



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**KENNECOTT MINE RECEIVES STATE AND NATIONAL
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS**

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Flambeau (WI) and Eagle (MI) Owner Recognized for Environmental Successes

Salt Lake City, UT — Kennecott Minerals Company (Kennecott) today announced its South Carolina based Kennecott Ridgeway Mining Company (Ridgeway) has earned two important awards honoring environmental performance. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) awarded Ridgeway with the 2006 South Carolina Mined Land Reclamation Award. Ridgeway also received the prestigious Interstate Mining Compact Commission Annual Reclamation Award.

“We take tremendous pride in receiving these two honors,” said Kennecott president David Salisbury. “These honors reflect our company’s strong dedication to environmental and community stewardship, and the efforts of the outstanding team of committed people who operated and reclaimed Ridgeway with a positive legacy in mind.”

The SCDHEC created the Mined Land Reclamation Award to acknowledge the best examples of responsible mineral resource development. The Interstate Mining Compact Commission established the Kenes C. Bowling National Mine Reclamation Awards to recognize outstanding reclamation achievements and promote community-compatible mine reclamation on a national level. The Interstate Mining Compact Commission is a multi-state governmental agency / organization with states officially represented by their Governors who serve as Commissioners.

Salisbury noted that Ridgeway is not the only facility Kennecott operated with the best interests of the community and environment in mind. Kennecott’s Ladysmith, WI based Flambeau Mine, which operated from 1993 to 1997, has recently requested the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) issue a Certificate of Completion (COC) for the successful reclamation of Flambeau. Flambeau produced more than 181,000 tons of copper, as well as gold and silver, while providing more than 70 safe and family-supporting jobs for local residents. Flambeau today hosts a natural ecosystem to support wildlife and native plants, and is a 150-acre recreation and nature area that is open to the public for events, hiking, bird watching, horseback riding, river fishing and more.

Ridgeway was chosen to receive both awards based on regulatory compliance, reclamation, water quality treatment, preplanning for post-mining land use and bond release, and innovative practices in reclamation.

“Our reclamation and sustainable development goals were to demonstrate to local communities, regulatory agencies, the mining industry, and environmental interest groups that mining can provide the natural resources demanded by society in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner,” said Ridgeway manager Roy Duckett, “Ridgeway today stands as an excellent success story of sustainable development and exists for the enjoyment and benefit of the community.”

Located approximately 25 miles north of Columbia, S.C. in Fairfield County, Ridgeway operated from December 1988 to November 1999 and produced more than 1.4 million ounces of gold while employing more than 180 people.

Following a \$30 million reclamation effort, the site today consists of two 100 acre lakes, numerous wetlands and a 380 acre tailings storage facility containing the finely ground rock remaining after the gold was removed, now transformed into a tall grass prairie hosting numerous bird and wildlife species. Kennecott has entered into a partnership with the nonprofit Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy to create the Ridgeway Center for Ecological Restoration utilized for environmental education and research.

Kennecott’s Ridgeway and Flambeau Mines produced minerals from naturally occurring sulfide ore bodies. Both mines met or exceeded all environmental regulations and permit conditions during operation and post-mining performance, and transforming the sites for on-going productive community use. Kennecott’s proposed Eagle mine northwest of Marquette, Michigan will produce much needed nickel and copper from sulfide ore.

Flambeau and Ridgeway received the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management’s Hardrock Mineral Community Outreach and Economic Security and Environmental Awards in 2003 and 2005, respectively.

Kennecott Minerals Company is a wholly owned subsidiary of London-based Rio Tinto plc, a world leader in responsible mining.

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On the web at:

www.kennecottminerals.com/mines/ridgeway (South Carolina)

www.flambeaumine.com (Wisconsin)

www.eagle-project.com (Michigan)