

SAVE AK FLAT



Saving Oak Flat should be very important to all of us. It is a spiritual area. It is a place used by Apaches, that choose to do so through their faith, to connect with our Creator God.

My ancestors from my dad's side came from the Aravaipa, Superior, and Oak Flat area before the U.S. Cavalry and miners defeated our ancestors and herded them like cattle at gunpoint to old San Carlos (now covered by San Carlos Lake). I, like many Apaches, have a personal connection to these areas, which were once our homelands. In our hearts and minds, they still are.

The fight to save Oak Flat is not only about today but also 40 – 50 years from now and for all future generations. Today, these foreign mining corporations and their supporters are trying to buy support for the Resolution Copper Mine by teasing us with jobs and dangling cash and checks. But they don't share the real story – they will destroy Oak Flat resulting in a crater over 1,000-feet deep and nearly 2 miles across, leave behind 1.37 billion tons of toxic waste for our children and our children's children, and pump unlimited amounts of underground water that will deplete area aquifers and threaten our own water supply on our Reservation.

This mine will be fully automated and robots will replace humans. Already, mining companies are announcing that in about two years, they will switch from human drivers to automated trucks for heavy equipment cutting out the need for human labor. The Resolution Mine will create very few jobs for our people. Our Tribe will produce many more jobs than Resolution Copper ever will.

Our biggest threat will be 40 – 50 years from now. In the early 2000s, we allowed foreign owned Rio Tinto (one of the two foreign mining companies that own Resolution Copper) to do exploratory drillings on our lands before the Council terminated the agreement. They know what minerals and water lie beneath our land. If the Oak Flat land trade goes through and Resolution begins mining, the company estimates it will take about 40 – 50 years before the copper runs out. And Resolution Copper will only be fourteen miles from our western Reservation boundary.

Our children's future will be their next target once the copper is depleted at Oak Flat. Resolution will not easily leave the area after investing billions of dollars. They will ask Congress for our land and water. This puts our future in jeopardy. Remember, since our Reservation was established, our lands have been decreased six times by Presidential executive orders. They will threaten our precious Gila Wash water aquifer that helps feed the majority of our people in San Carlos. Not only will they deplete the water aquifer, but they will contaminate it.

I want our children to have what we have today – a water supply, the natural landscape God has provided us that we enjoy both in our desert and forest lands, the animal and fish that help supplement our diet, to maintain our main source of diet – acorn, and to maintain our traditional places to gather acorn, medicinal and food plants to help heal and feed us.

I fight not only for today but also for the future of our children and Apache generations to come. Let's not let history repeat itself. Please stand with me to save Oak Flat. Please say NO to the proposed Resolution Copper Mine. God bless the Apaches.

Thank you,

Terry Rambler, Chairman
San Carlos Apache Tribe.



Chairman Rambler stated,
“My ancestors came from the Aravaipa, Superior and Oak Flat areas. My great grandmother was forced at gunpoint and herded like cattle to old San Carlos after miners discovered minerals in the area. The miners were supported by the U.S. Calvary to overpower my ancestors. These lands are our ancestral homelands. In our hearts and minds, these lands belong to us.”

REP. RAUL GRIJALVA WITH TRIBAL ELDERS AT OAK FLAT

RESOLUTION COPPER MINE OVERVIEW

In December 2014, Congress included the Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act as a last-minute rider (Sec. 3003) to the FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) despite extensive opposition. The legislation will transfer 2,422 acres in the Tonto National Forest, which is sacred to Western Apaches and known as Chí'chil Bıldagoteel or Oak Flat, to Resolution Copper, a joint venture between the world's two largest foreign mining companies, Rio Tinto and BHP, to construct a copper mine. Under the legislation, the Forest Service is required to hold consultations with the tribe. In the nine years since its passage, this has not occurred.

The mine would destroy Chí'chil Bıldagoteel, which would collapse into an over 1000-foot-deep crater nearly two miles in diameter. The mine would deplete local water resources and require at least 250 billion gallons of groundwater, much of it to be pumped from the East Salt River Valley, while Arizona faces longterm water shortages. The mine would be one of the deepest in the U.S., extending 7,000 feet beneath the surface where temperatures reach 180 degrees. For every 2000 pounds of ore extracted, only 31 pounds of copper would be produced. The rest would be toxic waste, known as tailings.

