

# MINING LEGACY IMPACTS ON BOND RELEASE<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** Historical business practices at Big Horn Coal Company (BHCC) resulted in 2.1 acres of hydrocarbon contaminated area, formerly a retail sale yard, within the mine permit area. BHCC is pursuing final bond release and this area is within the reclamation area. The retail sale yard consisted of a coal loadout structure, rail yard, and scale house which operated since 1945. The surface soils within the sale yard area were contaminated, at trace levels, with hydrocarbons (Bunker C and waste oils) used for dust suppression. Remediation of the contaminated soils, to satisfy regulatory standards, had to be completed and approved prior to contouring, topsoiling, and reseeded efforts dictated by the reclamation plan. BHCC used a collaborative agency approach and a newly enacted statute to assess, remediate and then, after acceptance, reclaim the area in accordance to the mine reclamation plan. This process required an initial assessment of contamination conditions in groundwater and soils, excavation, verification of contaminant levels, and further excavation to meet changing regulatory clean up limits. Unique to this process was a newly enacted statute – Article 16, Voluntary Remediation of Contaminated Sites of the 2000 Environmental Quality Act, which, if met, would essential require no further action (NFA) at the site. BHCC chose to pursue Article 16 to achieve a clear and defined closure decision, which in turn, enabled bond release activities to be implemented without cross jurisdictional disputes. BHCC reclaimed and closed the area in accordance with the Article 16 standards and the mine reclamation plan approved by Wyoming DEQ Land Quality Division.

Key Words: Retail Coal, Bunker C, Reclamation, Remediation

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