



NEW MEXICO OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES TRUSTEE & U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

May 12, 2017

The New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee's mission is to return injured natural resources and the services they provide to the condition that would have existed absent the release of contamination.

Contact:

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

Additional Funds from \$5.5M Settlement to be Disbursed for New Mexico's Environmental Restoration

*Wildlife Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment
for Chino, Cobre & Tyrone Mines in Southwestern NM Approach Completion*

Albuquerque – The New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (collectively, the Trustees) have finalized the 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 ONRT is a small state agency administratively attached to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) ensuring that New Mexico's natural resources that were injured because of contamination are restored for the full benefit of New Mexicans. New Mexico's Environment Secretary Butch Tongate serves also as the state's Natural Resources Trustee. The ONRT assesses injury to natural resources caused by the release of hazardous substances and then seeks compensation from the potentially responsible parties for restoration of those injured resources. The funds obtained are used to restore, replace, or acquire the equivalent of injured, destroyed or lost natural resources and the services they provide.

The original RP/EA for Chino, Cobre, and Tyrone Mine Facilities was issued in December 2013; eight restoration projects are being implemented as a result. The Trustees then reopened the selection process for additional restoration projects which resulted in the recently finalized Addendum. This was done for two reasons: 1) most of the projects originally identified in the second level of prioritization could not come to fruition and, 2) the projects originally identified in the third level of prioritization would not have provided sufficient benefits to wildlife, especially birds, and wildlife habitat.

The Trustees then issued a Draft Addendum on November 29, 2016, and received public comments for 30 days. They carefully considered the comments received, and have now finalized the Addendum to the RP/EA. This means that additional funds from the original \$5.5 million settlement will be disbursed in the near term for New Mexico's environmental restoration.

(more)

A description of the new restoration projects selected and the results of the evaluation can be found in the Addendum to the RP/EA at: <https://onrt.env.nm.gov/chino-cobre-and-tyrone-mines/> , 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.

Funding for the selected restoration projects flows from a \$5.5M settlement for natural resource damages reached between the Trustees and Freeport-McMoRan on behalf of the state of New Mexico.

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 <https://onrt.state.nm.us>.

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