



COLORADO
**Division of Reclamation,
Mining and Safety**
Department of Natural Resources



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Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety Announces Phase One of Corley Mine Surface Burn Mitigation Project

Florence, CO – The Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS) announces the start of construction activities for Phase One of the Corley Mine Surface Burn Mitigation Project, an earth-moving and coal mine refuse fire mitigation effort to extinguish a burning coal refuse pile located approximately 9 miles south-southwest of Florence, Colorado.

Construction is scheduled to begin on Monday, May 19, 2025, and is expected to be completed by Thursday, September 4, 2025. This project is being funded through the federal funds established to reduce the impacts of coal mines on communities and has an accepted bid amount of \$853,015.00.

The mitigation effort will address a 1.5-acre surface coal refuse pile that has been actively burning for over two decades due to spontaneous combustion. The pile measures approximately 35 feet tall, 150 feet wide, and 300 feet long, and is the

legacy of historical coal mining on the site, which saw operations by 15 different mines between the 1920s and 1990s.

DRMS will oversee the mechanical excavation of an estimated 82,400 cubic yards of hot burning material. Each cubic yard of burning coal will be quenched with water at a rate of 5 gallons per cubic yard. Once quenched, the material will be blended 1:1 from onsite waste piles, cooled, and then backfilled. Total excavation and backfill activities will cover 164,800 cubic yards over a 9.5-acre site.

To reduce fire danger, 9.5 acres of vegetation will be cleared around the active area, and 20,000 gallons of water will be available onsite at all times during hot work. This water will be housed in a tank equipped with a 200 gallon-per-minute pump and National Standard Thread fittings compatible with the Florence Fire Protection District. DRMS will halt all hot work if sustained winds exceed 25 miles per hour or if weather conditions present an immediate wildfire risk.

The site is on private property and public access is prohibited. This project will not affect any public roads, trails, or recreational areas. DRMS is coordinating closely with local authorities to ensure safety, and fire suppression resources will remain in place throughout the duration of the project.

Potential visual impacts of the project may include large coal or ash plumes which may resemble a wildfire and may reach elevations where a smoke plume could be widely seen. If the public has any questions or concerns about a local smoke plume it's always a good idea to reach out to their local fire protection district. Once the coal refuse fire is extinguished, Phase 2 will begin, which includes grading the site using GPS-controlled equipment to implement a geomorphic design that blends with the surrounding topography and minimizes erosion. Final steps include revegetation using native seed mixes to restore the disturbed areas.

To learn more about the project, please visit our [fact sheet](#).

To learn more about the State's coal mine fire reclamation program please visit the [Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety website.](#)