Strata Energy, Inc. Case Study

The Ross ISR Project (in-situ uranium)

What was the client's issue presented to WWC?

The issue presented was Greenfield permitting of an in-situ uranium project through multiple state and federal processes. In the early project phases, Strata was a junior mining company with limited staff and exposure to the State of Wyoming and U.S. Government regulatory oversight. Strata needed turn-key permitting services from the initial baseline data collection point through execution of construction and uranium recovery operations.

How did WWC brainstorm and collaborate with the client to find a solution?

WWC evaluated state and federal guidelines for licensing an in-situ uranium project, developed a schedule to establish a baseline, a mining plan, and reclamation plan, along with a host of other plans necessary for the multitude of permits required to conduct in-situ uranium mining. The schedule met Strata's expectations upon which WWC executed the plans through eventual submittal of five significant permit applications (WDEQ-LQD Permit to Mine, WDEQ-AQD New Source Permit, WDEQ-WQD Class I UIC Permit and US NRC Source and Byproduct Materials License, US DOI-BLM Plan of Operations).

What was the solution chosen by WWC?

WWC along with Strata elected to use a collaborative approach with the regulatory agencies and stakeholders to develop informed applications that met statutory requirements and were consistent with regulations and guidelines. The collaborative approach allowed Strata to expedite the baseline data acquisition and permit application development in order to meet project timelines with high-quality permit documents.

Why did WWC feel the solution chosen was the best choice?

WWC selected this approach because it allowed Strata to predict and then meet corporate timelines along with allowing submittal of high-quality permit applications. The approach taken by Strata and WWC resulted in new guidelines (Guideline 24) from WDEQ-LQD for complex permitting actions that followed the model established by for the Ross ISR Project.

What was the final result of the completed project?

Three major permit applications were completed within some 15 months of receiving the notice to proceed (WDEQ-LQD Permit to Mine, US NRC Source and Byproduct Materials License and US DOI-BLM Plan of Operations). The permit to mine application was approved within 22 months and the source and byproduct materials license was received within 39 months. Other regulatory approvals were received timely and consistent with the initial schedule. At this time, the mine has been operating since December 2015 and WWC continues its' involvement both for regulatory compliance and engineering.

How was the outcome defined as good or effective for your customer?
Meeting the anticipated regulatory schedule allowed Strata to demonstrate effective execution which facilitated further investment in the Project.

How did the chosen solution save the client time, energy, or money?

The permitting added significant value to the project and necessitated detailed mine planning which carried over to the feasibility aspect of project development.

Why did WWC feel the solution chosen was the best choice?

WWC was the best choice for several reasons: first, WWC has a long and successful history working with all divisions of WDEQ; second, WWC has a long and successful history working on uranium projects and had recently worked through technical issues for other in-situ uranium permitting matters; third, WWC was quickly able to bring on 10 subcontractors to complete niche elements of the baseline data acquisition phase of the permitting.

Notes:

The NRC licensing process included a contested hearing with an Atomic Safety Licensing Board (ASLB) and all of the legal/technical work associated with said hearing. WWC had not participated in an ASLB hearing and was able to successfully defend the application and subsequent agency decision documents in a contested scenario against a well-funded non-governmental organization (NGO), specifically, the Natural Resources Defense Council. The ASLB decision was appealed to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and ultimately the 10th Circuit Court of Appeal (DC) whereupon the appeals were dismissed with prejudice.