

Peabody's Powder River Coal Company, Campbell County High School Students Team to Restore Riparian Habitat on Reclaimed Lands

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Employees of Peabody Energy's Powder River Coal Company teamed with Campbell County High School students to restore riparian habitat along Porcupine Creek at the North Antelope/Rochelle Mine, the nation's largest and most productive coal mine. Nearly 50 students and employees spent yesterday hand planting more than 2,200 willows and cottonwoods along a two-mile stream bank as part of "Project Forkhorn," a broad wildlife habitat reclamation program.

"Hand planting is an important technique because it allows us to look at the micro-topography within our reclamation to determine the best planting locations for hardy, robust growth," said Bryan Hansen, environmental specialist for North Antelope/Rochelle Mine.

"Planting willows along the stream bank will improve water quality and support a wider diversity of aquatic life. We also expect the improved habitat to attract an increased population of migratory water birds, including mallards and Canada geese."

Today's team-based work to restore riparian habitat is part of a larger effort to reclaim mined lands for wildlife habitat as well as livestock grazing. Populations of pronghorn, deer and elk find a home within the mine's lease area, populations that have grown annually for nearly a decade.

"We believe in continuous environmental improvement in coal mining and coal use and seek to create valuable resources to benefit future generations," said Greg Dundas, operations manager for North Antelope/Rochelle Mine. "Project Forkhorn embodies these values, while increasing awareness about stewardship of our resources. The students should take great pride in their excellent work, which will leave a lasting legacy."

To date, Project Forkhorn has resulted in the hand planting of more than 5,000 trees and shrubs on reclaimed lands, with species ranging from Rocky Mountain juniper to Wyoming big sagebrush. Annual environmental monitoring results show that reclaimed lands at North Antelope/Rochelle are typically two times more productive than native range.

Peabody's commitment to environmental excellence is driven by the company's mission statement, which says that when mining is complete, the company will leave the land in a condition equal to or better than before mining. This mission is turned into reality through an environmental committee headed by the company's president and the actions of a staff of corporate field environmental experts.

Award-winning reclamation efforts include restoring tens of thousands of acres and planting more than 70 million trees nationwide. Peabody has received nearly 20 industry awards in the past three years for environmental excellence.

With coal seams up to 100 feet thick, ultra-low sulfur products and superior train loading capabilities, Peabody's Powder River Basin mines provide more than 100 million tons of coal annually to customers as far away as Canada, Alabama and Massachusetts. The operations provide low-cost energy for more than 16 million families, using low sulfur coal that results in a cleaner environment.

Peabody Energy is the world's largest coal company. Its coal products fuel more than 9 percent of America's electricity and more than 2 percent of the world's electricity.

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