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BLACK MESA AND KAYENTA MINES

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CHAPTER 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MINING LOCATION AND ACTIVITIES

Location

The Black Mesa and Kayenta Mines are located on the Black Mesa in Navajo County, Arizona on lands leased from the Navajo and Hopi Tribes. The Black Mesa is a massive highland in Northeastern Arizona covering approximately 2.1 million acres. Along its northern boundary, the Mesa rises abruptly in a 1,200 to 2,000-foot high uneven wall then descends gently downward in a plane of rolling hills to the Little Colorado River. The maximum elevation at the northern rim of the Mesa is approximately 8,200 feet. Near the northern rim and in some of the canyons there are fairly dense stands of pinyon and juniper trees, a characteristic from which the Mesa has derived its name. Most of the Mesa, however, is rolling country covered primarily by a sagebrush shrubland. The Peabody leasehold covers 64,858 acres on the northern part of the Mesa just south of Kayenta, Arizona (Figure 1) with and additional Grant of Easement Right-of-Way for 360.94 acres.

The areas on the Black Mesa leased by Peabody consist of approximately 24,858 acres of land where the surface and mineral interests are held exclusively by the Navajo Tribe (i.e. "N" areas) and approximately 40,000 acres of land in the former Navajo-Hopi Joint Use Surface Lease Area (i.e., "J" areas). The tribes have joint and equal interests in the minerals, which underlie the former Joint Use Area; however, the surface has been partitioned. That portion of the leasehold, which lies in the former Joint Use Area, consists of approximately 33,863 acres partitioned to the Navajo Nation and 6,137 acres partitioned to the Hopi Tribe (Figure 2). No surface coal mining is planned in that portion of the leasehold, which lies within the Hopi Reservation.

Peabody Western Coal Company (PWCC) also obtained a Grant of Easement in August 1996 for various facilities at Kayenta and Black Mesa Mines. For Kayenta Mine, two parcels representing 77.49 acres were included for the overland conveyor, overland conveyor maintenance roads, overland conveyor transfer on "B" and "C" facilities, 69 kV transmission line, seven sedimentation ponds, and access roads to pond areas. For Black Mesa Mine, two parcels containing 283.45 acres were included for haul roads (Navajo Route 41), 69 kV transmission line, water and telephone lines, utilities access roads, two sedimentation ponds, rock borrow area, and an access road to Navajo Water Well #4.

The Kayenta Mine is located on the Navajo lease area and the east portion of the former Joint Use Area (Figure 3). Coal produced at the Kayenta Mine is transported approximately 83 miles via an electric railroad to the Navajo Generating Station near Page, Arizona (Figure 4). The Navajo Generating Station is operated by the Salt River Project and consumes seven to eight million tons of coal per year.

The Black Mesa Mine consists of the west side of the former Joint Use Area and a small portion of the exclusive Navajo lease area (Figure 3). The coal produced at the Black Mesa Mine is transported via slurry pipeline approximately 273 miles to the Mohave Generating Station near Bullhead City, Arizona (Figure 4). The Mohave Generating Station is operated by the Southern California Edison Company and consumes up to six million tons of coal annually.

Mining Activities

Coal on the Black Mesa is mined by conventional strip mining methods. Overburden material covering the coal is removed primarily by draglines using a furrowing technique. The overburden is removed by digging a furrow or elongated pit to the first coal seam. The overburden is placed alongside the excavation. The coal is removed by shovels or front-end loaders and transported by haulage trucks to coal preparation facilities. Material between coal seams is removed by draglines, shovels, or other excavation equipment and placed within or alongside the excavation or pit. When all the coal is removed, overburden from the next pit is placed in the parallel, open pit. This process is continued until all the coal has been removed from the given coal resource area (Figure 5).

At the preparation facilities, coal is dumped by the haulage trucks into hoppers. The coal is then sized and stored or shipped, depending on customer demand or coal quality requirements. There are three coal preparation areas at the Kayenta Mine and one preparation facility at the Black Mesa Mine (Figure 6). At the Kayenta Mine, after sizing, the coal is transported by conveyor up to 15 miles from the preparation facilities over the northwest face of the Mesa to storage silos located on the Black Mesa and Lake Powell Railroad. Coal is loaded from the silos into unit trains for transport to the Navajo Generating Station. At the Black Mesa Mine, prepared coal is transported by conveyor a short distance to the Black Mesa Pipeline Company's slurry preparation plant. After processing, the coal is shipped in slurry form to the Mohave Generating Station.