

Rio Tinto

From Spirit Magazine – The Magazine for Rio Tinto People

Creating a future from old sites



Bill Adams, general manager, Legacy and Closure, has seen first-hand how we're creating new opportunities at old mining and operational sites.

At Rio Tinto, our approach is to plan for closure during our operations. We collaborate with and listen to our stakeholders throughout an operation's life cycle to identify options for post-closure land uses.

We also have a commitment to legacy management, which outlines how the company manages the disused sites that have been inherited through the acquisition of other entities.

After a long and distinguished career spanning 20 years at Rio Tinto based mainly in the US, Bill shares his experiences in legacy management and closure planning.

Q. What was your first role at Rio Tinto?

My first role at Rio Tinto was for Kennecott Utah Copper. I started in December 1995 as director of Environmental Science. I was responsible for assisting Kennecott with environmental risk assessments and associated contaminant clean-ups across the mining property.

Q. How did you get involved with legacy management?

I got involved with legacy management in 2008 when I was asked to review the top 15 sites acquired with the purchase of Alcan. This led to the development of a Legacy team in April 2009.

Q. What has been your most challenging legacy/closure project?

Without a doubt the most challenging project has been the mine remediation at Holden in the State of Washington. The site is extremely remote and only accessed by water. This old copper mine is the largest mine closure undertaken by Rio Tinto to date.

Q. What has been the most interesting project?

The most interesting project that I have worked on has been the donation of the Ryan Mine site to the Death Valley Conservancy (DVC). This Borax mine operated from 1913 to 1927 and is located next to Death Valley National Park (the largest National Park in the US). Under the direction of the DVC, the 14

remaining buildings at Ryan are being restored and will be open to the public in the future. Rio Tinto established a trust fund through an endowment that pays for the restoration. The Ryan mine operators/US Borax leaders worked with congress to establish the National Park in the 1930s.

Q. What's changed in how we approach and manage legacy and closure commitments?

Prior to 2009 Rio Tinto did not have a central group for managing legacy properties. Each of the 114 sites that the Legacy team now manages was managed by the business units. The formation of the Legacy team brought structure and leadership in the way we manage our closed properties.

Q. How has Rio Tinto innovated and adapted to continue to respond to diverse and increasing closure/legacy commitments?

Shortly after the Legacy team was established, we determined the best way to manage the diverse portfolio of legacy sites was by region. So, we placed team members in Europe, Australia and North America. This enables us to monitor changing regulations in various jurisdictions. This approach also allows us to have a team member on site when work is being done, helping to ensure it gets done safely. The Legacy team members frequently work with local communities to help them set up new businesses at closed properties.

Highlights

- Bill Adams retires after a career at Rio Tinto that began in 1995
- Credit the Legacy team for bringing structure and leadership in managing closed properties
- Considers a regional approach best to manage the diverse portfolio of legacy sites

Clean-up Creates Opportunity



Our clean-up work at the Holden Mine site in Washington State, US, garnered the American Exploration & Mining Association's 2015 Environmental Excellence Award.

Closed in 1957, the site – which Rio Tinto inherited through acquisition – has had an impact on water and soil in the immediate area. Our work at Holden involves burying and capping the historic mining materials as well as collecting and treating impacted water. This work will not only clean up the site – it will also give a boost to the local economy and community.

The project will employ more than 500 people over its life, generating more than US\$8 million in wages and injecting US\$60 million into the local economy.

Did you know?

The Legacy team has completed work at 38 properties in the last seven years.

To date, the Legacy team has generated over US\$500 million via sales of assets, including properties, houses, buildings and the Rawhide Mine in Nevada, US.

[Watch the Holden Mine Video](#)

