews worked for weeks extinguishing this fire, but thousands of acres burned.

The proposed project site is privately owned and the property owner, Jon Prestangen, has requested assistance to have the outcrop fire suppressed. The coal outcrop fire was brought to the attention of the Public Service Commission by the U.S. Forest Service in October 2008. The area that would be affected by coal suppression activities is expected to be less than one-half acre and is located on pastureland used for livestock grazing.

As part of the process to obtain authorization to proceed from the Office of Surface Mining, we request concurrence that the proposed reclamation work will not adversely affect any threatened, endangered or rare animal species. We would appreciate your review and concurrence for the work proposed at this site. Please reply regarding this proposed project as soon as possible.

Mr. Jeff Towner
March 18, 2009
Page 2 of 2

Attached is a map showing the general location of the proposed reclamation project. Thank you for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me by email at tjoswald@nd.gov or 701.328.2445.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Oswald', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Oswald,
Environmental Scientist/Project Manager
Abandoned Mine Lands Division

Prestangen Ranch Coal Outcrop Fire General Location
Section 28, T149N, R98W, McKenzie County
North Dakota Public Service Commission
January 2009

