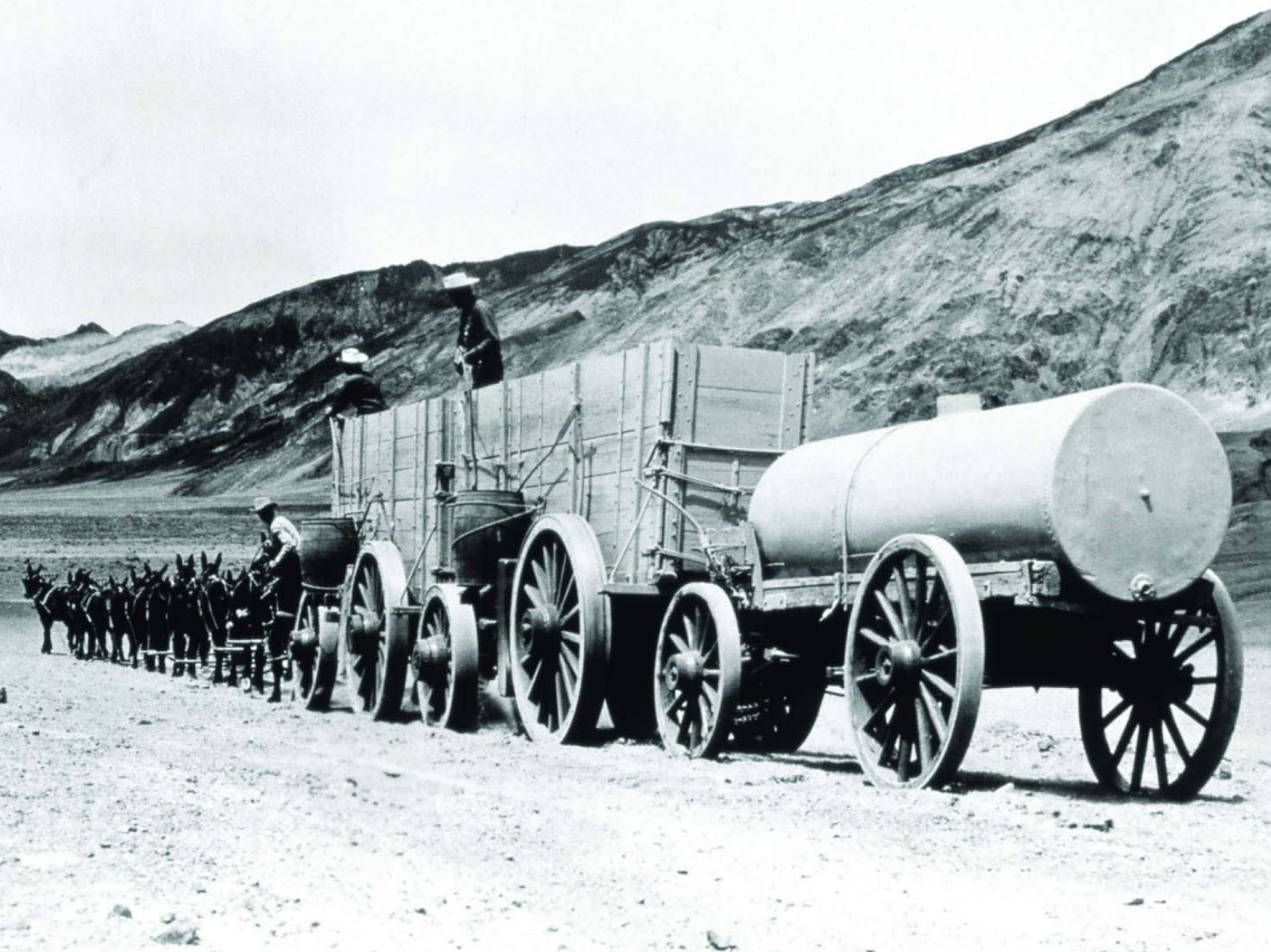


RIO TINTO

Sustainable development, Rio Tinto Minerals, and the Wild West



Flourishing life in Death Valley

Rio Tinto Minerals' borate business has a 134 year history that captures all the key elements of the modern concept that has come to be known as sustainable development – creating self-sustaining environmental, social, and economic skills and capabilities that have lived on well beyond the cessation of mining activities.





Rio Tinto Minerals' spirit of pioneering and innovation extends more than 134 years and is Rio Tinto's longest standing example of its efforts to support sustainable communities in economic, environmental, and social aspects. Located in California's Death Valley, Rio Tinto Minerals and its *20 Mule Team Borax*® products became synonymous with the Wild West.

As Rio Tinto Minerals' foundation business, Pacific Coast Borax, planned to close its original mines in the area, its executives worked to have Death Valley designated a National Monument. (It achieved this status in 1933, and in 1994 was designated a National Park.) The company creatively converted mining facilities to support the nascent tourism trade, built new hotels and attractions using native stone and adobe, donated land and facilities to the federal government, and helped the area's residents develop new skills to support tourism. Rio Tinto Minerals promoted both its products and tourism in the region, using its world famous *20 Mule Team Borax* brand as a symbol of technological ingenuity and overcoming nature's obstacles in the Wild West. A former company executive and inventor of the *20 Mule Team Borax* logo, Stephen T. Mather, went on to become the first head of the US National Park Service (NPS). His successor at the NPS, Horace Albright, became a senior executive at the company. Today Death Valley receives nearly one million visitors each year, providing jobs and sustaining a viable economy in what would otherwise be a desolate area.

Long after the company moved its mining operations out of Death Valley, the western theme continued. For many Americans, there is an immediate association between *20 Mule Team Borax*, and one of the longest running radio and TV series in history, *Death Valley Days*, including one of its actors and hosts, Ronald Reagan. The company even hired a woman (rare in those days), Ruth Woodman, to scour the countryside for "true stories of the American west" and help write scripts for the TV series.

Local and regional communities around Death Valley continue to look for ways to draw on their cultural heritage for support by, for example, developing a museum and further tourist attractions. Equally important, the company continues to derive value from its *20 Mule Team Borax* brand as a means to differentiate its products and services in increasingly competitive markets. Research shows that nearly 75 per cent of consumers in the United States recognise the brand, and associate it with dependability, durability and trustworthiness.

Rio Tinto Minerals' 134 year history captures all of the key elements of the concept that has recently come to be known as sustainable development and continues to leverage its rich heritage to sustain profitability going forward.



Above: Author Ruth Woodman on location at mining camp of Ryan, Death Valley.

Left: Author Ruth Woodman and actress Karen Sharpe on location in Death Valley filming "Claim Jumpin' Jennie".

Rio Tinto plc

London
Telephone +44 (0)20 7930 2399

Rio Tinto Limited

Melbourne
Telephone +61 (0)3 9283 3333

www.riotinto.com

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