The mine also includes a six-square-mile toxic waste dump for the 1.37 billion tons of tailings that would be permanently stored behind a three-mile long, 500-foot-high dam. The tailings would travel through a 19-mile pipeline, traversing desert canyons, including Ga'an Canyon, and washes to reach the permanent dump location on Dripping Springs Wash. It would include a 22-mile pipeline to transport copper concentrate to a railroad siding southwest of Superior, where it will most likely be shipped to smelters in China.

While moving toward a renewable energy-based economy is essential, copper is not on the U.S. Geological Survey's list of critical minerals because the U.S. already produces large amounts of copper and has reliable copper import trade partners. Copper is also 100% recyclable,

and one-third of the U.S. copper supply in 2022 came from recycled copper. The U.S. already exports 25% of the copper extracted from domestic mines to other countries because there are only two operating smelters to process unrefined copper in the U.S. Resolution Copper has not included a smelter for this project, and the copper will most likely have to be exported.

In a last-ditch effort to support these wealthy foreign mining interests, the Trump Administration tried to move forward with the land exchange right before leaving office in January 2021. On March 1, 2021, the Biden Administration rightfully stopped this process because government-to-government consultations with Tribes had not occurred, and the process needed further review. The Biden Administration has made meaningful tribal engagement a cornerstone of its Native American policy.

Consultations Have Not Taken Place Consultation between the San Carlos Apache Tribe and the Forest Service still has not occurred. Tribes across Arizona and the U.S. are opposed to the Resolution Mine. Nothing can be done to mitigate the destruction of Chí'chil Bıldagoteel; therefore, the mine should not proceed.



FORMER CHAIRMAN WENDSLER NOSIE SR., REP. RAUL GRIJALVA, CHAIRMAN RAMBLER, AND VICE CHAIRMAN ETPISON AT AN OAK FLAT EVENT.

Importance to Apache RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Chí'chil Bıldagoteel is filled with power. It is a place where Apaches conduct ceremonies such as Holy Ground and the Sunrise Dance that celebrates a young woman's coming of age, gather medicines and ceremonial items, and seek and obtain peace and personal cleansing.

Chí'chil Bıldagoteel is the goíí' (home) of our diyí'n (sacred power), visited by our ga'an (spiritual beings) who provide us with healing and spiritual services. Chí'chil Bıldagoteel is foundational to our religious beliefs.

CHÍ'CHIL BİLDAGOTEEL IS A SACRED SITE LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Overview

For hundreds of years, Chí'chil Bıldagoteel, also known as Oak Flat, has been a place of cultural and religious significance to Western Apaches. Chí'chil Bıldagoteel means "a broad flat of Emory oak trees." It is a sacred area for members of the San Carlos Apache Tribe, and as noted by an ethnographic study prepared for Tonto National Forest (TNF), nine other tribes with traditional ties to the area.

Like most federal lands, the TNF is carved out of the ancestral homelands of Indian tribes. Our historical and spiritual connection to these lands was never extinguished. Our ability to access these federal lands for religious purposes is guaranteed through treaties, federal court decisions, Executive Orders, laws, and regulations.

Apaches on the San Carlos reservation have ancestors who came from Chí'chil Bıldagoteel before being forced to Old San Carlos and held as prisoners of war. Tribal members' ancestors passed their knowledge to their descendants who are alive today. Our people have lived, prayed, and died in the Chí'chil Bıldagoteel area for centuries, long before the Resolution Mine project was conceived.

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In a March 29, 2021, letter to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) confirmed these facts and the devastating impacts of the Resolution mine including the destruction of Chí'chil Bıldagoteel.

"The historic significance of Oak Flat cannot be overstated, and neither can the enormity of the adverse effects that would result to this property from the (Resolution Mine) undertaking," the ACHP letter states. "In addition, hundreds of other historic properties would be destroyed or otherwise adversely affected by the undertaking."

The ACHP urged "the Forest Service to explore directly with the Administration and Congress, and in consultation with other stakeholders, any and all opportunities to amend or repeal the exchange portion" of the FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, which includes a provision that would give Chí'chil Bıldagoteel to Resolution Copper Company.

Conclusion

We agree with ACHP. We must save our native religion, culture, and way of life by protecting Chí'chil Bıldagoteel from obliteration by the Resolution mine.



