

Peabody Energy's Former Big Sky Mine Honored for Environmental Excellence by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior

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ST. LOUIS, Oct. 18, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Peabody Energy (NYSE: BTU) today earned the 2011 Director's Award from the U.S. Department of the Interior for outstanding achievement in land and habitat restoration at the company's former Big Sky Mine in Colstrip, Mont. Interior's highest honor, the Director's Award is presented each year to one coal producer for demonstrating the best environmental practices in the United States. The award was presented at Interior's Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. government recognized Peabody for using grading techniques to create sustainable watersheds and superior wildlife habitat throughout a 2,200-acre region of gently rolling hills and stream valleys in Montana. The team delivered dramatic improvements to erosion control, rangeland productivity, water supply and wildlife habitat when compared to native range.

"Work at the Big Sky Mine has become a national model for what can be achieved by empowering a workforce to innovate," said Peabody Energy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Gregory H. Boyce. "Working with regulators, the Big Sky project team proved that exceptional results can be achieved by allowing employees to continuously adapt to changing conditions and implement the very latest and best environmental practices. This honor underscores our commitment to the mission that has always guided us: Every day, Peabody 'returns the land to a condition equal to or better than we found it.'"

The Interior Department credited Peabody's team of environmental scientists and operations personnel with establishing a diverse mix of native trees, shrubs and grasses in the area. This sustainable landscape offers unique ranching and wildlife benefits, supporting livestock and ecologically important species such as the sharp-tailed grouse.

Under the leadership of part-time rancher and Peabody Energy Reclamation Manager Reg Hoff, the Big Sky team partnered with area landowners, regulatory agencies and academics over three decades to implement reclamation best practices.

The team pioneered natural drainage techniques that resulted in numerous vital watersheds throughout the area.

In addition, the team transformed residual high walls at the mine into formations that mimic native sandstone bluffs, creating valuable habitat and striking vistas. Final grading at Big Sky was completed in 2007.

An expert panel from U.S. Interior's Office of Surface Mining annually recognizes mining operations from around the nation for sustainable programs that reclaim mined lands and demonstrate community involvement and social responsibility. Peabody Energy was among four coal producers honored at Interior's Excellence in Surface Coal Mining ceremony and the only 2011 winner of the Director's Award.

The company earned more than a dozen state, national and international awards for stewardship and sustainability in 2010 and the first half of 2011. The company reclaimed more than 5,200 acres and planted half a million trees last year.

Peabody is the world's largest private-sector coal company and a global leader in clean coal solutions. With 2010 sales of 246 million tons and nearly \$7 billion in revenues, Peabody fuels 10 percent of U.S. power and 2 percent of worldwide electricity.

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SOURCE Peabody Energy
