

MONTANA

2007 mining

Exciting news for the industry:
MMA signs HB460 with DEQ

Profile of MMA Member Mark Cole

Revett Minerals' Rock Creek Mine
goes 'hand-in-paw' with grizzlies

Stillwater sets groundbreaking
natural resource precedent
with its Good Neighbor Agreement



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Cole has deep belief in mining industry

By Dawn M. Barker

Mark Cole is a busy man. As one of the principals of Dick Irvin Inc. of Shelby, Montana, he has his hands full with the diversified nature of trucking services the company provides. Still, he finds the time to devote his energy to what he feels is an important sector of the economy – the mining industry.

Cole is First Vice President of the Montana Mining Association, and has put in many hours of work, trying to find solutions to make the busy sector even better for everyone involved.

As well as the MMA, Cole has worked on transportation steering committees and research projects in both the U.S. and Canada, bringing logistics and analysis of the transportation industry to the economic forefront, and he also holds the chair as president of the Montana Motor Carrier Association, as well as serving on various boards and committees of the construction and agriculture industries.

Though he has been involved with Dick Irvin for 34 years, Cole was by no means “there at the beginning”. Established in 1951 as a single proprietorship by Dick and Pat Irvin, the company began with just a single farm truck serving the local agriculture market. Dick Irvin became incorporated in 1967, and has since grown immensely, now operating between 85 and 100 power transport units throughout the United States and western Canada. Although it still serves its original agricultural clientele, time has seen the company branch out to serve the oil and gas resource, mining and construction industries.

Dick Irvin made its entry into the Montana mining scene in the late 1970s, when the oil and gas market was on a decline. Today, it services not only Montana, but also all of the western U.S. and Canada.

“I’ve seen a very substantial reduction in

the mining industry in this state during the last decade, but I’m happy to say it looks much better today,” Cole said.

“The future looks considerably better; the market is stronger than it has been in years.”

In his spare time, Cole and his wife Barbara raise quarter horses, and they try to visit as often as possible with their two grown children and four grandchildren.

“We’re excited (to be grandparents),” he said. “Every opportunity we get, we try to spend time with them.”

Still, the pull of his work with the company continues, and Cole is dedicated to his profession.

“Ours is a progressive company. You need to be on the cutting edge of development in the region or area. It’s just beneficial to be aware of what’s happening, and in some way to be able to assist in developing the economic situation, new businesses or industries

can come about, and that’s good for everyone,” he said.

“I’m a firm believer not only in our company, but also in utilizing the resources we have here in North America. I think that we need to make use of the resources in a very environmentally conscious way that will not do harm to the environment, but provide the basics that the industry and the economy needs.”

So it would appear there’s no sign of slowing down for Cole.

“We’ve talked about it (retiring),” he said, “but I don’t know what I would do. You always think about it, but if you enjoy what you’re doing, you might as well keep on. At this point, I’m definitely looking forward to more years in the industry.” ■



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Rock Creek Mine a boost for both economy and ecosystem

By Dawn M. Barker



Usually, one hears about civilization's infringement into the natural ecosystem as a battle of man vs. nature, with nature on the losing end of the deal. Revett Minerals' proposed Rock Creek Mine, however, promises to turn that concept on its ear, with productivity and the health of the local ecology going hand-in-hand – or should that be “hand-in-paw”?

When the Rock Creek Mine was originally proposed in 1998, many feared the endangered grizzlies of the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem (CYE) would be harmed, or even wiped out by the copper and silver mining activity, even though the mining would take place deep underground. Originally, a biological opinion was first issued in 2000, and was revisited in 2002. Revett then revised its plans substantially, so much so that it became clear they were committed to benefiting all wildlife as well as “the griz” in the area. This commitment eventually won the support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In fact, the Revett plan will result in more funding for the Cabinet Yaak Ecosystem than has been spent on the Yellowstone Ecosystem over the last 25 years (the grizzly bear population in Yellowstone is now proposed for delisting).

Included in Revett's plan is the provision that the company will not disturb the 94,000 acres of wilderness adjacent to the mine's mill site nor the surface of the wilderness area a thousand feet above where much of the mining activity will take place, thus affecting only 115

acres of land outside the wilderness area that is suitable for grizzly bear habitat. To offset the 115 acre area, Revett will purchase an additional 2,450 acres of bear habitat which will never be sold or developed, and fund the closure of five miles of existing roads which are currently in the protected habitat area.