Ga'an Canyon, near Oak Flat (also known as Devil's Canyon). This rare perennial desert stream and its ecosystem are threatened by the proposed Resolution Copper Mine.

PHOTO BY JAMES WELLS

RESOLUTION MINE POSES MAJOR THREAT TO ARIZONA WATER SUPPLIES

Overview

The proposed Resolution Copper Mine would consume enormous amounts of groundwater from aquifers east of Phoenix to slurry toxic waste and copper concentrate. The mine would also dewater the local aquifers decimating local water supplies, destroying sacred springs, and eliminating habitats for plants and animals.

The mine would pump at least 775,000-acre feet, or 250 billion gallons, of water (and likely much more), which is enough water for 140,000 people annually for 40 years, much of it from aquifers in the East Salt River Valley. If the water Resolution Copper claims it would use was stored in a tank the size of a football field, the tank would need to be 147 miles high. As dramatic as this is, it is likely Resolution Copper is intentionally underestimating the amount of water it will need for this mine by at least 33 percent.

But Resolution Copper doesn't need to worry if it needs more water. State law currently allows Resolution to develop an unlimited number of wells and pump an unlimited amount of groundwater. Resolution proposes to take 7 percent of the total groundwater available in the entire East Salt River Valley subbasin.

Most of the water would be used to move 1.37 billion tons of toxic mine tailings through 19 miles of pipeline to a massive dump spanning six-square miles near Dripping Springs Wash. The mine would also use water to move 40 billion pounds of copper concentrate 21 miles to a railroad site where it will be loaded on trains for export overseas, most likely to China. The water used to transport the toxic waste and copper concentrate will be irreversibly poisoned, unfit for any future human consumption or use.



CHAIRMAN RAMBLER WITH TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION CHAIRMAN NED NORRIS JR. CHAIRMAN NORRIS HAS BEEN A STRONG SUPPORTER OF SAVING OAK FLAT.



Will Destroy Ecosystems

The mine would destroy at least 18 groundwater dependent ecosystems, many of which are sacred springs, that nourish plants and animals, including endangered species. Resolution's unrestricted groundwater pumping would lower groundwater levels in some areas by 450 feet, causing ground subsidence that could damage infrastructure, including the CAP canal.

Resolution Would Drain Arizona's Aquifers

Resolution's demand on Arizona's water would significantly impact the entire regional water system, which is already dealing with significant CAP water restrictions as a result of the megadrought. Large aquifers in Arizona would be fractured and drained, forcing those reliant on those aquifers to seek water elsewhere, putting more pressure on water supplies.

In a report analyzing the withdrawn final environmental impact study (FEIS), the Bureau of Land Management raised many concerns with how the FEIS modeled the impacts to water resources including failing to analyze potential impacts to the Cutter Basin aquifer located on the San Carlos Reservation.

Will Destroy Ecosystems, Stop Development

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Resolution's groundwater use would also make nearly 3,500 acres of the Superstition Vistas Planning Area, a proposed 175,000-acre future development, unfit for development, costing Arizona at least \$536.6 million in lost sales, which are used to support public schools.

Arizona continues to be in a drought, and its precious water supply continues to diminish. The notion that massive amounts of this essential resource would be wasted, all to bring financial benefit to foreign mining companies, is absurd and must not happen.



CHAIRMAN RAMBLER WITH OKLAHOMA REP. TOM COLE WHO IS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF SAVING OAK FLAT.



CHAIRMAN RAMBLER WITH ARIZONA REP. RAUL GRIJALVA, A STRONG SUPPORTER OF SAVING OAK FLAT. REP. GRIJALVA HAS CONSISTENTLY INTRODUCED LEGISLATION IN CONGRESS TO HELP SAVE OAK FLAT.




CHAIRMAN RAMBLER AND VICE CHAIRMAN ETPISON AT UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK ADVOCATING TO SAVE OAK FLAT



Mine Would Create Toxic Lake

The crater would create a pit lake or lakes, resulting in additional losses to the region's groundwater supplies and pose a toxic threat from acid rock drainage. Water would continuously migrate into the lake/lakes from the shallow alluvial aquifer and other sources and then evaporate over time. This toxic lake could harm local water quality and wildlife, including migratory birds.



