

Minerals 2004 Monitoring Report

Activities, Effects and Resources To Be Measured.

“Site Specific Development and Proposals, Administration of Operations, Compliance with Terms of Operating Plans and Existing Agreements.”

Location.

Locatable operation monitored: Pine Valley RD, Marc #1 site

Leasable operations monitored: Escalante RD, Upper Valley (Citation) Oil Field

Mineral material permit areas monitored: Cedar City RD, 3 cinder pits; 1 sand and gravel borrow area; Escalante RD, 1 sand and gravel borrow area.

Variation.

“Any unacceptable or unexpected results that deviate from the environmental assessment and approved operating plan; inadequacy or unreasonableness of lease/permit terms and operating plan requirements.”

No variation from existing operating plans.

Results.

Locatable operations: 1 (no new proposals)

Leasable operations: 16 existing leases (no new leasing, exploration, or development)

Mineral materials permits: 55

Interpretation.

No new proposals for exploration or development of locatable minerals occurred. This low level of activity is expected to continue on the Forest because of limited mineralization and demand.

The number of mineral material permits issued in 2004 remained relatively high (55). Almost all permits are for material in existing gravel and cinder pits that have been in use for 30 to 40 years. Some but not all pits have operating plans, but the plans are 20 or more years old and need review and revision. Emphasis needs to be given to pit plan revision on the Forest.

Leasable operations include three capped carbon dioxide wells and the Upper Valley oil field on the Escalante Ranger District; both are in compliance with surface use plans for those leases. There is oil and gas industry interest in new leasing but no activity will occur until a Forest-wide leasing analysis has been completed, at the earliest by 2006 or 2007. Oil and gas leasing activity is expected to resume and may achieve previously high levels encountered in the 1970s and 1980s once the Forest-wide O&G leasing analysis (EIS) is completed.

Monitoring Resources Available.

Sufficient funding and resources were available to accomplish monitoring of activities, which remain at levels practically unchanged over the past 15 years. It is likely that oil and gas leasing and lease development and exploration would resume after completion of the Forest-wide leasing analysis. Monitoring of lease activity including exploratory drilling would become a high priority when that occurs and could require significant increases in funding and personnel time to accomplish.

Recommendation.

Monitoring should be continued for these minerals activities. The current level of monitoring is appropriate. Each site where activities are occurring should continue to be visited at least once each year and examined to determine if surface resource protection measures are being followed as described in the plans of operation.