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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Wildlife and Habitat Natural Resource Damage Case Settled for Freeport-McMoRan Mines**

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico – The New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee, the U.S. Department of the Interior through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Freeport-McMoRan Corporation and several subsidiaries (Freeport) have reached a settlement valued over \$5.5 million for the injury of wildlife and wildlife habitat resulting from the release of hazardous substances from the Freeport mine facilities in southwestern New Mexico.

The settlement includes \$5,500,000 for the restoration of wildlife and wildlife habitat, and the transfer, to New Mexico State Parks, of 715 acres of conservation land adjacent to City of Rocks State Park. City of Rocks State Park is located north of Deming, New Mexico, and is representative of the high desert grassland habitat of the Chihuahuan desert. The park and surrounding grassland supports plants such as yucca, agave, cacti and ocotillo and provides habitat for a variety of wildlife.

“New Mexico State Parks is very excited over the acquisition of this important land,” said Director Tommy Mutz. “The land transfer includes one half of Table Mountain, the Faywood Cienega, a wetland site of ecological significance, the ownership of the access road to the park, and increases the ability for State Parks to provide recreational opportunities of an enhanced trail system.”

In addition, Freeport will reimburse the federal government \$59,750 for its remaining unpaid injury assessment costs.

“I am pleased to see this settlement agreement between the Service, the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee, and Freeport-McMoRan Corporation,” said Benjamin Tuggle, Southwest Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “We can now begin the process of restoration to compensate for the injuries to wildlife and wildlife habitat by decades of mining. The Trustees will now begin to work with the

public and other involved stakeholders to determine what restoration project or projects will best serve to compensate for those resource losses.”

The New Mexico Natural Resources Trustee Dave Martin explained, “The State and Federal Trustees will prepare a draft restoration plan for public review that will propose projects that can be implemented with restoration money from the settlement. After careful consideration of the public’s response, a final restoration plan will identify the selected projects.”

The settlement for the wildlife and habitat injuries was reached through negotiations with Freeport, the State and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and was based on years of natural resource injury assessment work.

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