The composition of the mine, located 1,000 feet below ground level, will mean that wildlife and people on the surface won't even be aware that industry is happening beneath their feet.

When the Rock Creek Mine was originally proposed in 1998, many feared the endangered grizzlies of the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem (CYE) would be harmed, or even wiped out by the copper and silver mining activity, even though the mining would take place deep underground.

Revett recently agreed to and is funding three positions for the life of the mine: two Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks grizzly bear specialists and one law enforcement officer; the company will assist Montana's Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the United

States Forest Service in providing education, information and outreach programs. This will include monitoring and research efforts centered on the CYE grizzly bear population.

Finally, Revett Minerals will purchase grizzly bear-resistant garbage containers for employees who live in the area, for the mine, and for Forest Service campgrounds, and convert the Sanders County garbage transfer station and others in the area to be bear-resistant.

This suite of measures will cost Revett an estimated \$18 million in today's dollars (approximately \$30 million if escalated at 4% per annum) during the project's lifespan, which the company says equals more than \$1 million for each bear known to live in the area.

If you care about Grizzly Bears,

support the Rock Creek mine

Revett Minerals and Federal Agencies agree to unprecedented protection package.

US Fish & Wildlife Service and US Forest Service developed several measures to protect grizzlies in Montana. The enhancement package includes:

- 2,450 acres of high-quality grizzly habitat will be protected from future development;
- Montana's Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) will be able to hire two grizzly bear specialists for 30-plus years, at no cost to taxpayers or sportsmen;
- FWP will also be able to hire an additional law-enforcement officer for the area, again at no cost to taxpayers or sportsmen; and
- FWP, in concert with the Forest Service, will have additional money for grizzly education programs – at no cost to taxpayers or sportsmen.

Don't take our word, listen to Anne Vandehey from US Fish & Wildlife Service:

Vandehey said these collective conservation measures "will ultimately improve conditions for bears in the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem." And, she added, "We don't believe any other grizzly bear ecosystem has received this level of concerted or focused attention."



What makes this possible? Our Rock Creek mine!

What makes all these recovery measures possible is our proposed Rock Creek Mine in Sanders County. Rock Creek will be an underground copper-silver mine that will have a modest footprint and use state-of-art environmental protection technology. The mine will directly employ more than 250 Montanans for more than three decades, and will use a multi-stage water treatment plant to ensure excess water meets or exceeds all state and federal regulations.

You see, it is possible both to protect the griz and provide needed jobs. We can do both!





Estimates are that direct bear mortality attributable to the mine during the mine's 35 year lifespan will be a single bear, and to offset this, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks plans to import six female bears into the area.


In a recent news release, Revett President and CEO Bill Orchow stated that "No other grizzly bear ecosystem, worldwide, has received such an intensive, concerted and coordinated effort to reduce conflicts between grizzly bears and people, and to

reduce the potential for human-caused mortality of grizzly bears."

Revett's commitment to the ecosystem does not stop at bears, either. The original biological report raised concerns that mine construction could elevate sediment levels,

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Revett Minerals President and CEO Bill Orchow believes the company developed a win-win situation with Rock Creek. "This is good news for the economy, good news for Northwest Montana, and good news for wildlife."

adversely affecting the area's bull trout population. In answer, the company has committed to pave the road, install sediment control structures, and provide long-term monitoring to detect changes in water chemistry and temperature.

The mitigation plan contains many additional environment-friendly measures as well, such as not using salt on the roads during winter, removal of any animals from the roadway area, construction of power lines to reduce potential harm to bald eagles, and funding electric fencing kits to surround bear problem sites.

The result will be a positive net effect to the ecosystem, and it certainly will be for the local human economy. When up and operating at capacity, the mine is estimated to produce 10,000 tons of silver and copper per day, and to provide 300 "quality" jobs and 30 years of economic benefits to the region, including taxes, local purchasing and the multiplier effect which comes from improving the local economy.

Revett's existing Troy Mine, just over the hill from Rock Creek, is solid proof that Revett can and will operate in an environmentally friendly and economically beneficial manner. Constant monitoring has shown benign tailings and mine water that consistently meets drinking water standards. Troy provides 150 local jobs and produces 6,500 tons of copper and silver daily. Revett's tradition of protecting the environment and providing economic benefits to the community will continue with operations at Rock Creek Mine.

Revett Minerals President and CEO Bill Orchow believes the company has

developed a win-win situation with Rock Creek.

"This is good news for the economy, good news for Northwest Montana, and good news for wildlife," he said. ■



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