INTRODUCTION

This paper is really two papers that describe the practices at the McKinley Mine that provide sedimentation control which avoids adverse environmental consequences of sediment and that the preceding paper describes while satisfying the legal requirements described in a following paper. The practices include both sediment control and measurement of the effects the mine's practices on the streams as they leave the mining area. The first part will describe the alternate sediment control practices that have evolved over time at the mine and the problems that have been encountered and the second part will describe the automated water monitoring system that has been developed to deal with the unusual conditions of the mine.

The alternate sediment control practices used at the McKinley Mine have evolved over the last ten years in response to what has been learned about sediment control structures and changes in regulations governing coal mining. Although the practices are called sediment control, their function is one of erosion control and their benefits are in meeting the regulations covering discharge from coal mining areas, in satisfying the rules concerning minimizing the impacts of such discharge on the area's hydrologic balance, in improving the quality of revegetation on reclaimed areas, and in protecting the utility of the reclaimed areas.

EVOLUTION OF THE ALTERNATE SEDIMENT CONTROL PRACTICES

The first practice used at the mine was the creation of contour furrows by a modified Rome disc. The disc has oversize platens at four foot intervals that form six-inch deep furrows as it is pulled in front of the seeder when reclaimed mined
Of course, the berms and furrows did not meet the design criteria concerning spillways. The solution was to create two types of berms: interior berms which are the same as the berms described above and perimeter berms which include spillways capable of passing the design storm for permanent structures. The perimeter berms are to be used along the boundary between reclaimed land and other areas such as undisturbed land, facilities, and roads. In this way the regulations are satisfied and berms and furrows are satisfactory sedimentation control for reclaimed areas.

Of course, not all of the mine is reclaimed land. There must also be a sediment control system for the shop, mining pits, roads, and rail facilities. For drainage from the shops and offices non-discharging sedimentation ponds have been built. Despite the adverse impacts of ponds, they were the most appropriate control methods for these areas because the affected drainage area is small, the facilities are permanent (at least for the life of the mine), and ponds provide an additional method to contain any spills or contamination that results from the fuel storage, oil and grease, and solvents that are concentrated in the area.

For the active mining pits and ungraded spoils any drainage is contained in the pit and disposed of through evaporation. The pit drainage collects in the lower end of the pit and is either left there to evaporate or is pumped to another area to be contained and evaporated if coal removal is being done where the water naturally collects. Drainage from the ungraded spoils collects in between the spoil ridges and either stay there or flows into the pit along one of the access ramps. The only area that might drain away from the pit is the outslope of the last ungraded spoil ridge behind mining. Drainage from this relatively small area is to be contained by a berm built along the base of the spoil outslope during the grading process.

For roads and railroads, the OSM rules are different in that they do not specify that all drainage must pass through siltation structures but that drainage must be treated by the best available technology. After presenting the arguments to OSM on the adverse impacts of sediment ponds, an agreement was reached that the goal for drainage from roads and the railroa would be to maintain sheet flow wherever possible and where concentrated flow did occur it would be conveyed by non-eroding structures to undisturbed areas.

The last area to be covered to provide a complete sedimentocontrol control system is the treatment of rills and gullies when they do occur. For small rills they will be filled by hand. Larger rills and persistent rills will be stabilized using a series of fabric fences or straw bale filters. Gullies are to be stabilized using porous check dams designed and installed according to the method developed by the USDA Forest Service (Keele 1966, 1976 and 1977).
There will be some areas in the reclamation where rills and gullies persist despite all efforts to avoid them. In these areas the furrows will be stabilized where the predicted flow threatens to continually erode the reclaimed areas. It is necessary to allow the formation of channels in the reclamation to prevent the erosion from occurring before mining. Although rills and furrows are intended to hold as much precipitation as possible, runoff will occur and percolate through the soil. The formation of channels in the reclamation should be allowed for in the overall riprap containment and sedimentation control system. The natural ice channel is likely to be channel rip-rap, possibly gabions to hold meanders until the ice has a chance to reestablish itself. The solution was to survey in stakes to guide the operator, especially in draws where the natural instinct is cut across them. These changes should reduce the risk of breaching from off contour berms and furrows.

