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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

(Albuquerque, NM) — The N.M. Office of Natural Resources Trustee and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (collectively, the Trustees) seek public comment on the Draft Wildlife Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment 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 during an informal scoping process. A description of the projects and the results of the evaluation can be found in the Draft Wildlife Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment. Copies of the Draft Wildlife Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment are available on the internet at www.onrt.state.nm.us or may be requested from the N.M. Office of Natural Resources Trustee, 4910-A Alameda Boulevard NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113, (505) 243-8087. Copies may also be viewed at the following public libraries: The Public Library, 515 West College Ave., Silver City, NM 88061, (575) 538-3672; Bayard Public Library, 1120 Central Ave., Bayard, NM 88023, (575) 537-6244; and Gila Valley Library, 400 Highway 211, Gila, NM 88038, (575) 535-4120.

“To involve stakeholders in the identification of potential restoration projects, the Trustees solicited project ideas from local, state, and federal agencies; nonprofit organizations; and private citizens”, said State Natural Resources Trustee Dave Martin. “As a result, 21 projects were evaluated in the Draft Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment. All comments on the project evaluations will be considered by the Trustees prior to revising and publishing the Final Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment.”

“It is through the commitment of our partners, and the variety of experience they bring to the table that provides us with the quality and range of proposed conservation projects in the plan we are seeking public comment on at this time”, said Benjamin Tuggle, Southwest Regional Director for the Service.

A public meeting will be held to answer questions about the restoration project evaluations on **January 30, 2013 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Silver City Annex Building, 2nd floor training room, 1203 N. Hudson, Silver City.** The public is invited to send written comments on

the contents of the Draft Wildlife Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment as well as propose additional restoration projects for consideration. Comments and new restoration project ideas must be submitted in writing to the N.M. Office of Natural Resources Trustee by March 4, 2013 at 4:00 p.m.

The final selection of restoration projects will occur after the Trustees review public comments, and will be identified in a final restoration plan/environmental assessment to be released in early 2013. 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 N.M. Office of Natural Resources Trustee, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Freeport-McMoRan.

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