

Little Long Valley Mine (Wooley Valley Unit #3)

The Little Long Valley Mine is located on the east slope of the Wooley Valley Range about 15 miles northeast of Soda Springs, Idaho, and northwest of the Mill Canyon Mine (Figure 173). The area of the mine was examined by the USGS as part of the phosphate withdrawal examination as early as 1912 (Mansfield, 1927). There were no early trenches or other excavations on the land that was to become the mine although there were several trenches in the immediate vicinity.

The first leasing activity in the mine area occurred in 1947. The Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Inc. of Columbus, Ohio filed an application to lease on March 17, but that application was rejected on procedural grounds on April 14, 1947. On August 11, 1947, the Pacific Supply Cooperative of Walla Walla, Washington filed an application to lease, but that effort also was rejected on procedural grounds.

On May 6, 1953, the BLM held a competitive phosphate lease sale. The J. A. Terteling and Sons Company was the successful high bidder and Federal Lease I-04373 was issued to them on September 1, 1953. The J. A. Terteling and Sons Company assigned the lease to the Terteling Land Company on April 1, 1959. The only work conducted on the lease was exploratory in nature. On July 1, 1966, the Stauffer Chemical Company was designated as the operator of the future mine and eventually, on June 1, 1967, the Terteling Land Company assigned the lease to the Stauffer Chemical Company. Still no mining occurred on the lease. The Stauffer Chemical Company immediately designated the Terteling and Sons Company as the operator, and they in turn subcontracted operations to the Triangle Mining Company (a wholly owned subsidiary of the Terteling and Sons Company). To complete the business maneuvering, the Triangle Mining Company was designated operator on February 16, 1973.

It was well recognized that the phosphate ore wasn't confined to the limits of Lease I-04373 and that to complete the land acquisition, more ground had to be leased from the Federal Government. A prospecting permit for additional land was applied for by the J. A. Terteling and Sons Company on August 23, 1966 and the permit was issued on February 1, 1967. This prospecting permit was assigned, along with Lease I-04373, to the Stauffer Chemical Company on June 1, 1967. Apparently, a deposit of phosphate ore was found in the area of the prospecting permit because on January 14, 1969, the Stauffer Company applied for a preference right lease for the area of the permit. Federal Lease I-97 was issued to Stauffer Chemical Company on August 1, 1969.

Mining actually started on Lease I-04373 during the summer of 1976, about the time that an all-weather haul road to the mine was completed. In support of starting the mine, 104 exploratory drill holes were drilled during the summer and early fall. The mine was divided into four sections, or mine panels. Mining started on panels 1 and 4, with the waste from panel 4 being used in the final construction of the haul road, and the waste from panel 1 being hauled to the #1 Waste Pile. Also