Some other problems in berms and furrows have been solved by familiarizing the people on the job with the berms with their purpose and design. Some of the early berms failed because they were not installed soon enough after topsoil replacement. The 100-year storm for slopes less than 5% was not always followed by contour around them. These dikes are no more than 200 feet apart and are closely spaced. Some of the early berms failed because they were not horizontal. To prevent their becoming channels, one alternative is to place perpendicular to the berm to block flow. These dikes are no more than 200 feet apart and are closer together in critical areas such as draws. Also, the mine plans to add a device to the hydraulic height adjustment on the disc that creates the furrows to occasionally, briefly raise the disc to block flow along the furrows. These changes should reduce the risk of breaching from off contour berms and furrows.

Another problem that caused breaches is "melting" berms. The bank thrown up by creating the incised portion of the berm contributes to the storage volume and this bank has been prone to failure from piping or infiltration in the loose soil forming it. The best method to solve this problem is to compact the bank either by modifying the construction method to use the weight of the grader to compact the bank or to use multiple pass construction techniques. Another alternative is to build a specialized plow or similar device that will dig the trench and compact the bank at the same time. Modified construction methods will be investigated in the next several years, but the present emphasis is on building the larger perimeter berms to meet regulatory deadlines.

Some other problems in berms and furrows have been solved by familiarizing the people building the berms with their purpose and design. Some of the early berms failed because they were installed only on the lower slopes. When rain
hit the area before the upper berms and furrows could be built, runoff from this area quickly overwhelmed the controls on the lower slope to the extent that the entire hillside had to be regraded and seeded. The lesson is that runoff units must be reclaimed entirely for the controls to be able to have sufficient capacity to perform properly. This means that the grading and top-soiling schedules must consider slopes and drainages as well as mining pit progress.

ALTERNATE SEDIMENT CONTROL SUMMARY

The approach to sediment control at the McKinley Mine, using a variety of techniques and minimizing the use of sedimentation ponds, appears to be workable. Some problems with the use of berms and furrows still need to be solved and design calculations reviewed and verified to determine if standard storm models work for the short, intense storms typical of the mine. Since the sediment control strategy is workable, acceptance of this nonstandard method by the regulatory authorities will depend on showing that the system provides the benefits and avoids the adverse impacts that are claimed. The critical part making the showing is supporting the water quality arguments with streamflow and water quality samples which is the subject of the next part of the paper.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

McKinley Mine is located in McKinley County, New Mexico approximately 25 miles northwest of Gallup. The mine has been operated by The Pittsburg & Midway Coal Mining Co. (P&M) since 1963. The mine is geologically located in the southwest reaches of the San Juan coal basin. Mean actual rainfall is 15 inches.

High intensity localized thunderstorms during the months of July, August and early September generate flash flooding in the ephemeral drainage channels at McKinley Mine. Runoff volumes varying from a trickle up to peak volumes of 2,000 CFS peak flow may occur during a single event. The flows are turbulent, carrying high concentrations of total suspended solids (up to 250,000 ppm), total iron (up to 6.0 mg/l) and total manganese (up to 2.0 mg/l). Values for iron and manganese are high due to the heavy sediment loading. The pH tends to be slightly alkaline (7.5 to 8.0).

Mass bank caving, extensive headcutting and local refuse disposal habits result in large amounts of vegetative debris and human refuse (everything from household garbage through the metal from junked cars) being carried by runoff events. This floatsam carried by the flashy runoffs characteristic of the area creates a sampling environment that is incapable of being monitored by conventional monitoring equipment.

PREVIOUS MONITORING EFFORTS

From 1979 until 1983 conventional surface water monitoring equipment and facility installations were deployed in the ephemeral drainages at McKinley Mine. Instrumentation at 13 locations included single stage sediment samplers (12 bottle levels mounted on two inch by 12 inch by 10 foot boards cemented into the wash floor), crest stage gages (two inch steel pipe cemented three feet into the wash floor), and crested stage gages equipped with Stevens stage height recorders and flow activated Mass 54040 samplers were maintained.

Attempted use of these installations the four runoff seasons dictated that alternate methods of deployment and equipment sampling methods would be required if acceptable percentages of data and samples were to be real. The equipment was perpetually clogged with debris and silted in by flow events. Masses of vegetative debris and trash collected on upstream portions of equipment and housings resulting in the wash out of the monitoring facilities. Extrapolation of rainfall and flow data for monitoring during the 1983 runoff season indicated that less than ten percent of the total potential data and samples for this period were actually recorded and retrieved.