PROPOSED RESOLUTION MINE WOULD INFLICT MASSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

Overview

The proposed Resolution Mine would bring massive, long-term environmental destruction to the region. Resolution Copper's intended mining method would destroy Chí'chil Bıldagoteel, which is a sacred area listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Chí'chil Bıldagoteel, also known as Oak Flat, would collapse into a crater between 800 and 1,115 feet deep and roughly 1.8 miles across.

The destruction of Chí'chil Bıldagoteel would also eliminate world-class public rock-climbing areas and the Oak Flat Campground. Public access would be eliminated on 10,100 acres, of which 7,700 is Arizona State Trust land. Up to 17,500 acres of soil and vegetation would be disturbed.

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The mine would also negatively impact at least 18 Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems, including sacred springs, and the wildlife associated with those ecosystems. The groundwater drawdown from Resolution Copper's ongoing mine shaft dewatering has already damaged six springs. The initiation of blockcave mining will impact overlying aquifers and two more springs, and depending on the final mine design, an additional five springs could be affected.

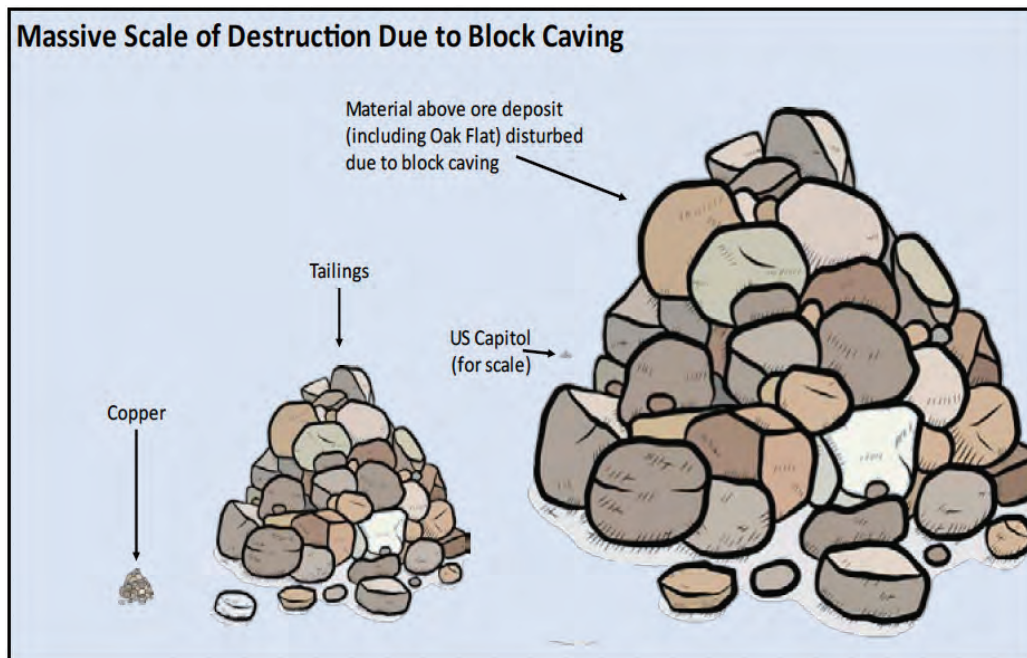


CHAIRMAN RAMBLER SPEAKING TO JOHN PODESTA, PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S KEY ADVISOR, EXPLAINING THE OAK FLAT ISSUE.

Over 1 Billion Tons of Toxic Waste

The mine would generate 1.37 billion tons of toxic waste called tailings that will be liquefied and transported as a slurry through a 19-mile pipeline to the Skunk Creek waste dump. Tailings are finely ground waste rock left over from processing copper ore into copper concentrate. The pipeline and power line corridor needed for the mine would impact 14,950 acres, of which 2,467 are in Tonto National Forest, 8,218 are Arizona State Trust Land, and 4,265 are private. The Skunk Camp tailings dump would be one of the largest tailings storage facilities in the world. It would include a 500-foot-high, three-mile-long dam to store the toxic liquified mining waste called tailings.

