



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
ENERGY AND MINERALS DEPARTMENT

OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION
AZTEC DISTRICT OFFICE

BRUCE KING
GOVERNOR

LARRY KEHOE
SECRETARY

1000 RIO BRAZOS ROAD
AZTEC, NEW MEXICO 87410
(505) 334-6178

February 3, 1981

Mr. Ernest Padilla
Oil Conservation Division
P. O. Box 2088
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Re: Illegal pit fire

Dear Ernie:

At approximately 12:45 p. m., February 2, 1981, Mr. Gholson from our office and I observed a large plume of smoke north of Aztec. Upon investigation we discovered that a pit at the Koch Exploration Company, Lambe #1, A-20-31N-10W, San Juan County, was on fire and unattended. An Employee of Koch later drove up and admitted that he had started the fire. The fire burned for approximately one hour, indicating that a large quantity of oil, perhaps as much as twenty barrels, had burned.

This fire was set without permission of this office in direct violation of Rule 311 and caused the waste of oil which might have otherwise been put to beneficial use.

I recommend that the appropriate legal action be taken against Koch Exploration Company for this violation.

If you have any questions, please contact this office.

Yours truly,

Frank T. Chavez
District Supervisor

FTC:no