REVISED MONITORING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Goals

In 1983 P&M decided to develop a surface water monitoring system that would be as economical as possible, reliable, and capable of continued operation under the physical conditions at the mine. It was also a goal to make the monitoring program more manageable by reducing the total number of stations.

Erickson, W. R. Unpublished water monitoring data on file for the McKinley Mine, The Pittsburg & Midway Coal Mining Co., McKinley County, New Mexico.

Regulatory Review and Interpretation

Because McKinley Mine is situated partly on and partly off of the Navajo Indian Reservation, and because the mine has not yet been issued a permanent program mining and reclamation permit, several sets of regulations are applicable. These included the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) 25 and 30 Code of Federal Regulations, The New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division (NMMD) 79-1 and 80-1 Regulations, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations. The monitoring and reporting requirements of all of these regulations were analyzed to determine the most stringent set of performance requirements for surface water monitoring. The revised surface water monitoring system was approved by both the OSM and the NMMD prior to manufacturer and erection.

Specific Mine Site Problems and Needs

Problems and needs unique and/or specific to the McKinley Mine of potentially significant economic impact were then added to the regulatory requirements for the monitoring system. Items and issues included more accurate estimation of erosion at the mine, procurement of adequate baseline information for upcoming mining areas, and the establishment of a constant reference point for tracking of long-term hydrologic trends at the mine, particularly concerned with bond release.

Since the McKinley Mine lease covers approximately 27,000 acres, it was also important to minimize the total number of station locations required for monitoring. An additional problem was encountered by the requirement to monitor water upstream and downstream of the permit area. McKinley Mine lies at the top of the regional watershed. This problem was solved by installing monitoring stations in the four major washes containing land to be disturbed by mining during the next 15 years and through the establishment of a background monitoring station on Coal Mine Wash just west of the permit area. Lands within this wash's drainage will remain undisturbed by mining for the life of the mine. In this way a comparison point was established and approximately 90 percent of runoff from active areas at the mine were included in the monitoring program system.

Passive vs. Automated Monitoring Program Costs

An economic analysis of the cost for construction and operation of a passive monitoring network and an automated monitoring network was performed. Initial construction of an automated network was estimated to be five times greater than passive network costs. However, costs of manpower requirements for repair, maintenance, servicing and operation activities for the passive system were estimated to be $150,000.00 dollars more than for the automated station over a ten-year operational period. Additional intangible economic benefits would be realized with the use of washout proof structures. The increase percentages of data retrieved coupled with the long-term nature of the stations is expected to prove invaluable in establishing records for water quality and quantity, regional geomorphological trends and bond release for reclaimed lands. No attempt to quantify these items was made in the economic analysis.

REVISED SURFACE WATER MONITORING STATION HOUSINGS

Submergent vs. Emergent Housings

The most crucial design decision encountered in the program revision was whether to use a watertight, submergible housing or an emergent one not subject to immersion during flow events. Submergent housings were being used at Peabody Coal Company's Black Mesa/Kayenta Mine. These installations were located in washes five to seven times wider than those at the McKinley Mine. One benefit of the submergent housing was the fact that lift capacities of sample retrieval pumps was not of concern.

However, in order to provide adequate room for the monitoring technician and equipment, submersibles would have to be fairly large in size. Structures at McKinley would occupy 20 to 35 percent of the wash cross-sectional volume if erected. Concern that such an obstruction would cause itself to be eroded out of the channel was paramount.

With these restrictions in mind, F&M opted to erect the emergent housings (figure 1). Their narrower cross-sectional volumes would impact the channel much less and the chance that leaks could develop in the housing and flood equipment were eliminated. Bouyancy/anchoring problems associated with the submersible housings were also avoided. The principal drawback of these structures was the intake lift limitation of water sampling equipment. It was determined that these problems could be overcome with auxiliary pumping equipment and that this limitation represented a much smaller problem.

Housing Pedestals and Anchoring

The principal anchoring component supporting the equipment housing above the wash are three, six inch, schedule 80 steel pipes set into the arroyo to a depth of 25 to 30 feet. No bedrock was encountered when drilling operations were conducted to set the pipes. A coal exploration drill was used to set the pipes. Two inch angle iron forms bracing between the three pipes. The pipes are placed in a triangle in the middle of the wash floor. The narrow end of the triangle points upwash. The triangle formed by the pipes is approximately two feet wide on the downwash side and three and one-half feet on each of the other two sides (from pipe center to pipe center). The pipes were treated with anti-corrosion agents prior to placement.

