



**ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT CABINET  
DEPARTMENT FOR NATURAL RESOURCES**

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August 15, 2011

WHITNEY C. BLACKBURN-LYNCH  
ERMC2  
2265 HARRODSBURG ROAD, SUITE 200  
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40504

RE: Armstrong Coal Company, Inc.  
Application # 892-0110 NW  
Ohio County

Dear Ms. Blackburn-Lynch,

This office recently reviewed the corrected report, "Phase III Data Recovery of the Equality Boot Rockshelter (15Oh161) Located Within the Proposed Equality Boot Mine in Ohio County, Kentucky," prepared by Jonathan P. Kerr and others of Cultural Resource Analysts, Inc (CRAI). This report presents the results of a Phase III data recovery project conducted for the above referenced permit application.

During the course of the archaeological excavation, a site type rare in the Western Coalfields, a rockshelter, was investigated in detail. In total, twenty-nine (29) one-meter-square units and eight (8) cultural features were excavated by hand. Excavations sampled archaeological deposits present to a depth of approximately 1.6 meters (5.2 feet) below modern ground surface. Although the upper soil layers in the rockshelter had been disturbed by extensive digging by relic hunters, cultural materials dating from the Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, and Historic periods were recovered by CRAI, including a small quantity of human remains recovered from looter backdirt. Information was obtained pertaining to the processes of formation of the rockshelter, climate change through time, the time span and seasonality of human use of the location, activities performed at the site, natural resources exploited, and lifeways of the human occupants. The above-referenced report is an important and much-needed contribution to the archaeology of the Western Coalfields region.

The investigators have **recommended that no additional work be conducted within this area.** Division of Mine Permits personnel and the State Historic Preservation Officer have reviewed the authors' methods and conclusions, and **concur with this recommendation.** A copy of the SHPO comments is attached for your information.

Whitney C. Blackburn-Lynch\  
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**The Department now considers the applicant to have successfully completed the permitting requirement to consider and protect significant cultural resources for site 15Oh161.** If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me at the Critical Resources Review Section, at (502) 564-2320.

Sincerely,



Ms. Davie Ransdell, Supervisor  
Critical Resources Review Section  
Division of Mine Permits

c: Permit File Stephen Ibershoff (e)  
Charles M. Niquette  
Lindy Casebier, SHPO (e)



STEVEN L. BESHEAR  
GOVERNOR

**TOURISM, ARTS AND HERITAGE CABINET  
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August 9, 2011

LINDY CASEBIER  
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

Davie Ransdell, Supervisor  
Critical Resources Review Section  
DSMRE/Division of Permits  
#2 Hudson Hollow Complex  
U.S. 127 South  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

**RE: Phase III Data Recovery of the Equality Boot Rockshelter (15OH161) located within the Proposed Equality Boot Mine in Ohio County, Kentucky (Revised Report)**  
By Jonathan P. Kerr, Robert C. Donahue, Russell S. Quick, and Lisa J. Kelly (CRAI)  
**Armstrong Coal Company, Inc.**  
**Permit Application # 892-0110**

Dear Ms. Ransdell:

Thank you for submitting the above-mentioned revised report for review. This archaeological investigation of 15Oh161 involved the excavation of 29 1-x-1 m<sup>2</sup> units and eight features, and specialized analyses of recovered materials dating from the Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, and Historic periods—representing many millennia of Kentucky's prehistoric and early historic past. Despite impacts to this shelter by looting activity, the investigations were able to identify and examine changes in various aspects of prehistoric lifeways over time, specifically in subsistence, technology, economic organization, and settlement patterns.

The archaeological studies conducted at Equality Boot Rockshelter (15Oh161) greatly enhanced our understanding of human occupation and use of this area of western Kentucky. This site's significance is particularly noteworthy in relation to the broader regional context of Archaic habitation along the Green River during a time of substantial socioeconomic changes. Though not as optimal as preserving and protecting this significant site for posterity, this revised report stands as an important contribution to our understanding of Kentucky's rich cultural heritage.

We are satisfied that our previously-submitted comments and recommendations for revision have been addressed. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Kary Stackelbeck (502.564.7005, ext. 147) of my staff.

Sincerely,

Lindy Casebier, Acting Executive Director  
Kentucky Heritage Council and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

LC: wds/klis

cc: Charles M. Niquette (CRAI); Jonathon P. Kerr (CRAI); Dr. George Crothers (KY-OSA)