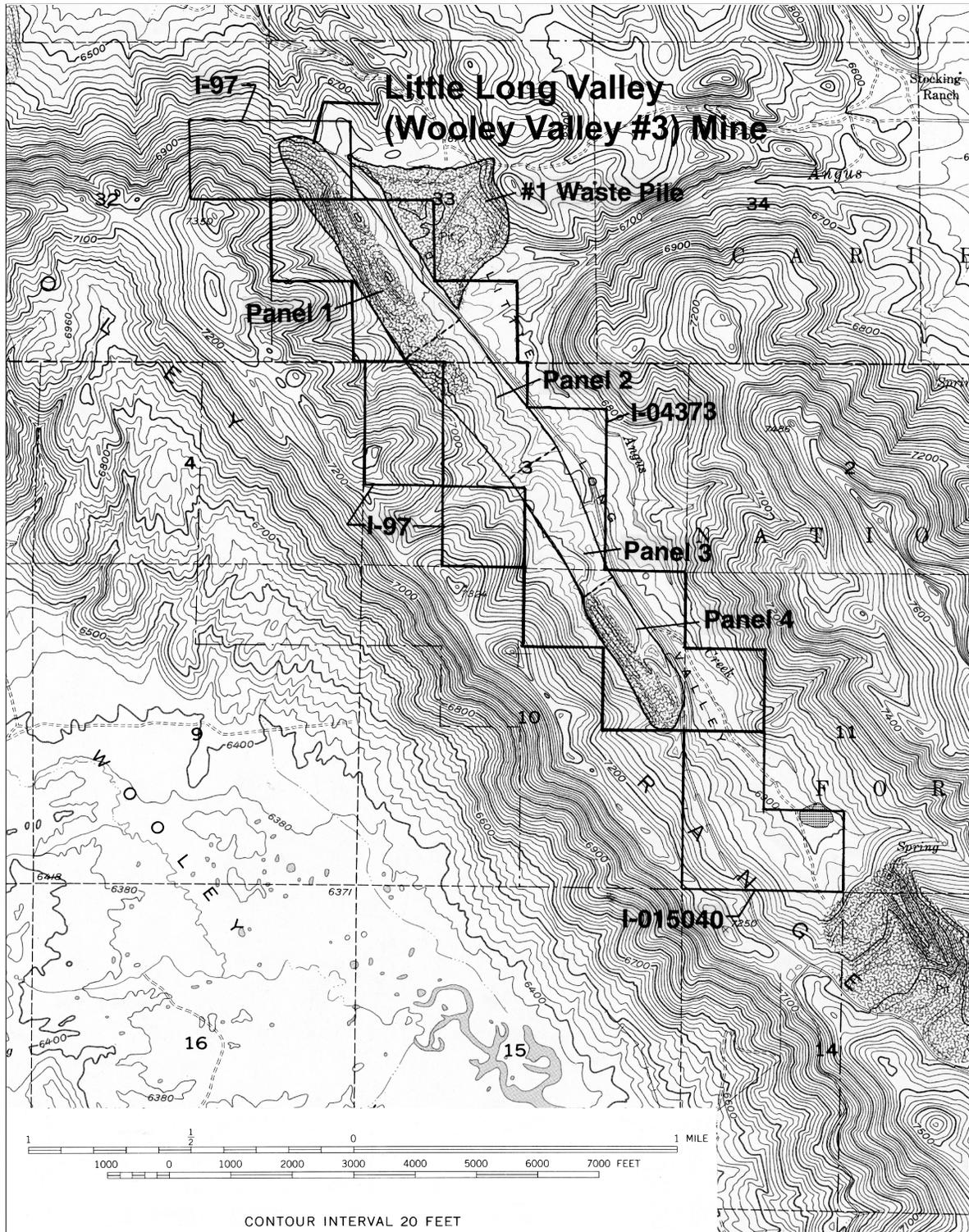


Figure 173. Map showing the location of the Little Long Valley (Wooley Valley #3) Mine, Caribou County, Idaho.

constructed during the summer of 1976 were a series of sediment control basins to prevent sediment run-off from the mining activity from entering Angus Creek. During 1977, exploration was carried on in advance of mining and a total of 137 drill holes were drilled to delineate the ore zone. Mining was completed in Panel 1 in May, 1977, with operations moving on to Panel 2 (Figures 174 and 175).

On April 15, 1978, the Stauffer Chemical Company terminated their operating contract with Triangle Mining Company, thereby assuming all control in the Little Long Valley Mine.

Mining on Lease I-97 occurred on 2 of the 3 parcels. Parcel 1, or the northernmost parcel, produced ore, Parcel 2, or the central parcel, was acquired to cover segments of Lease I-04373 pit footwall which extended off-lease, and Parcel 3, the southernmost, was found to be barren of phosphate.



Figure 174. Site of the Little Long Valley Mine (pre-mining), view northeast, 1973. BLM file photo.

Mining on the northernmost Parcel 1 started in February of 1980 and was completed in 1981 with surface disturbance resulting from mining and mine related activities totaling about 20 acres. The mined-out pit was to serve as a run-off catchment basin and only a small area in the south end of the pit was backfilled.

Stripping operations and ore extraction was carried out by rubber-tired scrapers assisted by crawler dozers. Ore was hauled to the belt conveyor built at the Mill Canyon Mine just to the southeast of the



Figure 175. Aerial view of Little Long Valley Mine, August, 1978. Photo by Peter Oberlindacher.

new mine. There, the ore was carried downhill to the rail loading facility and then hauled to the Stauffer mill at Silver Bow, Montana.

To link the Little Long Valley Mine with the Mill Canyon Mine, the Stauffer Chemical Company acquired the 120-acre Federal Lease I-015040 from the FMC Corporation on October 1, 1974. This lease lay between the two Stauffer mines. Mining was conducted on this lease as Panel 5 and less than one million tons of ore was produced. On June 1, 1990, Stauffer assigned 78.7% of the lease back to the FMC Corporation.

By December, 1989, all economically recoverable phosphate reserves located within the area of Leases I-04373, I-97, and I-015040 had been recovered. Reclamation was completed and the mine was closed. For a company history after 1990, see the section of this report for the Blackfoot Narrows Mine.