

A Sacred Apache Site Will Be Destroyed With The Trump Administration's Upcoming Rushed Approval Of A Copper Mine On Public Land

Sacred Land In The Tonto National Forest Is Set To Be Handed Over To Australian Mining Companies With A History Of Environmental Destruction And Spending Big On Lobbying Despite A Rushed Environmental Review And Push Back From The San Carlos Apache Tribe

The Controversial Resolution Copper Mine Is Set To Approved, Handing Over 2,422 Acres Of Public Land To Extractive Industries.

The Resolution Copper Mine In The Tonto National Forest Is Set To Be Approved Under The Trump Administration Alongside The Planned January 15th Release Of The Project's Environmental Impact Statement. "U.S. President Donald Trump's outgoing administration plans to approve a controversial land swap needed for Rio Tinto Ltd and partners to build an Arizona copper mining project that Native American tribes say will destroy sites of cultural and religious value. [...] The U.S. Forest Service will publish a final environmental impact statement for the mine on Jan. 15, a necessary step to complete the land exchange, said Tom Torres, acting supervisor of the Tonto National Forest, where the mine would be built." [Reuters, [01/04/21](#)]

The 2,422 Acres Land Exchange Pertaining To The Mine Project Was Approved By Congress In 2014. "The mine project is the result of a land exchange approved by Congress in 2014 pending completion of an environmental impact statement. The Forest Service traded 2,422 acres to Resolution Copper in exchange for eight parcels totaling 5,376 acres of private land, including some riparian zones along the San Pedro River." [AZ Central, [10/09/19](#)]

The Approval Comes After A Rushed Environmental Review That Fails To Address The Two Mile Wide Crater The Mine Will Create...

The Current Plan For The Mine Would Destroy Much Of Oak Flat And Create A Two Mile Wide Crater As The Mine Caves In On Itself In As Little As Six Years. "Under the current Forest Service plan, much of Oak Flat would eventually be destroyed. Starting about six years after underground blasting and extraction at the mine begins, the mine will gradually start to cave in on itself, forming a crater nearly two miles wide and as much as 1,100 feet deep, according to federal estimates." [New York Times, [12/19/20](#)]

The Environmental Study Was Not Previously Expected To Be Finished Until Mid 2021. "Federal records show that the environmental study until recently was expected to continue until the middle of 2021. It is now slated to be finished by mid-January." [New York Times, [12/19/20](#)]

Trump Issued An Executive Order Requiring Agencies To Expedite "Infrastructure, Energy, Environmental, Or Natural Resources-Related Projects." "Section 9(b) of E.O. 13927 additionally requires agencies to utilize their statutory and regulatory authorities that provide for emergency or expedited treatment of infrastructure, energy, environmental, or natural

resource-related projects and project reviews “to the fullest extent permitted to facilitate the Nation’s economic recovery.”” [USDA Report On EO 13927, [07/07/20](#)]

...Or The Destruction It Will Cause Sacred San Carlos Apache Tribe Site.

Oak Flat Is Sacred To The San Carlos Apache Tribe, Including Ancient Petroglyphs And An Apache Burial Ground. “To the nearby San Carlos Apache Tribe, Oak Flat is holy ground. There are ancient petroglyphs on some of Oak Flat’s rock walls. In addition to evidence of shelters and cooking fires, the area has yielded broken pottery, arrowheads, and stone tools. Oak Flat was also an Apache burial ground. According to John R. Welch, Simon Fraser University professor of archaeology and former historic preservation officer for the White Mountain Apache Tribe, Oak Flat holds “the best set of Apache archaeological sites ever documented, period, full stop.”” [Washington Post, [09/22/20](#)]

In 2014, 20 Native American Groups Wrote A Letter To Congress Opposing The Land Swap, Saying It “Tramples On The Religious Rights Of Indigenous People.” “Last year, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, Pascua Yaqui Tribe and Tohono O’odham Nation were among 20 Native American groups who sent a letter to Congressional leaders, protesting the land-swap bill. They argued it tramples on the religious rights of indigenous people. Nossie said it continues a pattern of “killing the identity of native people.” [Tuscon.com, [12/11/14](#)]

Rio Tinto, The Mine Owners, Recently Destroyed A 46,000-Year-Old Aboriginal Cave In Australia...