Four cement footers were placed in a large X on the banks of the arroyos with the station centered in the middle of the X. Three-eights inch anchor cables attach from the corners of the station to the cement footers. Engineering calculations showed the station structure capable of withstanding a flow rate of 2,000 CFS with a safety factor of five.9

Steel plate one-fourth of an inch thick encloses the housing pedestal pipes. This plating protects the monitoring equipment which extends down into the wash from the housing and serves to streamline the station profile. Space

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Figure 1.—Surface water monitoring station located in Coal Mine Wash.

vertically along one upwash side of the plating at six inch intervals are sample intake port attachment holes. The other upwash side has access doors spaced from the wash floor to the bottom of the housing frame allowing for equipment access.

Equipment Housings

Fiberglass housings four feet square and six feet tall are attached on top of the pedestal formed by the pipes. The housing has a sliding door and ventilation is provided by a small fan. Solar panels are mounted on top of the housings and supply power for the monitoring equipment. All of the stations have a small landing platform in front of the door on the downwash side of the station. At the three tallest stations, catwalks with security gates connect the station landing with one arroyo bank. The two shorter stations have a lockable trap door in the landing platform which provides access. A ladder on the platform allows access to the roof of the housing for solar panel servicing.

WATER MONITORING EQUIPMENT

General Description

The present surface water monitoring equipment is comprised principally of a computerized controller, Stevens Type F stage recorder and Manning S4040 discrete pump sampler. The system is battery powered with solar recharging. A diagrammatic representation of the system and component interaction is presented in figure 2.

![Diagram of Surface Water Monitoring System Component Interaction]

Measurement of Flow

Cement weirs for channel control and flow measurement were considered for placement in the washes. Conversations with Jack Dewey (USGS-Albuquerque) concerning monitoring installations in other portions of the San Juan Basin indicated that construction of weirs was not necessary to obtain reasonably accurate flow rates. He indicated runoff curves for a given watershed may be developed which estimate flow rate within 90 percent of actual using indirect flow calculations. Verification of flow rate curves would need to be made with direct flow measurements. The large cost of installing weirs and the potential for their erosion out of the channel convinced P&M to utilize the indirect flow measurement methodology as described by the USGS.10,11

Indirect flow measurements utilize three channel cross-sections at each station. High water surveys are used in indirect flow rating of channels along with direct measurements for flow curve development and verification. Stage height measured by the station is correlated with the flow curve.

A ten inch PVC pipe is used for the gaging stilling well. It is held in place by plumber's strap towards the back of the enclosure formed between the steel plates surrounding the station legs. The stilling well is vertically adjustable so the level may be moved in response to scour and deposition of sediment in the channel.

Small transmissivity holes were originally drilled into a PVC cap to dampen float chatter. Clogging problems were experienced with this system. To solve the clogging problem the end of the PVC cap was removed. Three one-eighth inch aluminum rods were then inserted into the PVC cap just above the end in an overlapping triangular pattern. The rods form a positive bottoming out platform for the gaging float and allow the stilling well to be self-cleaning.

Dampening of float chatter is provided by the computerized data acquisition equipment described in the next section.

A Stevens Type F recorder with a potentiometer is used to measure stage height. The drum chart is used as a backup for the computer system. Gearing for stage height is


1:10. Time gears used during the runoff season and dry season are eight and 30 days, respectively. The potentiometer sends electronic stage height signals to the computerized controller.

Scour chains are not used in the cross-sections. Since 90 percent of the material suspended in flow events is 65 microns in diameter or smaller, it was decided not to employ these chains. The high labor intensity involved in their use also makes them prohibitive. Should they be deemed necessary during future monitoring their use could be employed.

DATA ACQUISITION EQUIPMENT
(COMPURNICATION CONTROLLER)

General Description

Event sampling activities are based on stage height measurements received by the computerized controller from the Stevens and time measurements. The data acquisition equipment was manufactured to P&M specifications by Creative Systems, Inc., Fort Collins, Colorado. The controller is the brain of the system and coordinates all other activities.

