



State of Washington Department of Ecology  
Northwest Region Office  
**WATER QUALITY COMPLIANCE  
INSPECTION REPORT**

WADOE Stormwater  
Compliance Inspection Form  
(last file update 4-04.)

Facility Type: ☐ Shipyard  
☒ Industrial ☐ Boatyard  
☐ Construction ☐ S & G

Section A: General Data

Inspection Date January 12, 2023	NPDES Permit # <b>WA-0030830</b>	County King	Receiving Waters Mud Lake Creek, Ginder Lake, Lake 12
Discharges to: Surface Water <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Groundwater <input type="checkbox"/>		Weather at time of inspection: Light Rain, 48°F	

Section B: Facility Data

Name and Location of Facility Inspected PACIFIC COAST COAL COMPANY (John Henry Mine No. 1) 30500 Lake Ginder Road Black Diamond, WA 98010	Entry Time 9:56 am	Permit Effective Date March 01, 2008
	Exit Time 10:48 am	Permit Expiration Date January 11, 2013 Permit extended
Name(s) of On-Site Representative(s)/Title(s)/Phone and Fax Number(s)  Erik Wheeler, Project Manager – Wheeler Construction Co. EWheeler@wheelercc.net		Other Participants:  Jay Fennell Sand and Gravel Inspector Washington State Dept. of Ecology
Name, Address of Responsible Official/Title/Phone and Fax Number. David Morris General Manager - Pacific Coast Coal Co. P.O. Box 450 Black Diamond, WA 98010 Email: djmorris@aol.com		Cleo Neculae TMDL Lead Washington State Dept. of Ecology
Phone Number 206.321.5984 Fax Contacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Samples Taken? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos Taken? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Section C: Areas Evaluated During Inspection.

<input type="checkbox"/> NPDES Permit Available	<input type="checkbox"/> Wet & Dry Season Inspection Reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Operations & Maintenance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Effluent/Receiving Water
<input type="checkbox"/> Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan Available	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee Training Records	<input type="checkbox"/> Oil/Water Separator	<input type="checkbox"/> Pretreatment
<input type="checkbox"/> SPCC Plan & Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Compliance Schedules	<input type="checkbox"/> Solid Waste Disposal	<input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory
<input type="checkbox"/> Erosion and Sediment Control Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Catch Basins	
<input type="checkbox"/> DMR Submittals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fuel/Chemical Storage	<input type="checkbox"/> Track out / Wheel wash	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Section D: Summary of Findings/Comments

**BACKGROUND**

John Henry Mine No. 1 is a coal mining and processing facility operated by Pacific Coast Coal Company (PCCC). This facility is located near the City of Black Diamond and had active mining since 1999. The mining authorization for this facility, initially granted by the Federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), has expired. PCCC is currently reclaiming the mined area.

Ecology regulates the discharge of stormwater and process water generated at the facility through a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Until PCCC fully reclaims the mine, Ecology will require PCCC to maintain coverage under an NPDES permit. Ecology issued the individual NPDES permit for this facility in March 2008, which was then modified in 2012.

PCCC submitted its NPDES permit renewal application to Ecology in March 2018 and additional permit application information in August 2018 and February 2019. Ecology is currently in the process of renewing the NPDES permit for the facility.

On December 27, 2022, Ecology Sand & Gravel General Permit manager Jay Fennell received a complaint forward from a concerned neighbor regarding observed turbid discharges entering Pond 1 at the John Henry Mine site owned by Pacific Coast Coal Company. This complaint was later recorded as ERTS #720144 on January 12, 2023 included additional concerns of turbid discharges from the site entering Mud Lake and other surface waters adjacent to the site.

J. Fennell along with Water Quality TMDL Lead Cleo Neculae, conducted a site visit to discuss the complaint with the site Project Manager Erik Wheeler, and discuss mine dewatering practices at the site. Due to recent rains and ground conditions within the mine, access within the site was limited to the mining equipment. A site map is included within this report for reference.

J. Fennell took all the photos at the time of the inspection. No sampling occurred during this inspection.

## INSPECTION OBSERVATIONS & FINDINGS

### Access

Access to the mine is via Lake Ginder Road. The inspection mainly consisted of a conference between Ecology staff and E. Wheeler at the main office trailer as thick mud due to recent rains made further access into the mine impassable. Overview of Pond 1 from the south end of the site was accessed along Green River Gorge Rd.

