



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Coronado National Forest
Supervisor's Office

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File Code: 1950-3/2810

Date: July 10, 2008

Enrique Manzanilla
Director - Communities and Ecosystems Division
U.S. EPA, Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
CED-1
San Francisco, CA 94105

**CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN
RECEIPT REQUESTED
NUMBER: 70033110000285807847**

Dear Mr. Manzanilla:

I am writing to invite the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to participate as a federal cooperating agency with the USDA Forest Service, Coronado National Forest, in the environmental study of a proposed Mine Plan of Operation. The proposed Rosemont Copper Mine would extract and process ores from the Rosemont Deposit located approximately 30 miles southeast of Tucson, Arizona. The mine and associated facilities would encompass approximately 4,500 acres in public and private ownerships in Pima County, Arizona.

The Coronado National Forest, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, published a Notice of Intent (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado/rosemont/documents/rosemont-noi-02282008.pdf>) to prepare an environmental impact statement on Rosemont Copper Company's Mine Plan of Operations. Briefly, the proposed action is to construct and operate an open-pit copper mine and associated processing facilities, including access roads, required utilities, and to reclaim affected lands. A full description of the proposed action (Mine Plan of Operation) may be viewed at: <http://www.rosemontcopper.com/operations2.asp>.

Based on the Mine Plan of Operation, the Coronado National Forest identified the following preliminary issues in its Notice of Intent. Effects on:

- the economy, public services, quality of life, and other community resources in Pima County, Tucson, and nearby communities
- the quality and availability of surface water and groundwater resources
- vegetation and wildlife, including those having special-status designations
- soils and geology
- aesthetic resources, including visual quality objectives and State Highway 83, a scenic highway
- archaeological, historic, and cultural resources, including Native American interests and values
- Forest recreational use and compatibility with other Forest land uses
- increased traffic on local roads and transportation systems
- noise on nearby residents, Forest users, and sensitive wildlife
- mining and processing and vehicle traffic on ambient air quality



The formal scoping period for public comment is scheduled to close on July 14, 2008. Upon completion of this scoping effort, comments will undergo content analysis and reports of the results will be produced. These preliminary issues are expected to be refined as the environmental study progresses.

I am requesting U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's participation as a federal cooperating agency due to your agency's regulatory oversight authority for aspects of this proposed action. Under a cooperating agency agreement, I would expect the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to be a partner in the development of the environmental impact statement and related documentation required by environmental law, regulation, and policy. To promote a successful partnership in this endeavor, I am prepared to have the Rosemont Copper Project Team Leader, interdisciplinary team, and primary consultant (SWCA Environmental Consultants) undertake activities to enhance interagency cooperation:

- Consult with your agency on any relevant technical studies that will be required for the project
- Organize joint field reviews with your agency
- Provide your agency with project information, including study results
- Request your agency's review of relevant sections of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement prior to its release for comment
- Include information in the environmental documents and record needed by your agency to discharge your regulatory and compliance responsibilities under law, regulation, and policy
- Include information in the environmental documents and record that assists your agency with any other requirements regarding jurisdictional approvals, permits, licenses, and/or clearances

I encourage your agency to express its views on subjects within your jurisdiction and expertise, and will expect that if, at any point in the process, your agency's needs are not being met you will inform my team leader. I anticipate that the environmental documents and associated public involvement processes used in this study will satisfy your agency's requirements, including those related to project alternatives, environmental consequences, and mitigation. The Forest Service intends to utilize the environmental impact statement and our subsequent record of decision as our decision-making documents and as the basis for determining the Final Mine Plan of Operation.

I look forward to receiving your agency's written response to this federal cooperating agency invitation by August 29, 2008. I request that your response define the ways your agency would like to be involved in this environmental study, and whether any additional documentation of our cooperating agency relationship is desired.

Questions or concerns about the Mine Plan of Operation or our agencies' respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of this environmental study should be directed to Deputy Forest Supervisor, Reta Laford. Ms. Laford may be reached via telephone at (520) 388-8300 or via electronic mail at rlaford@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jeanine A. Derby
JEANINE A. DERBY
Forest Supervisor

cc:

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