

## Get the Facts on Oak Flat

### ***Background***

Oak Flat is a part of the Tonto National Forest in Arizona. In 2014 Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act with a rider that would give 2,422 acres on Tonto National Forest to a mining Conglomerate of two of the world's largest mining companies.<sup>1</sup> These companies, BHP and the Rio Tinto Group, plan to create a massive mine in Oak Flat in order to remove the copper that lies 7,000 feet underground. They call this project "Resolution Copper."<sup>2</sup>

### ***Effects***

- Subsidence- the mine will create a large sinkhole that is estimated to be 2-4 miles in diameter. When supporting rock underneath the surface is removed, it causes a gradual sinking on the surface, resulting in a crater-like depression in the earth.<sup>3</sup>
- Waste products- the mine is expected to produce 1.5 billion tons of tailings. Tailings are the materials left over after the process of separating the copper from the unusable part of the ore.<sup>4</sup> Even if tailings are properly stored, they can easily contaminate water and soil through acid drainage or other means.<sup>5</sup>
- Water- Arizona already suffers from drought in many areas, and this mine will use an estimated 20,000 acre feet of water per year- enough to provide water for 20,000 families or 80,000 people for an entire year. To function the mine requires the removal of water to keep the mine shafts dry.<sup>6</sup> Water is a precious resource that must be protected.

### ***Why this land is important***

- Sacred land- Oak Flat is sacred to the San Carlos Apache people. The area contains prehistoric sites and is the site of many religious and cultural ceremonies in the tribe. Oak Flat's destruction would be devastating to the Apache people.<sup>7</sup>
- Wildlife- Tonto National Forest is home to a diverse array of plants and animals, including many endangered and threatened species.<sup>8</sup> Their habitat would be destroyed with the creation of this mine.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://arizonageology.blogspot.com/2014/12/resolution-copper-land-swap-bill-signed.html>

<sup>2</sup>

[http://tucson.com/business/local/massive-mine-proposed-at-oak-flat-sacred-tribal-land/article\\_36556048-ba26-54ba-8445-0ff8b753e29b.html](http://tucson.com/business/local/massive-mine-proposed-at-oak-flat-sacred-tribal-land/article_36556048-ba26-54ba-8445-0ff8b753e29b.html)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112shrg75271/html/CHRG-112shrg75271.htm> and <http://www.azminingreform.org/sites/default/files/docs/Impacts%20of%20Block%20Cave%20Mining.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://resolutioncopper.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/project\\_landing\\_page\\_faq.pdf](http://resolutioncopper.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/project_landing_page_faq.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://epa.gov/waste/nonhaz/industrial/special/mining/techdocs/tailings.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://resolutioncopper.com/environment/water/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.azminingreform.org/content/oak-flat-land-exchange>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tonto/landmanagement/resourcemanagement/?cid=fsbdev3\\_018778](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tonto/landmanagement/resourcemanagement/?cid=fsbdev3_018778)

- Recreation- Oak Flat is a popular destination for birders, rock climbers, and families. Visitors from all over the world have enjoyed the majestic beauty of the area. The largest climbing competition on earth, the Phoenix Bouldering Contest, took place in Oak Flat for 14 years.<sup>9</sup>
- Public land- National Forests were created for the conservation of land and to be open to all. The privatization of this land for profit is simply wrong. This legislation failed twice on the House floor- only when it was slipped into an appropriations bill was it able to pass.<sup>10</sup>

***Contact us***

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<sup>9</sup> [http://blogs.phoenixnewtimes.com/valleyfever/2015/04/resolution\\_copper\\_mine\\_superior\\_oak\\_flat.php?print=true](http://blogs.phoenixnewtimes.com/valleyfever/2015/04/resolution_copper_mine_superior_oak_flat.php?print=true)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/03/ndaa-land-deals\\_n\\_6264362.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/03/ndaa-land-deals_n_6264362.html)