Resolution Copper LLC Is Owned By Rio Tinto And BHP. “Rio Tinto holds controlling interest in Resolution Copper LLC, co-founded with another Anglo-Australian firm, BHP.” [Washington Post, [09/22/20](#)]

Rio Tinto Is A Mining And Metals Company. “As pioneers in mining and metals, we produce materials essential to human progress. [...] We work in 36 countries – in mines, smelters and refineries, as well as in sales offices, data centres, research and development labs and with artificial intelligence.” [Rio Tinto, About, accessed [12/10/20](#)]

- **Rio Tinto Is An Australian Company.** [Rio Tinto, Contact, accessed [12/10/20](#)]

In 2020, Rio Tinto Destroyed 46,000-Year-Old Aboriginal Caves In Australia Traditionally Owned By The Puutu Kunti Kurrama And Pinikura People. “Mining giant Rio Tinto has apologised for blowing up 46,000-year-old Aboriginal caves in Western Australia dating back to the last Ice Age. The Juukan Gorge caves, in the Pilbara region, were destroyed last Sunday as Rio Tinto expanded an iron ore project agreed with the authorities. Many prehistoric artefacts have been found at the remote heritage site. [...] “We pay our respects to the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura People (PKKP),” he said. The PKKP are the traditional owners of the site.” [BBC, [05/31/20](#)]

...And, Along With The Mine’s Co-Owners, Were Among The Top 25 Largest Greenhouse Gas Polluters In The World.

Resolution Copper LLC Is Owned By Rio Tinto And BHP. “Rio Tinto holds controlling interest in Resolution Copper LLC, co-founded with another Anglo-Australian firm, BHP.” [Washington Post, [09/22/20](#)]

Rio Tinto Was The 24th Largest Producer Of Greenhouse Gas Emissions From 1988 To 2015. [The Guardian, [07/10/17](#)]

BHP Was The 20th Largest Producer Of Greenhouse Gas Emissions From 1988 To 2015. [The Guardian, [07/10/17](#)]

Rio Tinto Has Met Repeatedly With Industry-Friendly Secretary Wilbur Ross...

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross Had At Least Three Meetings With Rio Tinto, The Backers Of The Resolution Copper Mine. “Mr. Ross’s calendar shows at least three appointments with top executives at Rio Tinto, the Anglo-Australian mining giant backing the Resolution Copper mine planned for construction in Arizona next to the San Carlos Apache reservation.” [New York Times, [12/19/20](#)]

- **Ross Also Visited The Resolution Mine Site In 2020.** “Mr. Ross also made a trip to the mine site this year.” [New York Times, [12/19/20](#)]
- **Wilbur Ross Has Amassed His Fortune Through The Steel Industry.** “Ross has made a fortune in the steel industry – an industry of which the Commerce Department has significant oversight. Indeed, government transition documents show that the Commerce Department is slated to make no fewer than five decisions about steel trade soon after the inauguration which will directly affect businesses that Ross has a stake in.” [ProPublica, [12/16/16](#)]

...Enjoyed Insider Access To Interior Through An Industry Group...

