



U.S. Office of Surface Mining
**News
Release**



September 2, 2010
For Immediate Release

Contact: Christopher Holmes Glenn Waugh
(202) 208-7941 (360) 753-9538
cholmes@osmre.gov gwaugh@osmre.gov

**Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Denies
Mining Permit to Coal Company in State of Washington**

(Denver, CO) – The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) today denied a Washington State coal operator’s application to remove a small amount of coal and required the operator to reclaim a coal mine dormant for more than a decade.

Pacific Coast Coal Company, based in Black Diamond, Washington, began surface coal mining operations at the John Henry No. 1 Mine in 1985, and the mine remained active until 1999. The company left behind two open pits and four spoil piles that have remained unreclaimed since that time.

Federal law requires companies to reclaim coal mine sites after mining is completed. From 2002 to 2008, Pacific Coast Coal advised OSM it intended to resume mining. Based on that information, OSM granted Pacific Coast renewal permits and did not require the company to reclaim the site. In that time, the company signed no contracts, nor did it produce coal at the mine.

In April 2009, OSM gave the company a final opportunity to obtain a contract for the sale of coal, or to submit a plan to reclaim the site. The company did not respond to OSM’s mandates until May 2010, when it agreed to begin reclaiming the site.

In July 2010, the company asked to mine 3.5 additional acres to obtain 26,000 tons of coal, purportedly for “test burns” and sale on the spot market. However, the company has not shown it has buyers for its coal, and it has not sufficiently described the impacts of its request. It is this request OSM is denying.

The Surface Mining Act requires OSM to help ensure the Nation’s energy needs while protecting the environment from the adverse effects of surface coal mining. After eleven years with no mining activity or reclamation, the company must be held to a reasonable standard, which is why OSM has denied Pacific Coast’s permit.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement carries out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 in cooperation with states and tribes. OSM’s objectives are to ensure that coal mining activities are conducted in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, to ensure that the land is restored to beneficial use after mining, and to mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.