



July 8, 2008

Team Leader, Rosemont Copper Project
Coronado National Forest (CNF)
300 W. Congress St.
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Submitted via email to comments-southwestern-coronado@fs.fed.us

Comments and Requests Regarding The Proposed Rosemont Copper Project

Dear Team Leader,

The proposed Rosemont Copper Project would destroy or degrade many square miles of habitat in the northern Santa Rita Mountains for the endangered jaguar and other wildlife (1) (2). Impacts from this large-scale mining operation would likely have far-reaching negative consequences for the conservation of jaguar and other wild species – the project area gateways principal habitat linkages in southeastern Arizona, connecting the Tumacacori-Atascosa and Santa Rita-Patagonia mountain ranges with the Rincon Mountains and other ranges to the north (2). This region of southeastern Arizona is critical to the recovery of the jaguar in the United States.

We request that the upcoming environmental analysis for the proposed Rosemont Project fully examine its potential impact on jaguar recovery and on the conservation of other wild species at the greater landscape level, as well as locally in the project area. Analysis should include direct project impacts combined with cumulative impacts from the full range of human activities affecting wildlife habitat in the broader geographic area surrounding the project (e.g., the I-10 corridor, recreational activities on the national forest, road densities, urban and exurban sprawl). As you undertake your analysis, please contact us for further details on the importance of the project area and the Santa Rita Mountains for jaguar population recovery.

Frankly, this project, if approved, would cause tremendous damage to a vital core area of habitat for jaguar and other wildlife, as well as degrade or destroy what may be the most significant north-south movement corridor for wildlife in southeastern Arizona.

The US Forest Service's decisionmaking regarding the proposed Rosemont Copper Project should have the benefit of advances in conservation science and natural resource planning that have occurred since implementation in 1986 of the existing Coronado National Forest Plan. Therefore, we ask that a decision on this project and other proposed mining operations on the CNF be deferred until the forthcoming Plan revision is completed.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

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Conservation Biologist
Campaign Coordinator
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- (1) <http://jaguarhabitatusa.wordpress.com/maps/>
- (2) http://www.azdot.gov/Highways/OES/AZ_WildLife_Linkages/workgroup.asp