Massive Scale of Destruction Due to Block Caving



Conclusion – Disastrous Impacts to People, Land, Water, and Wildlife

A tailings dam failure could result in injuries and deaths, destruction of property, displacement of large downstream populations, disruption of the Arizona economy, contamination of soils and water, and risk to water supplies. Uncontrolled seepage from the tailings dump threatens to contaminate groundwater and/or downstream surface waters with hazardous waste.

The mine would also cause negative impacts to amphibians, birds, fish, invertebrates, mammals, and reptiles through the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of breeding, rearing, foraging, and dispersal habitats. Wildlife cameras have documented a wide variety of wildlife, including mountain lions, bears, and coatimundi. Several threatened and endangered species, including the Gila Chub, southwestern willow flycatcher, Arizona hedgehog cactus, northern Mexican garter snake, and the yellowbilled cuckoo, could be impacted.



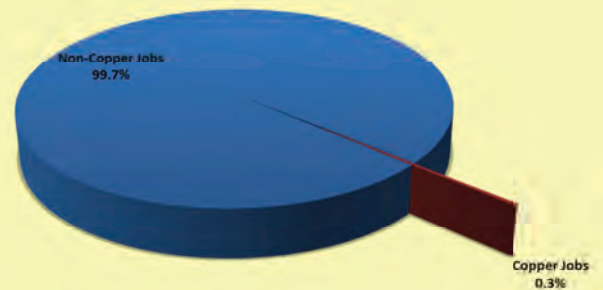
TRIBAL LEADERS, INCLUDING VICE CHAIRMAN ETPISON AND CHAIRMAN RAMBLER, MEETING WITH THE WHITE HOUSE ON OAK FLAT.



PUBLIC RALLY NEAR THE WHITE HOUSE TO SAVE OAK FLAT.



The Relative Importance of Direct Copper Jobs in the Arizona Economy, 2011



“Over the last several decades, dependence on mining did not provide a reliable path to prosperity that allowed mining communities to perform better than other American communities. In fact, mining-dependent communities lagged significantly behind the average for the rest of the nation.”

The Superior-Globe-Miami area has been mining and processing copper ore for over a century. The towns remain economically depressed.

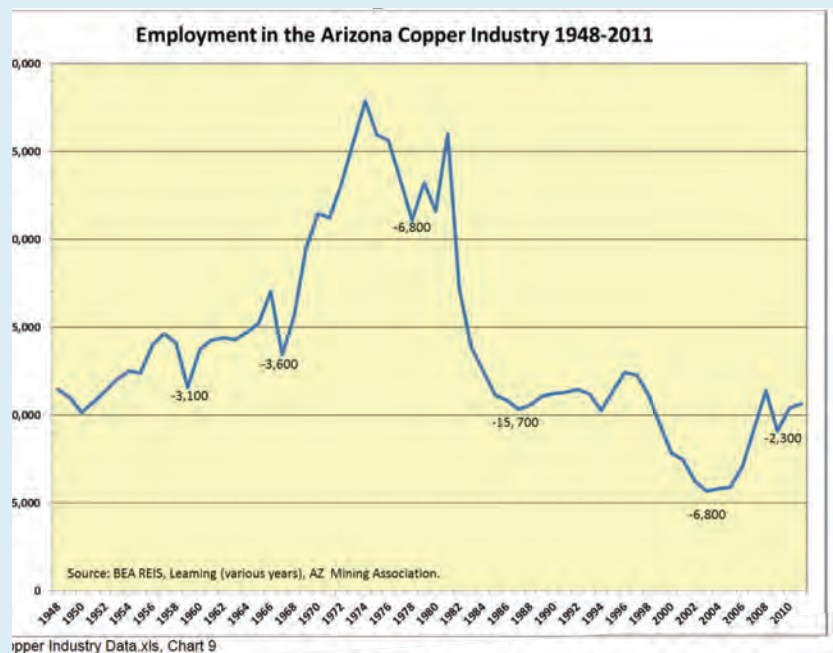
RESOLUTION COPPER’S PROMISE OF ECONOMIC BOOM IS BASED ON FAULTY ANALYSIS

Resolution Copper Company has repeatedly promised that their proposed mine would bring an economic boom for Superior and the surrounding areas if constructed. This promise is based on a skewed economic analysis that grossly exaggerates benefits while ignoring negative impacts.

