



THE NEW MEXICO OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES TRUSTEE AND THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 30, 2016

Contact:

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George Dennis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (505) 761-4754

THE NEW MEXICO OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES TRUSTEE AND THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SEEK PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE DRAFT ADDENDUM TO THE WILDLIFE RESTORATION PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Albuquerque – The New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (collectively, the Trustees) seek public comment on the Draft Addendum to the Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment (RP/EA) for the Chino, Cobre and Tyrone Mine Facilities in Southwestern New Mexico.

The trustees have completed an evaluation of wildlife and wildlife habitat restoration projects that were proposed after holding an informational meeting in Silver City on October 21, 2015, which reopened the restoration project selection process for the RP/EA. The original RP/EA, dated October 2013, was issued in December 2013. The Trustees reopened the restoration project selection process for two reasons: 1) the majority of the projects originally identified in the second level of prioritization (Tier 2) could not come to fruition for various reasons, and 2) the Trustees wanted restoration projects that would provide significant benefits to wildlife, especially birds, and wildlife habitat prior to considering implementation of the RP/EA's third and lower ranked projects (Tier 3).

A description of the new projects and the results of the evaluation can be found in the Draft Addendum to the RP/EA. A copy of the Draft Addendum is available on the internet at <https://onrt.env.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/fmidraftaddendum.pdf> or may be requested from the N.M. Office of Natural Resources Trustee, 121 Tijeras Ave. NE, Ste. 1000, Albuquerque, NM 87102, (505) 222-9546. Copies may also be viewed at the following public libraries: the Public Library, 515 West College Ave., Silver City, NM 88061, (575) 538-3672; the Bayard Public Library, 1112 Central Ave., Bayard, NM 88023, (575) 537-6244; and the Gila Valley Library, 400 Highway 211, Gila, NM 88038, (575) 535-4120.

The public is invited to send written comments on the contents of the Draft Addendum to the RP/EA. The public comment period is open for 30 days. Comments must be submitted in writing to Ms. Trais Kliphuis, Executive Director, New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee at the address above

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by December 28, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. Comments may also be submitted via e-mail to: trais.kliphuis@state.nm.us.

The final selection of restoration projects will occur after the Trustees review public comments, and will be identified in a final Addendum to the RP/EA to be released by the first quarter of 2017. Selected restoration projects must restore, rehabilitate, replace, or acquire the equivalent of wildlife and wildlife habitat resources that were injured by the release of hazardous substances from the three Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold Inc. mine facilities.

Funding for the restoration projects derives from a \$5,500,000 settlement for natural resource damages reached between the Trustees and Freeport-McMoRan.

For additional information, please contact: Trais Kliphuis, New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee, (505) 222-9572 or George Dennis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (505) 761-4754 or visit the N.M. Office of Natural Resources Trustee website at www.onrt.state.nm.us.

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