

RIO TINTO

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RTEA and Jacobs Ranch Mine Donate Conservation Easement to Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

GILLETTE, WY – On June 25, 2007, Rio Tinto Energy America (RTEA) and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) finalized a formal agreement that created the Rochelle Hills Conservation Easement. The easement contains nearly 1,000 acres, with 75 percent of that total comprised of reclaimed mining lands on RTEA's Jacobs Ranch Mine, located fifteen miles southeast of Wright, Wyoming. The easement acreage was donated to RMEF by RTEA.

Larry Baesler, Lands Program Manager for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation stated, "The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is very excited to complete this historic easement with the Jacobs Ranch Mine. We are hoping it is only the first of many such easements in the Rocky Mountain west. We look forward to strengthening this new partnership with the mining industry so that together we can continue to protect important reclaimed wildlife habitat and ensure the future of our hunting heritage."

The Rochelle Hills Conservation Easement is the first easement in eastern Wyoming and the first easement on reclaimed mining lands in Wyoming. The reclaimed land's primary uses are livestock grazing and wildlife habitat.

“The reclamation efforts of Jacobs Ranch Mine helped to enhance the condition and classification of the land from rangeland in the pre-mining stage to crucial elk winter range in the post-mining reclamation,” Bob Green, RTEA Director of Sustainable Development said. The land now provides valuable winter and yearlong elk habitat for the Rochelle Hills elk herd, which is made up of more than 400 head of elk.

“In keeping with our sustainable development goals, the company donated the easement to ensure that the land continues to be used as grazingland and wildlife habitat in the years to come,” RTEA President and CEO Colin Marshall said. “This is an excellent example of sustainable development in that the coal mined from this land provided energy for today’s economic growth, while the subsequent quality reclamation will provide sustainable use for future generations.”

RTEA is committed to sustainable development, which is exemplified in part by the numerous environmental awards its operations have received. Jacobs Ranch Mine was recognized by the Wyoming Section of the Society of Range Management with the Excellence in Rangeland Stewardship Award. The mine has also been the recipient of the national Excellence in Surface Mining and Reclamation Award and the Wildlife Habitat Reclamation and Stewardship Award.

The Rio Tinto Group is a world leader in finding, extracting and processing the earth’s mineral resources. RTEA specializes in the production of low sulfur, sub-bituminous coal, and operates five coal mines located in Wyoming, Montana and Colorado. With a combined workforce of more than 2,200 employees, and with the help of hundreds of contractors and suppliers, the company provides fuel to its energy company customers who generate nearly six percent of the nation’s electricity. For more information on RTEA, visit www.rtea.com.

Founded in 1984 and headquartered in Missoula, Mont., the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring the future of elk, other wildlife and their habitat. The Elk Foundation and its partners have permanently protected or enhanced nearly 5 million acres, a land area more than twice as large as Yellowstone National Park. Nearly 500,000 acres previously closed to public access are now open for hunting, fishing and other recreation. The Elk Foundation has more than 150,000 members, a staff of 150 and 10,000 active volunteers. To help protect wild elk country or learn more about the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, visit www.elkfoundation.org or call 800-CALL-ELK.

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