An independent review of Resolution’s economic study shows Resolution Copper’s claims of massive job growth will not occur and that copper mining’s historical boom and bust cycles will continue. This will result in minimal investment in the immediate area while most benefits are exported elsewhere. The San Carlos Apache Tribe hired Tom Power, a renowned expert and Professor Emeritus at the University of Montana, to prepare the independent analysis.

The report states, *“Over the last several decades, dependence on mining did not provide a reliable path to prosperity that allowed mining communities to perform better than other American communities. In fact, mining-dependent communities lagged significantly behind the average for the rest of the nation.”* The Superior-Globe-Miami area has been mining and processing copper ore for over a century. The towns remain economically depressed.

Resolution’s plan to use a highly mechanized automated technology will significantly reduce the employment impact on the nearby area. The high-tech jobs that Resolution Copper touts will require advanced math/science degrees and will be based in Utah, not Superior.



CHALLENGES IN MINING COMMUNITIES: UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMIC FACTORS

The Power report shows there are six important explanations for the poor economic performance in mining communities, despite the relatively high wages paid in those industries:

The instability of mine production, employment, and payroll.

1.



Reduction of the workforce due to the use of advanced technological machinery.

2.



Mines always deplete their economically viable ore deposits and then shut down.

3.



4.



Mining usually takes place in rural areas. This leads to much of the spending associated with mine operations, including payroll, to move from rural communities to larger metropolitan areas.

5.



Mine employees often commute long distances while maintaining their residences outside the area immediately impacted by the mining and milling.

6.



Mining is land intensive and has permanent impacts on the natural environment. Environmental degradation can significantly reduce the attractiveness of a mining area as a place to live, work, and raise a family.

Conclusion

The region's economic future is based on protecting its scenic beauty, attracting tourism, and providing amenities that attract remote workers seeking outdoor recreational opportunities. Updated and comprehensive economic reviews demonstrate that the Resolution Mine will not provide the economic windfall it often claims in efforts to gain public support.



CHAIRMAN RAMBLER SPEAKING AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK TO SAVE OAK FLAT.



CHAIRMAN RAMBLER WITH FORMER SPEAKER OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, NANCY PELOSI, A STRONG SUPPORTER OF SAVING OAK FLAT.



CHAIRMAN RAMBLER AND VICE CHAIRMAN ETPISON AFTER MEETING WITH GOVERNOR KATIE HOBBS REQUESTING SUPPORT FOR SAVING OAK FLAT



FAWN SHARP, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS (NCAI), INFORMING THE PUBLIC THAT NCAI SUPPORTS SAVING OAK FLAT.

ARIZONA AND U.S. TRIBES OVERWHELMINGLY OPPOSE THE RESOLUTION MINE

Overview

In December 2014, Congress included the Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act as a lastminute rider (Sec. 3003) to the FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The Exchange mandates the U.S. Forest Service transfer sacred Chí'chil Bıldagoteel, also known as Oak Flat, to Resolution Copper, a joint venture of the two largest foreign mining companies in the world, Rio Tinto and BHP. The law requires the transfer within 60 days of publishing a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The transfer must occur regardless of the mine's devastating impacts on the environment, the depletion of scarce water resources, and the destruction of a sacred Western Apache site at Chí'chil Bıldagoteel and many cultural resources.

The San Carlos Apache Tribe is joined by 18 other Arizona tribes opposing the Resolution Copper Mine. The Inter-Tribal Association of Arizona, which represents 21 of the 22 tribes in Arizona, has passed numerous resolutions, sent letters, and testified before Congress on multiple occasions over the last 20 years opposing the Resolution Mine. National and regional tribal organizations, including the National Congress of American Indians, and countless tribes from across the country have also passed resolutions and spoken out in the effort to save Chí'chil Bıldagoteel from obliteration.

Congress Has a Trust Responsibility to Protect Tribal Historical and Cultural Resources

Tribal Nations are sovereign governments and have a unique legal and political relationship with the United States as defined by the U.S. Constitution, treaties, statutes, court decisions, and executive orders.