Rio Tinto Is Involved With The American Exploration & Mining Association. [AEMA Current Corporate Members, [06/01/20](#)]

The AEMA Had A Phone Call With EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler On May 1, 2020 That Included Rio Tinto. “EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler was joined by Associate Administrator for the Office of Policy Brittany Bolen and Nena Shaw, the head of the Smart Sectors Program with the EPA’s Office of Policy. Approximately 20 AEMA and/or NMA member companies participated in the call. [...] Ryan Modlin with Rio Tinto mentioned their Bingham Canyon copper mine in Utah that has critical minerals as byproducts. He acknowledged the need to educate the public. He also mentioned the EIS for the Resolution project and looking forward to working with EPA on that.” [Mining America, Joint AEMA NMA Call With EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, [05/01/20](#)]

Rio Tinto Gave A Keynote Address At The Same AEMA Meeting Where Assistant Secretary Of Land And Mineral Management Joe Balash Spoke. “During a keynote address on Dec. 6, Joe Balash, assistant secretary of Land and Minerals Management for the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), told a sold-out lunch crowd that the DOI had released final drafts of proposed

revisions to the Obama-era greater sage grouse conservation plans. [...] Elias Scafidas, chief financial officer, copper and diamonds, Rio Tinto gave a keynote address at the Wednesday afternoon luncheon and Skaer was recognized for her 22 years of contributions to AEMA." [Mining Engineering Vol 71, No 2, accessed [01/05/20](#)]

- **Balash Has Previously Attacked Public Lands Protections While Highlighting The Importance Of Other Commodities.** "The path leading to America's reliance on other countries for mined materials has been complicated and systemic, said Joe Balash, assistant secretary for land and minerals management at the Interior Department. He pins the blame on decades of policies reducing the availability of public lands. The Trump administration is reviewing public land use plans, but Balash said that will only address some of the country's import-reliance problems as a fast-moving economy outpaces slow-moving shifts in policy. "There are some commodities on the list that have only become important in the last few years," Balash said." [S&P Global, [10/09/18](#)]

...And Had A Former Lobbyist in a Key Interior Post...

Michael Freeman Previously Served As Acting Deputy Solicitor For Water Resources In The Department Of Interior. "The release said "Freeman most recently served as Acting Deputy Solicitor for Water Resources at the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). Before that, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Environmental Management at DOI."" [Missoula Current, [12/09/20](#)]

Freeman Joined CGCN Group As A Partner In 2017. "CGCN Group, an integrated advocacy and public-affairs firm, on Monday announced the addition of Mike Freeman as partner." [CGCN Group, Press Release, [05/15/17](#)]

As A CGCN Group Partner, Michael Freeman Requested A Meeting With Assistant Secretary Joe Balash On Behalf Of The Rio Tinto Group In 2018. "I'd like to request a meeting with Assistant Secretary Joe Balash on behalf of Todd Malan, Vice President, External Affairs & Communications for Rio Tinto Group. We are currently looking at January 23-25 (Tuesday-Thursday of next week), I know that's late notice, but I believe Todd is pretty flexible with those dates. I can provide more details about the substance of the meeting if you need, I just thought it would be helpful to get the request in as soon as possible." [Joseph Balash Calendars 2018, page 51, accessed [12/10/20](#)]

- **Joe Balash's Calendar Lists A Meeting With The Rio Tinto Group At 10am-10:30am On February 1, 2018.** [Joseph Balash Calendars 2018, page 51, accessed [12/10/20](#)]
- **Rio Tinto Was The 24th Largest Producer Of Greenhouse Gas Emissions From 1988 To 2015.** [The Guardian, [07/10/17](#)]

...And, Combined With BHP, Has Spent Over \$9M On Lobbying Since The Land Swap Was Approved.

Rio Tino Has Spent Over \$6.9M On Lobbying Since 2014. [OpenSecrets, Rio Tinto Group, accessed [01/05/21](#)]

BHP Has Spent \$2.17M On Lobbying Since 2014. [Senate Lobbying Database, accessed [01/05/21](#)]

- **BHP Previously Hired Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Field To Lobby For Them.** [Senate Lobbying Database, Lobbying Report, [08/13/07](#)]
- **Daniel Jorjani Previously Worked At Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld.** [LinkedIn, Daniel Jorjani, accessed [10/15/20](#)]