### Pond 1/Mud Lake

Upon arrival to the site, J. Fennell and C. Neculae discussed the nature of the complaint with E. Wheeler and asking for an overview of how the mine conveys mine-dewatering water from the spoil piles south to Pond 1. The Ecology inspectors specifically asked whether discharges such as what was observed during the Dec. 27, 2022 complaint were a normal occurrence.

E. Wheeler explained that the conveyance pipes that drain mine-dewatering water and stormwater from the spoil pile stockpiles north of Pond 1 occasionally fill with fine sediment and require flushing to ensure that incidental overflows do not occur. Additionally, mine staff will release water as needed to allow for increased stormwater storage capacity.

E. Wheeler further explained that if visual inspections indicate that sediment build-up is occurring along the conveyance channels, operators will release water within the impoundments at the Spoil Pile 2 to then discharge to Pond 1.

Because Pond 1 is a man-made pit, discharges into the pond are not considered a discharge to waters of the State and are therefore not subject to Water Quality Standards.

When asked about Pond 1 dewatering when considering additional influent from the spoil pile impoundments, E. Wheeler stated that the mine recently constructed a roughly 20-foot high dike, to prevent discharges from Pond 1 into the neighboring Mud Lake (photo 1).

E. Wheeler explained that impoundment capacity gained by the dike installation, combined with periodic dewatering via pumping, would effectively prevent incidental discharges into Mud Lake, while also providing stabilized access to the south side of Pond 1 for continued reclamation. E. Wheeler estimated that pumping from Pond 1 to the I Ponds to the northeast would resume within the next two weeks following the inspection.

We then asked about the conveyance path and destination for pumped water from Pond 1. E. Wheeler responded that pumped water from Pond 1 will continue to be conveyed to the I Ponds for settling prior to discharge to surface waters. E. Wheeler clarified that the site does not pump dewatering water directly to any neighboring surface water. Ecology observed the mine's mine dewatering water conveyance and treatment setup during by Ecology during its June 2021 inspection.

Following the conference with E. Wheeler, Ecology staff traveled to the south side of the mine via Green River Gorge Road to observe the newly constructed dike separating Pond 1 from Mud Lake. As E. Wheeler described, the dike provides substantial capacity to Pond 1 and there did not appear to be any visible seepage through the dike to Mud Lake.

A concern raised through observing the dike were whether the installation of the dike required additional permitting through the Office of Surface Mining & Reclamation, the local jurisdictional authorities, or engineering review through Ecology's Dam Safety Program. Confirmation of the design review and permitting requirements will be documented outside of this report.

### **Pond B/Ginder Lake**

Lastly, Ecology inspectors asked about mine-dewatering water treatment for discharges into Pond B. E. Wheeler stated that the mine began treating the commingled stormwater and mine-dewatering water with flocculent using a drip pump stored along the main drainage inlet to the pond (photo 2). At the time of the inspection, E. Wheeler did not specify an application rate for the flocculent.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

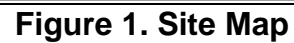
Overall, no water quality concerns resulting from the on-site discharge of mine-dewatering water into Pond 1, or the mine's site-wide water management approach, were identified during the inspection. As such, there are currently no required corrective actions for the permittee to complete for permit compliance.

Ecology recommends that the flocculent tote observed along the drainageway to Pond B be placed in secondary containment in the event of a leak.

**Attachments:** Photo log with descriptions.

Name(s) and Signatures of Inspector(s) Jonathan Fennell	Agency/Office/Telephone WA Dept. of Ecology/ NW Regional Office/ 425.240.4234	Date 1/23/2023
Name(s) and Signatures of Inspector(s) Cleo Neculae  Cleo Neculae (signed electronically)	Agency/Office/Phone and Fax Numbers WA Dept. of Ecology/NWRO/	Date:  1/25/2023
Signature of Management, Q A Reviewer Monika Kannadaguli, PE, CPESC  <i>Monika Kannadaguli</i>	Agency/Office/Phone and Fax Numbers WA Dept. of Ecology/NWRO	1/25/2023

**ANNOUNCED** Inspection



**Description:** Schematic site map of John Henry Mine showing layout of ponds, conveyance pathways, discharge locations and monitoring points.





**Photo 1 [IMG\_3619, taken by J. Fennell on Jan. 12, 2023]**

**Description:** View looking northwest from the south side of Pond 1 at the John Henry Mine. Earthen dike constructed to prevent discharges from Pond 1 into Mud Lake. Dike also provided haul access to south side of Pond 1 for continued back filling and reclamation.





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**Photo 2 [IMG\_3617]**

**Description:** View of flocculent tote stored near drainage ditch into Pond B.

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