



Cattle Farm-Surface Mine Project of similar scope and size.

Bear Fork Surface Mine and Cattle Farm

LOCATION:

Pike County, KY

CLIENT:

Premier Elkhorn Coal Company

TYPE OF PROJECT:

Section 404 Permitting and Development of Pastureland Post-Mining Land Use

Premier Elkhorn Coal Company executed a surface lease agreement with property owners that would enable them to develop a large eastern Kentucky surface mine in Pike County. The lease required Premier Elkhorn Coal Company to create the maximum extent of gently sloping functional pasture land. Upon evaluating Premier's production and operational needs and the functional needs necessary to support the owner's herd, Summit Engineering, Inc. developed a mine plan to facilitate the desires of both. The key component of the plan was the variance from the approximate original contour that permitted spoil material to be placed in valley fills, in lieu of stacking the spoil material on the mine bench.

Summit obtained all the state and federal permits necessary for a successful project. All requirements of the Kentucky Division of Mine Permits and Army Corps of Engineers concerns for Clean Water Act were satisfied. The mining and reclamation plan and the 404 permit application adequately addressed the dual purpose of mining and creation of pastureland. A backfill plan was devised that placed as much spoil material as possible on the mine bench, while still providing a sufficient acreage of gentle sloping pasture land to meet the needs of the Johnson family. Stream impacts were minimized by effectively utilizing previously impacted areas for valley fills and by developing innovative techniques to mitigate unavoidable stream impacts. 404 permits for mine sites that allow a variance for the post mining configuration to vary from the approximate contour are somewhat rare. Summit was successful in this endeavor and the 404 permit for this site was issued. This mine site will provide 860,000 tons of mineable coal reserves for Premier Elkhorn Coal Company and 283 acres of valuable pasture land for the Johnson family.