



# ecology and environment, inc.

International Specialists in the Environment

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February 12, 1998

Richard Procunier (SFD 7-2)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, California 94105

**Re: Atlas Mine Site Inspection, January 15, 1998**

Dear Richard:

This letter documents the January 15, 1998, inspection of the Atlas mine site performed by Ron Anderson and myself. As you know, Ron Anderson has left Ecology & Environment, Inc., and I have taken over management of this project. The goal of the inspection was to observe and document current site conditions and for me to familiarize myself with the site.

We inspected fencing, gates, ponds, diversion channels, drainage ditches, access roads and revegetated areas. It was raining on the day of the inspection and there had been some rain in the days preceding the inspection. The following paragraphs summarize our observations. A site map and photographs taken during the inspection are attached.

Also included in this letter are comments on the January 12, 1998, report by Chris Hess of K.M. Scrivner, Inc., on maintenance work completed at the Atlas Mine site.

### **Access Restrictions:**

The lower site gate has been repaired since the inspection on November 1, 1997, and is now easier to lock.

We observed minor damage to the interior fencing (placed onsite by BLM) along the road between Pond E and Pond C, where some of the wiring was cut or bent. I noted this to Tim Moore of the BLM in a telephone conversation on February 5, 1998.

### **Sediment Retention Ponds:**

Since the inspection on November 1, 1997, sediment deposits have been cleared from where the drainage pipe empties into Pond C and there is now unimpeded flow into Pond C (see Photo 6A). Our observations are consistent with the January 12, 1998, report by Chris Hess of K.M. Scrivner, Inc.

Pond B still holds a significant amount of water (see Photos 18A and 19A).

## **Diversion Channels, Diversion Berms, and Drainage Ditches:**

### **Channels**

The erosion noted during the inspection on November 1, 1997, at the entrance to Diversion Channel B does not appear to have been repaired (see Photo 15A). Our observations are inconsistent with the January 12, 1998, report by Chris Hess of K.M. Scrivner, Inc., which indicates that the erosion was repaired. Although some repair work has apparently been performed, it does not appear to have addressed the erosion issue. (Compare Photos 13A, 14A, and 15A from this inspection report to Photos 20 and 21 from the November 1, 1997, inspection report).

There is also some slumping from the embankment along Diversion Channel B about 100 yards below top of the channel (see Photos 13A and 14A). No problems were noted with any of the other diversion channels.

### **Berms**

We did not get a close look at the diversion berms during this inspection, however, our view from the road did not identify any problems.

### **Ditches**

As noted above, sediment deposits have been cleared from where the drainage pipe empties into Pond C and there is now unimpeded flow into Pond C (see Photo 6A).

The drainage ditch that crosses the road at the entrance gate to Pond B has been reopened since the inspection on November 1, 1997, but the reworked ditch is not as deep as it was prior to the revegetation work (see Photos 16A and 17A). The ditch should be monitored during and after precipitation events to ensure that it is deep enough to drain the area effectively.

The drainage ditch north of Pond C, along the road between Pond E and Pond C, was repaired since the inspection on November 1, 1997 (see Photo 8A). Our observations are consistent with the January 12, 1998, report by Chris Hess of K.M. Scrivner, Inc., indicating that the repair was made. However, the repair was not extended far enough and new road damage is occurring at the bottom of the repaired area (see Photo 7A). I noted this to Tim Moore of the BLM in a telephone conversation on February 5, 1998. To prevent further damage and washout of the road, the repair of the ditch should be extended all the way to the drainage pipe that passes under the road and empties into Pond C.

### **Access Roads:**

As noted above, there is new damage to the road between Pond E and Pond C beginning at the foot of the recent ditch repair on the west side of the road (see Photo 7A). Repair of the ditch should be extended all the way to the drainage pipe that passes under the road and empties into Pond C to prevent further damage and washout of the road.

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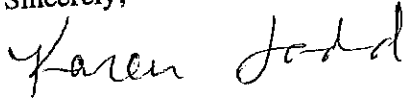
**Revegetation:**

According to our inspection, the second phase of revegetation at the Atlas Mine site appears to have been completed. Tim Moore of the BLM confirmed this in a telephone conversation on February 5, 1998. Mr. Moore said that Phase II was completed before Christmas 1997 and he inspected the work on December 31, 1997. He hasn't received the completion report yet, but he said that the revegetation work was completed almost exactly as planned, with only minor revisions. We observed that, as planned, some areas were hydroseeded only, while others were also planted with greenhouse stock (see Photos 11A, 18A, 19A, 20A). The area along the upper access road above Pond B was treated with soil amendments and hydroseeded only (see Photo 20A). Apparently as planned, areas around Pond B and Pond E were either treated with soil amendments and hydroseeded only, or they were also planted with greenhouse stock (see Photos 11A, 18A, 19A).

We noted standing water in the revegetated area at Pond D, north of the former mill ruins (see Photos 9A and 10A). The oversaturation may inhibit the plants from establishing in this area. In other areas onsite, we noted volunteer vegetative growth (see Photo 12A).

If you have any questions about this letter or our observations during the site inspection, please call me at (415) 981-2811.

Sincerely,



Karen Ladd

**Attachments**

cc: Frank Lopez, Cal-EPA  
Richard Blubaugh, Atlas Corporation