The electronic equipment is mounted in an air-tight metal enclosure. An LED readout and push button control panel allow input and viewing of functions chosen. Replaceable sacks of desiccant in a small PVC tube in the enclosure control humidity in the controller.

The data acquisition equipment records date, time, stage height, time of significant event recognition, and chemical and physical sampling times and bottles filled. Data is transferred from the field unit through the use of a memory cartridge. Data recording time span of the cartridge is variable and depends principally on the frequency that stage height is recorded. At five minute recording intervals the cartridge memory spans about two weeks. The cartridge is read onto P&M's DEC mainframe computer system using a Rainbow PC and special cartridge reader. Analysis and processing of the data is done through available and custom programs. The controller is divided into five functional sections with elements as described in the following sections.

View Set Controls

This section allows the operator to view and change sampling and measurement parameters. Parameters include the following as defined:

Event Height—The level of stage that must be reached for a significant event to be recognized. This level is presently designated as one foot. At this height the water sampling routines are triggered.

Event Wait—Elapsed time period required from the start of a significant event to the allowable of recognition of a subsequent significant event and associated chemical water sample retrieval. This delay period is used to prevent triggering chemical sampling from surges in stage height as runoff from subwatersheds within a station drainage reach the station.

Chemical Delay—This is the amount of time delay after recognition of a significant event that a chemical quality sample is taken.

Stage Recording Time—This is a stage height filter based on algorithms which uses values from zero to ten minutes.

Stage Recording Period—This is the frequency that stage height is recorded in the memory of the controller unit.

Sample "N" Delay—This is the amount of time from the recognition of a significant event that the nth sample is taken.

System Tests

This section allows the operator to perform sampling function operational tests. Functional tests include:

Physical Quality Sample—A one-half liter sample is pumped into the Manning sample carousel.

Chemical Sample—A four liter water sample is pumped into the chemical sample bay.

Find Bottle "N"—The nth bottle in the carousel is located.

Element Tests

This section allows testing of individual components of the system and includes:

Stage Height—The reading sent to the controller by the potentiometer on the Stevens recorder.

Date and Hour—Includes day, month, year and time.

Cartridge Test—Checks for the proper insertion and function of memories in the data cartridge.

Bottle Advance—Advances the Manning filler spout one carousel location.

Several additional tests of values, pumps and compressors are also included.

Special Operations

This section of the memory is protected by an access code. Any functions and parameters from the above sections may be placed in this
WATER SAMPLE COLLECTION

A modified Manning pump sampler controlled by the data controller retrieves water samples. An inline auxiliary pump assists the vacuum pump in the Manning during sampling. The carousel in the Manning contains 24 sampling locations. The first four of these locations have been fitted with funnels to route samples to one gallon, chemical sample bottles. The remaining locations hold the one-half liter, physical bottles in the carousel.

The intake manifold for sampling has undergone several metamorphoses. Initially it was intended that discrete level sampling be conducted. Samples were to be drawn from one of four sample ports most closely approximating 40 percent of the total stage height. Problems with vacuum losses in the Manning sample line prevent sampling in this fashion.

At the present time four sample ports vertically aligned convey water through nylon braided (double-walled, fiberglass reinforced, flexible plastic) tubing (double-walled, fiberglass reinforced, flexible plastic) to a mixing chamber. A one way valve on the exhaust end of the chamber prevents samples from entering. Nylon braided tubing is used to route samples to the Manning. Excess water drawn up the tube is exhausted back into the wash.

Power Supply

Power to run the equipment is supplied by 100 amp, 12 volt, heavy duty batteries. The batteries are recharged by a solar panel that is slanted by the data controller. The single best consumption of power is by the Manning sampler and the auxiliary pump during sample retrieval. Consumption of power by the remainder of the data acquisition equipment is negligible. The system can run for several days without any charge from the solar panels.

CONCLUSION

The revised surface water monitoring program at McKinley Mine was designed to withstand the rigors of the sampling environment in which it is placed. The equipment and housings have demonstrated their ability to function in these conditions. The system is not static, but is still undergoing refinement as problems present themselves and solutions are found. The system provides a constant reference point for the long term monitoring of water quality and quantity from "undisturbed" and mining disturbed lands at McKinley Mine. The stations are designed for long term usage and may be relocated upon termination of monitoring at a given location.

DESIGN ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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