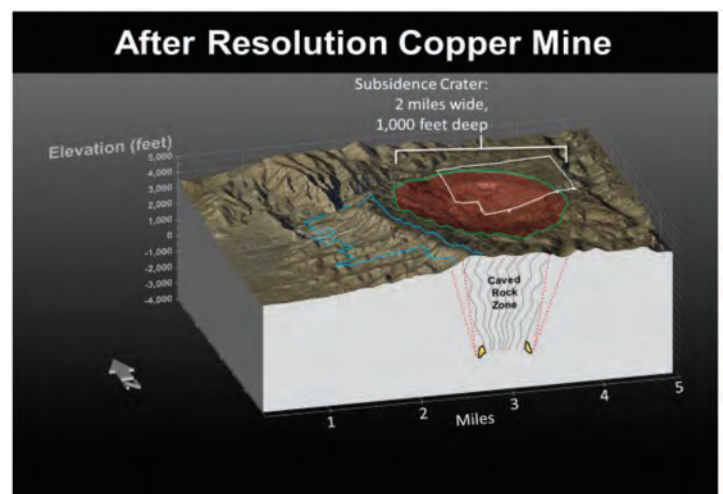
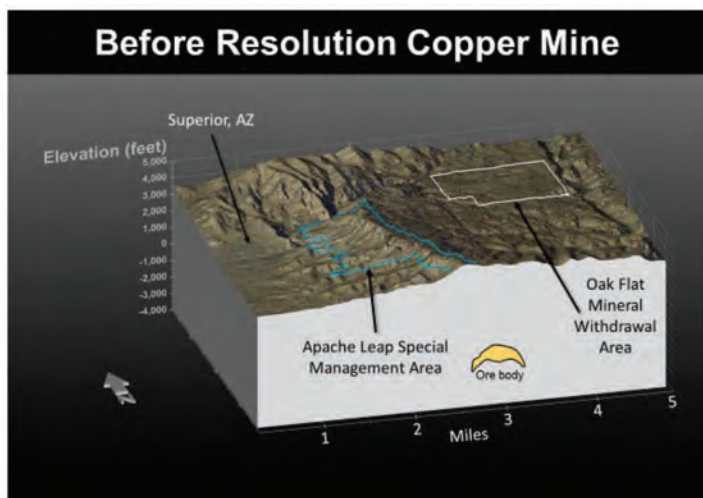
The Supreme Court has long recognized that Tribal Nations are distinct political entities that pre-date the United States and have retained inherent sovereign authority over their lands and people. Through its acquisition of tribal lands and resources, the United States formed a fiduciary relationship with Tribal Nations whereby it recognized a trust obligation to safeguard tribal rights, lands, and resources.



TRIBAL LEADERS MEETING WITH THE WHITE HOUSE ON OAK FLAT.



U.S. REP. RAUL GRIJALVA SPEAKING AT AN OAK FLAT EVENT.



An essential component of this fiduciary responsibility is preserving sacred places, objects, and cultural landscapes. This includes protecting Chí'chil Bida'goteel from destruction. There is no legal requirement that the Biden Administration publish the FEIS, which would trigger the 60-day time clock for the land exchange. But publishing the FEIS and transferring ownership of Chí'chil Bida'goteel to Resolution would be committing a human rights violation against the Western Apache and all native people. It would be a historic injustice.

Conclusion

The attempt to move forward with the construction of this mine is being driven by foreign interests attempting to profit off the destruction of sacred lands in the U.S. This is why tribes across Arizona and the country are so adamantly opposed to it.

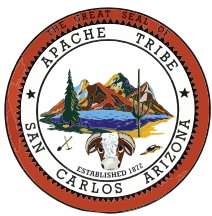
Fawn Sharp, President of the National Congress of American Indians representing 574 tribes in the U.S., summarized this issue well when she said, *"It would be the first time the United States actively sought to relinquish control of federal property to a foreign entity that would knowingly destroy the sacred places of peoples to whom it has a trust responsibility,"*



CHAIRMAN RAMBLER SPEAKING TO JOHN PODESTA, PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S KEY ADVISOR, EXPLAINING THE OAK FLAT ISSUE.



PUBLIC RALLY NEAR THE WHITE HOUSE TO SAVE OAK FLAT.



San Carlos Apache Tribe
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**VERY IMPORTANT
INFORMATION FROM
THE CHAIRMAN**



CHAIRMAN RAMBLER SPEAKING TO PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AND VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS REQUESTING BOTH TO SUPPORT TRIBES TO HELP SAVE OAK FLAT